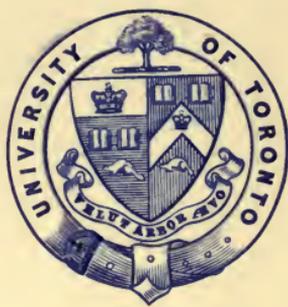


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HISTORY

OF THE

INVASION OF SWITZERLAND

BY THE FRENCH.

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BEQUEST OF
REV. CANON SCADDING, D. D.
TORONTO. 1901.



THE
HISTORY
OF THE
INVASION OF SWITZERLAND
BY THE FRENCH,

AND
THE DESTRUCTION
OF
THE DEMOCRATICAL REPUBLICS

OF
Schwitz, Uri, and Unterwalden.

BY HENRY ZSCHÖKKE,
NATIONAL PREFECT OF THE CANTON OF BASIL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
J. B. BRIATTE,
SECRETARY OF LEGATION TO THE HELVETIC REPUBLIC
AT PARIS.

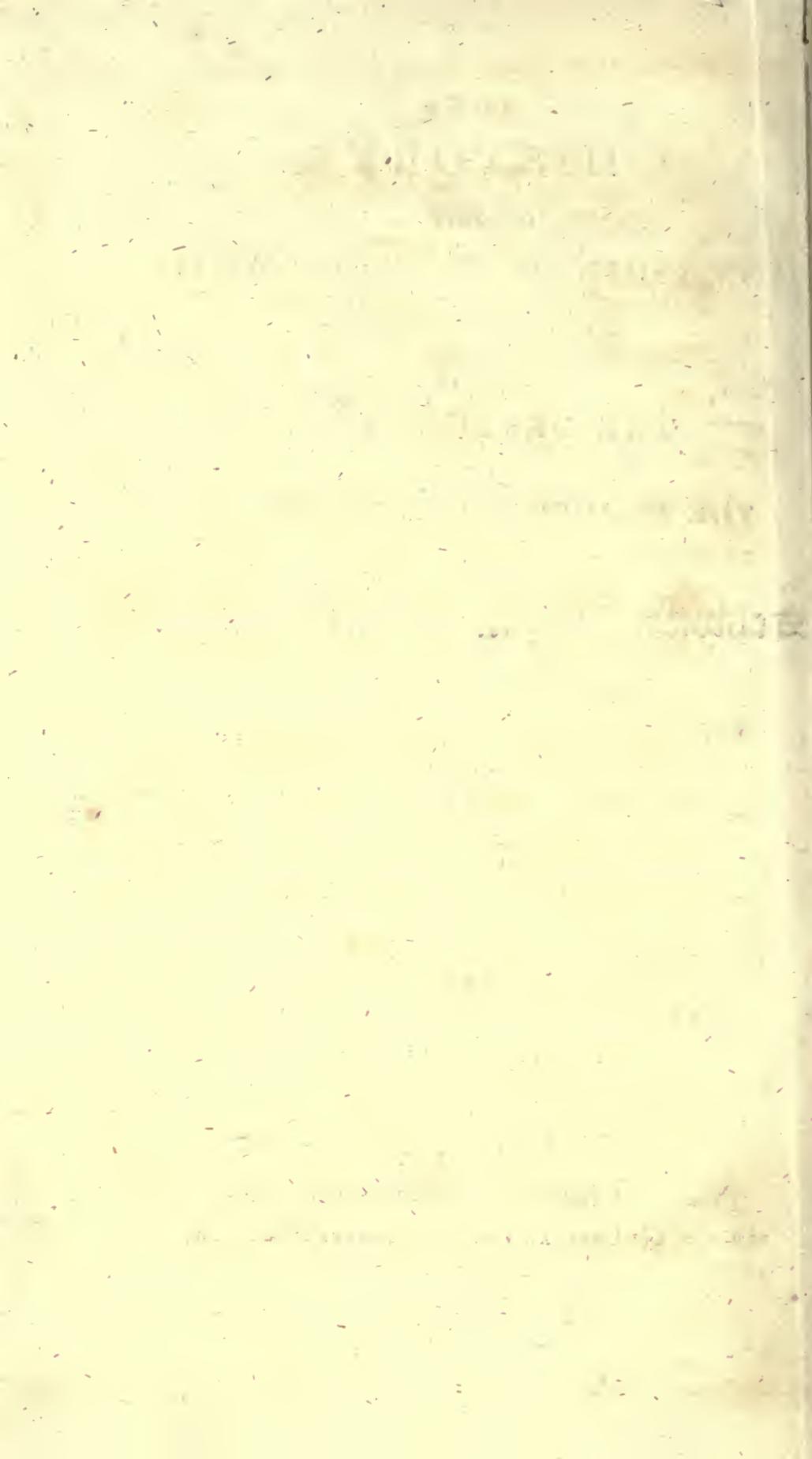
WITH A
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BY THE TRANSLATOR.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS work was originally written in German, and was printed at Berne, at the office of Gessner, son to the celebrated author of the Idylls. It was received with great avidity in Switzerland and Germany, and was translated into French; from which version, which is asserted to be perfectly faithful, the present has been made.

The author, Henry Zschokke, advantageously known by several esteemed works in German literature, was nominated in 1798 by the Helvetic directory commissioner of government in the small cantons, and charged with the office of healing, as much as lay in his power, the wounds inflicted by war. In the course of his mission he collected all the materials necessary for the history which he afterwards published; and he drew from

the archives of the country all the documents which might contribute to render it exact and authentic.

Its publication in English at the present period was thought peculiarly calculated to promote that spirit of resistance to unprincipled ambition, and the schemes of universal domination, which is alone to be relied upon in the arduous contest in which the nation is now engaged. The history of the memorable struggle here recorded will show what a people very inconsiderable in point of wealth and number was able to do in checking the progress of a host of invaders, by the mere force of native courage, and enthusiastic love of liberty and their country. It will show, that, stimulated by these motives, a band of peasants could be brought to charge with the bayonet, and entirely to defeat, battalions rendered formidable by their victories to the most warlike troops in Europe. It will also afford much valu-

able instruction for avoiding the faults which frustrated the defensive plans of the most powerful part of the confederacy, and placed the final stake in the hands of a few half-armed herdsmen. Moreover, it cannot fail to impress every generous mind with an indignant sense of the insolence of a lawless conqueror, and the degradation incurred by a vanquished and subjugated people.

The translator has annexed a supplement, in which he has given a sketch of the subsequent events that have occurred in this interesting quarter. Besides gratifying a curiosity that the preceding narrative must have excited; the renovation of the democratical cantons, partial and imperfect as it may be, will present the useful lesson, that determined valour secures the esteem even of those against whom it is exerted, and softens that fate which it may not have been able to avert.

HISTORY
OF THE
STRUGGLE AND DESTRUCTION
OF THE
DEMOCRATICAL REPUBLICS
OF
SCHWITZ, URI, & UNTERWALDEN.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

IN the bosom of the Helvetic Alps existed a small republic, which, for the maintenance of its antient liberty, ventured to contend against a formidable and more potent neighbour. It is our design to give a relation of this unequal contest. Neither extent of territory, nor strength, nor influence in the great affairs of the world, were the allotment of this people: they have been rendered interesting by their misfortunes, and worthy by their virtues, their courage, and their energy, of the pencil of the historian, and the survey of the philosopher.

Among these celebrated communities which first recovered liberty, the very name of which had been lost in Europe, the inhabitants of Schwitz were formerly distinguished; and their exploits gained them the honour of giving name to the rest of Helvetia. Equally faithful to the liberty which they had won with their swords, and jealous of their glory, they finally yielded only to force, and did not relinquish a constitution under which they had enjoyed five centuries of happiness, till further resistance was become impossible. Too soon the fame of their misery equalled that of their past felicity! This circumstance will doubtless suffice to excite our attention to the concluding destiny of this pastoral commonwealth. If the narrow bounds of its strength and means have precluded it from acting a brilliant part in the historical drama, the manner in which it suffered and fell can scarcely fail to entitle it to the homage of the enlightened observer.

But before we proceed to the events which brought on its fall, let us cast a rapid glance on its state previously to this catastrophe.

CHAPTER II.

THE entire territory of Schwitz presented a surface of no more than twenty-one square miles*. It was bounded to the north by the lake of Zurich; to the east by a chain of mountains separating it from the canton of Glaris; to the south and the west by tremendous rocks and by the cantons of Lucerne and Zurich.

The air of this district is pure and salubrious, and favourable to the growth of men and vegetables. In autumn and winter, however, thick fogs often overspread the valleys, and settle in them for weeks together.

Its most spacious and agreeable valley rises in an amphitheatrical form from the borders of the lake of Waldstaeten to the foot of the Haggenberg mountain. It is filled with rich pastures, fine fruit-trees, cabins, detached houses, and some villages. In its bottom is the town of Schwitz, distinguished from afar by its handsome buildings.

* German miles, 15 to a degree.

The torrent of Moutta divides this valley in its serpentine course. It rushes from a neighbouring valley, to which it gives name, and which stretches four leagues to the east amidst very high mountains. This unites with the Bisithal; and both are surrounded by a wall of rocks, whence burst in many cascades the waters which feed the Moutta.

To the north of Schwitz, between the Rigi and the Rosberg, on the side of Kusnacht, is a still pleasanter valley. It surrounds the charming lake of Lovertz, the banks of which are bordered with villages and trees of every kind. The mountains in this part assume an aspect equally brilliant and varied, and the limits of the valley are lost in the horizon. An arid and stony road to the north-east of Schwitz, carried over that part of the Haggenberg which approaches the lake of Lovertz, leads to the villages of Sattel and Rothen-thurm, situated in a pleasant plain in the vicinity of the Alps. Thence is descried Morgarten, that classic ground of liberty, immortalized by the victory obtained by the Swiss over the duke of Austria. The

plain of Rothenthurm is prolonged in a slope between the heights of St. Jost and Samstageren, to the foot of the Katzenstrik. This mountain here forms the boundary between the country we have just described and the valley of Einsiedlen, or Our Lady of the Hermits.

This valley was formerly a desert forest. The hermit Meinrad in the beginning of the ninth century entered it, accompanied with his pious followers, and this is the date of its population. Its forests have been cleared as far as the foot of the mountain, but the rigour of the climate does not permit the valley to be well cultivated. The soil moreover is marshy, and yields little besides an immense quantity of turf.

To the north rises mount Ezelberg, covered with a forest of fir trees. It is crossed by an extremely fatiguing road, opening into rich valleys which stretch as far as the lake of Zurich.

Such are the countries, which formerly composed the republic of Schwitz, but all had not the same rights.

CHAPTER III.

THE canton of Schwitz, properly so called, or that part which exercised the rights of sovereignty over the rest, comprehended only the communities situated in the valleys of Schwitz and Mouttathal, together with the villages of the neighbouring heights, such as Morschach, Illgau, Iberg, Alphal, Rothenthurm, and Sattel. Arth, and some villages lying between it and those just named, also made pretensions to the right of sovereignty.

Schwitz was the chief town. The history of the origin of its first inhabitants is obscured by fable. An antient tradition relates, that a famine having formerly occasioned much ravage in Denmark and East Friseland, part of the population of those countries was obliged to emigrate, and penetrated as far as the Helvetian forests. The land was cleared and the forests felled. The colonies successively augmented, and spread through the whole districts of Schwitz, Uri, and Unterwalden, and beyond the Brunnig, on the banks of the Aar,

in the district of Hasli. This tradition subjoins, that Schwitz was built by two brothers, Schwyter and Tschey, chiefs of the emigrated colonists; but that, in the sequel, a quarrel having arisen between them concerning the right of giving name to their common erection, Schwyter, like Romulus, killed his brother in single combat*.

In this spot men were long united in society before they formed a people, and were recognized as such. Continually struggling against the unkindness of nature, they enjoyed the peace afforded by poverty. No conqueror took arms to deprive them of their rocks. Hordes of Germans, indeed, penetrated in the fifth century as far as the lake of Waldstaeten: in later times Burgundy subjected to its yoke a great part of Helvetia: in the sixth century the monarchy of the Franks extended over these countries, which, in the tenth, were ceded to the Germanic empire: but

* These details are taken from antient manuscript chronicles. That which relates to the murder of Tschey is founded upon a very antient picture which is said to have been formerly shown at Schwitz, but which no longer exists.

it appears that the inhabitants of these lofty mountains were as ignorant that they had masters, as the latter were that they possessed subjects in these parts.

The rich pastures of the country, the Alps covered with plants of every kind, pointed out to the inhabitants the species of industry which they were to practise. They devoted themselves exclusively to the pastoral state; and, in all probability, the surplus of their productions passed off towards the Pays de Vaud, or the plains of Helvetia, which, on account of the passage of armies, and the abode of the bailiffs, must have afforded facilities for commerce.

The pastoral life, natural and artless, sufficed for the wants of the inhabitants of the Alps. Rich in their poverty, they did not aspire to an opulence foreign to their situation. Trades, arts, and sciences, were all unknown to them. Each family prepared its own coarse clothing, and made the few utensils and articles of furniture of which it stood in need. Their habitations were branches of trees interwoven, and were scattered in the valleys, or backed by the mountains. Every proprietor of

a similar hut also appropriated to himself as much of the adjacent land as was requisite for his support: the remainder, as well as the alpine pastures, belonged indiscriminately to all the herdsmen and their cattle. Hence the origin of all those extensive commons in which every citizen had a right. This simple distribution, the detached manner of dwelling, and the long continuance of the herdsmen upon the Alps in the grazing season, lessened among these people the unhappy contests respecting property, which in other countries too soon disturb the frail texture of social order.

Men who enjoyed so many properties in common could not abandon to a single person the care of their management. Every year, therefore, before their departure for the Alps, and their long separation, all the communities of the country assembled in one body. In this general assembly (*Landesgemeinde*) opinions and desires were united, and from their union emanated the law which every one was bound to obey. This law remained in vigour during the whole year, or for a longer

time, if such was the will of the general assembly. Its execution was entrusted to an experienced person, invested with the public confidence, to whom was joined a council, composed of some countrymen. He was called the Landamman, a title which conferred upon him no other power than that for which he had been created, nor any kind of personal privilege. He continued two years in office; after which some other person took upon himself the burthen of the state.

Such was the constitution of this people, or rather of this family, each member of which was of the age of majority, and enjoyed the undivided inheritance of his ancestors. When the Waldstaeten* were adjudged to the Germanic empire, of which their people then heard for the first time, they had already long lived happy under their modest compact, and did not alter it, even when the imperial bailiffs came to superintend them under pretext that their country was a dependency of that of Zurich.

As they were unmolested in their man-

* Forest states.

ners and customs, they did not take alarm on seeing a distant emperor arrogate the title of chief of their mountains. On the contrary, satisfied with finding in a potent prince a support against the aggressions of their neighbours, they voluntarily placed themselves under the protection of the empire, with the reservation of their liberty and constitution; and the emperors, who were little envious of the possession of the wild regions of Helvetia, contented themselves with having in them brave and faithful neighbours, who frequently sent their chosen youth to the imperial armies.

The dukes of Germany or of Suabia exercised the protectorate in the name of the emperor. An imperial bailiff administered criminal justice in the country itself.

But, in the twelfth century, when the empire, involved in a series of wars, experienced violent shocks, and the emperors saw their power diminished, while their vassals were aiming at the condition of independent princes, the mountaineers were often for a long time left to themselves. Then, according to the degree of danger which menaced them, they leagued them-

selves more or less closely with their neighbours, or else chose their own chief of a defensive union (*Schirmvogt*). This latter took place in 1110, when count Rodolph of Lentzburg was called by them to this dignity.

This period of discord and general war was, however, the golden age of the monastic order. Convents every where arose, even in the recesses of the mountains; and were richly endowed by the emperors, who assigned to them lands and men, and especially, numerous privileges.

Already, in the year 888, the hermit Meinrad had chosen his retreat in the wild valley which is now called Einsiedlen. More than forty years afterwards, on the spot where his cell had been, was built a monastery by the hands of another hermit named Benno. This foundation, through the benefits it received from princes, soon extended its power around; and the emperor Henry II, by the donation, in 1018, of an adjoining forest, entrenched upon the territory of the commons of Schwitz.

The canton resisted this infraction of its rights, and maintained its property; but

in 1114, in consequence of the complaints of the monks of Einsiedlen, the emperor declared that the litigated tract should belong to the convent. Schwitz, struck with the injustice of this order, refused submission to it, and entered into a defensive league with its faithful neighbours, the cantons of Uri and Unterwalden. It was in vain that the bishop of Constance launched his interdict against the three cantons*: their inhabitants continued their rustic labours in peace, and their priests in silence obeyed the will of the people.

From this period, Uri, Schwitz, and Unterwalden have always remained intimately united; and, strengthened by their agreement, they have vigorously preserved the franchises which they inherited from their ancestors. They refused to pay homage to the empire, till a formal promise

* It was not till the end of the tenth century that the bishops of Constance arrogated and exercised spiritual authority over the canton of Schwitz; at least, no anterior traces of it are discovered. The most antient act known is dated in the year 984; it is the consecration of the great church of Einsiedlen.

had been made them of respecting their constitution, and they had been recognized for free people who put themselves under the protection of the emperor. Several acts delivered to them by the emperors successively confirm the rights which they had reserved.

The most remote historical epoch of this people does not afford the least trace of an internal dissension, or any change in its social organization. The latter, when once rendered adequate to the purposes of those for whom it was made, preserved itself untouched, and was transmitted from age to age without the smallest alteration*. Every treaty concluded with a foreign power contained a clause which guaranteed it. Even the revolution, which, commencing with the death of the tyrant Gesler, terminated at the treaty of Westphalia with the declaration of Helvetic independ-

* The Waldstaeten had completed their political organization by the beginning of the ninth century, that is, at the romantic age of Charlemagne. A diploma of the emperor Lewis, preserved in the archives of Uri, imports that this canton, in 809, is placed under the protection of the empire, and that its constitution and liberty are guaranteed to it.

ence, made no innovation on the fundamental law of the state, but overthrew the tyranny which threatened its existence.

Very few people can boast of such good fortune. The system of government, whether in republics or in monarchies, has been always more or less imminently exposed to revolutions, and the firmest throne has sometimes been on the point of falling. The constitutions of the Helvetic democracies appear to owe their long duration to the security they afforded to property. Every citizen, a co-proprietor of the Alps and the common lands, appealed to the constitution for the maintenance of the rights which it secured him: hence that civil and political equality, which, less the work of man and his profound speculations than that of necessity, was thereby rendered the more lasting.

Every citizen was attached to his country by the same interests; every one was therefore equally disposed to watch over the liberty of the whole. The chief of the republic had never any other honorary distinction than that resulting from the choice which the people had made of his

person. He was bound to fulfil his duties without the hope of making them a source of profit, and could not neglect them without incurring the public indignation. Ambition and avarice found no aliment in those peaceful valleys, and the virtues of the people compelled the magistrates to be virtuous. The solitude of the Alps, and the separation of dwellings, habituated the people to a tranquil and domestic life. The towns and villages which by degrees arose in the valleys could never attain to that degree of opulence which results from the industry of commerce: no inhabitant could assume a marked superiority to another; and the equality invariably established between the citizens induced that between the different communities. None of these aspired to the vain title of city, which, under their constitution, would rather have exposed them to dangers than produced any solid advantages.

Jealous of their happiness, which they knew to be connected with the public prosperity, the people kept at a distance every stranger whom they suspected of being able to acquire a dangerous influ-

ence in the country. From this motive, it was very antiently ordained, that no person, whatever were his talents, his experience, or his morals, should exercise the functions of judge, if he were not a native and an inhabitant.

During the troubles of the Germanic empire in the 13th century, the ecclesiastical and secular princes, in their projects for aggrandizement, menaced the Waldstaeten. The three cantons then, in 1291, made an alliance, by which they mutually promised to oppose every election of a judge who should not be in the circumstances just mentioned, or should have obtained his place by cabal or bribery.

The people used the same prudence in the choice of their priests. This class of men, without property, without country, living in celibacy, ever disposed to arrogate power to themselves, more formidable by the arms of fanaticism than princes by the swords of their soldiers, had often been more dangerous to the repose of states than the victorious troops of an enemy. Schwitz, whose sole policy aimed at the preservation of its privileges, pa-

ralysed their influence. It admitted none but natives of the country to be priests in the canton. These ecclesiastics, in the midst of their families and of the companions of their childhood, accustomed to the principles of the people, and acquainted with their firmness, were less liable than others to be misled by a religious zeal which would have been prejudicial to the country. This fact explains to us the small effect of the anathema pronounced against the Waldstaeten by the bishop of Constance. In spite of it, the priests, as we before observed, continued their functions. The favour of their brethren was in their eyes more precious than the anger of a bishop was formidable.

The three cantons adhered to this principle, the utility of which they had experienced. When successful wars had enlarged their country, Schwitz applied it to the churches of the conquered territory, renewing the ordinance at the same time for the whole state.

It is indubitable, that to these precautions against foreign influence, those cantons, in part, owed their quiet and the

preservation of their constitution. But, while they prudently guarded against internal dissensions, they did not neglect to put themselves externally in a posture to inspire respect. In 1257 they took for their *Schirmvogt*, or head of their defensive league, the most valiant warrior of Helvetia, Rodolph count of Hapsburg. They agreed to pay him an annual tribute; whilst on his part he engaged himself to defend them in case of war, and to act as mediator in any differences which might arise among themselves. Rodolph, when arrived at the supreme dignity of the empire in 1274, continued to give the cantons distinguished marks of his good will. In the year following his election he confirmed their rights and immunities, and assured them of the immediate protection of the empire.

The ambition of this prince, however, was not satisfied with the throne to which fortune had elevated him. Occupying himself with the aggrandizement of his sons, whom he had invested with the dukedom of Austria, he persuaded by his solicitations the nobility to recognize the

feudal superiority of his house; the rich monasteries to place themselves under his guardianship; and the small states to pay him homage: and he acquired successively jurisdictions, rights, dues, and landed revenues, in the whole extent of northern Helvetia. It was thus that the abbot Berchtold of Falkenstein, overwhelmed with debt, sold to the house of Hapsburg considerable estates and numerous privileges which he possessed in the canton of Unterwalden.

The approach of so dangerous a neighbour greatly disturbed the inhabitants of the Waldstaeten. Already pressed on all sides by the house of Hapsburg, its ambitious projects could no longer appear equivocal to them. The three cantons, therefore, resolving to maintain their liberty, in 1291 formed a treaty of union nearly resembling that which afterwards served for the model of the Helvetic confederacy. It stipulated a perpetual alliance, and a sacred engagement to defend themselves against all foreign aggression, by the entire united forces of each canton.

Albert, son of Rodolph, still more

haughty and grasping, after having seized the imperial crown, impatiently pursued his father's projects, but with less prudence, and less good fortune. During the course of the year 1300 he caused it to be notified to the cantons of Uri, Schwitz, and Unterwalden, that they were expected to put themselves under the perpetual protection of his house, accompanying the offer of his friendship with insolent menaces. The general assemblies of the Waldstaeten, however, unanimously answered, that they desired the maintenance of their privileges, and sent to him deputies charged to obtain the confirmation of them, as well as the nomination of a bailiff for the exercise of criminal justice. The monarch eluded their request, and gave them for judges men purposely chosen to weary out their patience, and to push them to a degree of resistance which, under the name of revolt, might furnish him with a pretext to oppress them.

Gesler was the bailiff whom he sent to the cantons of Schwitz and Uri. His residence was alternately in the country of Uri and at Kussnach. Beringer, bailiff of

Unterwalden, fixed his residence at the castle of Sarnen, in the upper part of the canton; and for the lower part he chose a lieutenant named Wolsfenscheiss, a man entirely devoted to the emperor.

What Albert foresaw took place. The choice of these men, of a mean origin and of suspected intentions, excited inquietude and discontent. The bailiffs themselves, by their arrogant conduct, too soon justified the alarm they inspired. They assumed an authority which had never been entrusted to them. Sullied with crimes themselves, they punished with barbarity the slight offences of the people; and, relying upon the prerogative of free members of the Germanic body, they were not content with insulting the simple inhabitants, but manifestly showed an intention of subjugating them.

The known character of Albert, and several of his actions posterior to the period of which we are speaking, prove that his bailiffs in their vexations did no more than follow his orders. For the purpose of making the Waldstaeten feel that they were dependent upon him, he from time

to time interrupted all communication between them and his hereditary states, or at least made them pay excessive duties.

The cantons, left to themselves, for a long time suffered in silence. The bailiffs did not relax in their vexations, and presently there was no security either for persons or properties. It was thus that three men conspired to dig the grave of the liberties of the Waldstaeten; but three others watched at the edge of the precipice, and gained immortal honour by saving them.

Werner de Stauffach, Arnold Anderhalten de Melchthal, and Walter Furst, conceived in 1307 the generous design of liberating their country. Each of them associated ten resolute men, and fixed the day and the hour on which the conspiracy was to break out. To this time is shown, between Uri and Unterwalden, near the lake of Waldstaeten, the stone upon which, in the night of November 17, 1307, they engaged themselves by a solemn oath. But, before the appointed day, the bailiff Gesler fell under the shaft of a young man of Uri, William Tell of Burglen, son-in-law of Furst. His action is well known: it did

not in the least disconcert the measures of the conspirators.

On the first of January the three cantons were freed without striking a blow ; and the vassals of the house of Austria, who had been made prisoners, were expelled the country, after exacting from them an oath never to return. Without dreading the resentment of Albert, and strong in the justice of their cause, the three states renewed their antient alliance, and swore to defend with their lives and properties the liberty which they had regained. Joining moderation to courage, they forbore to sully the glory of their success by acts of vengeance on their late oppressors. Faithful to their duty towards the empire and the other lawful princes, they refused an asylum to John of Suabia, who had assassinated Albert in the midst of his preparations against the Waldstaeten.

It was not, however, to their generous conduct, so much as to the confusion that prevailed in the empire, that they were first indebted for the happiness of escaping the consequences of their bold procedure. Henry VII, successor to Albert, was ob-

liged to approve their violence. He took them under the protection of the empire, and gave them a new bailiff for the administration of criminal justice.

After the death of Henry, two potent rivals disputed the supreme dignity of the German empire; Lewis duke of Bavaria, and Frederic duke of Austria. The Waldstaeten declared for the former, for they were still at variance with the house of Austria on account of the limits between Schwitz and Einsiedlen. This house possessed the sovereignty of the convent of Einsiedlen, and in its name raised vexatious claims. The Waldstaeten were therefore the objects of a double displeasure, and the house of Hapsburg prepared for vengeance. Accommodation was attempted, but without effect. Leopold of Austria, brother of Frederic, advanced towards the cantons with an army of 15,000 men. Of these he took 10,000 and marched against Schwitz. The remainder of his army was entrusted to Otho of Strasberg, who had orders to proceed by Brunig and Lucerne, and attack Unterwalden.

The people of Schwitz, reinforced by

the two other cantons, awaited their invader on the heights of Morgarten with thirteen hundred men. He came and was beaten. This action took place on the morning of November 15, 1315. Otho of Strasberg and his army underwent a similar fate in the mountains of Obwalden.

The victory of Morgarten confirmed Swiss liberty and the alliance of the Waldstaeten. It was the occasion of the successive alliances of all the people of Helvetia, which became famous to posterity under the name of the Helvetic confederacy.

A few years after this event, the Waldstaeten were surrounded by faithful friends, and their mountains secured from the attempts of Austria. Lucerne, Zurich, Glaris, Zug, and some time afterwards, Berne, made alliance with them; either because these cantons apprehended injury from the house of Hapsburg and from a haughty nobility, or because they suffered under internal dissensions. Austria and the Helvetic nobility exhausted themselves in ineffectual efforts, while their enemies daily increased in power. The confederates, when called upon to defend their hearths

and their forms of government, fought with an unanimity which appeared like that of members of the same family, rather than of soldiers of different states. Companions in danger and glory, they became accustomed to regard each other as brethren. The long practice of arms, joined with almost constant success, rendered them enterprising; and the heart-felt consciousness of having a good cause to defend, preserved them from want of fidelity to their allies.

The battles of Sempach and Naefels finished what that of Morgarten began. Austria, hopeless of reducing enemies now become so formidable, accepted peace. This was at first, in 1389, concluded only for seven years; in 1394 it was prolonged to twenty years; and in 1412, to fifty. The victorious cantons remained in possession of their conquests. Formerly menaced by an ambitious nobility, they became its terror.

The Swiss had cause in 1350 to be contented with the decision of the abbot of Dissentis of the great dispute relative to the domains of the convent of Einsiedlen;

but a short time after, the latter was forced to acknowledge the superiority of the canton of Schwitz, and to pay it homage. In 1510 Schwitz had purchased of the house of Hapsburg the towns of Arth and Kusnacht. It was thus that this small republic insensibly augmented its strength by enlarging its territory.

The remarkable events and glorious actions of this period rendered it indisputably the most brilliant in the history of the confederates. The invincible bravery of their armies excited the admiration of the world; whilst the simplicity of their manners, their respect for the faith of treaties, and their moderation in victory, commanded its esteem.

When the emperor Sigismund took the field against the duke of Austria, and in the name of the empire summoned the cantons to join him, they refused, alleging as their reason the treaty of peace which they had concluded. The emperor menaced them, but in vain; and they remained faithful to their oath. The great council, however, then assembled at Constance, took the part of Sigismund, and, in the

name of the church, disengaged the Swiss from the obligations of the treaty. They then, in obedience to the commands of the church and the emperor, marched against the duke. The succours they granted to Sigismund were recompensed by the districts which they conquered from the house of Hapsburg.

The power possessed in Helvetia by this house was almost entirely destroyed by these redoubled blows, and in proportion to its decline, the bands of the confederacy were tightened; whilst the nobility, once so proud, bent the neck before the allies. The canton of Schwitz participated in the advantages of the war. It enjoyed co-sovereignty over the bailiwicks of Baden, Mellingen, and Bremgarten, which were a common conquest of the cantons of Zurich, Lucerne, Schwitz, Uri, Unterwalden, Zug, and Glaris, and thenceforth belonged to them in common. The canton of Uri alone refused to take its share. It had made war in obedience to the church and the empire, and not to enrich itself with the spoils of the vanquished.

CHAPTER IV.

WE should grossly deceive ourselves were we to compare the art of war of those times with that which now exists, or the strength of the neighbours of Switzerland at that period with their present strength. It cannot be concealed, that the fortunate confederates owed a great part of their success to circumstances which the course of time and events has entirely changed. A crowd of small powers, ecclesiastical and secular, had risen upon the ruins of the French monarchy, favoured by the dreadful anarchy which had laid waste the German empire. Cities, abbeys, and knights, wished to be independent, and their independence was solely secured by the weakness of their neighbours. To the short wars between them succeeded treaties of peace of equally short duration; for the complication of their interests, and the jealous distrust they entertained of each other, left among them the leaven of eternal discord.

The confederates happily had not to contend with a single adversary whose sole

will directed, as occasion required, the force employed against them. The coalition of their enemies was composed of heterogeneous parts, which often jarred in their inclinations or movements. Thus, for instance, in 1386, the Swiss received at the same time a partial declaration of war from more than a hundred and fifty ecclesiastic and secular princes. The common danger then acted more powerfully upon their minds than even their oath had done; while their enemies, actuated by different hopes and motives, were more discordant than united. The Helvetian on the field of battle knew what was the prize for which he fought; he knew that liberty or slavery awaited him, and between these alternatives he had no other choice than death. But the soldiers of the other party, engaged for a limited term, and foreseeing no melioration of their lot, whether victors or vanquished, regarded with indifference defeat or victory.

The armies of that period were not permanent. At the approach of a war soldiers were enlisted, who were disbanded

at the peace, or after a limited service. Hence it resulted, that they were without discipline or any knowledge of tactics; while the confederates, forced by Austria to remain armed for above a century, were instructed in the art of war, and rendered excellent soldiers. Hardened to fatigues, battle was only a sport to them. At the beginning of the war they kept on the defensive, but they soon learned to attack. At the battle of Morat, skilful military evolutions took place of their former defective arrangement.

The cavalry was the flower of the hostile army. The nobility, trained to war from their youth, and spurred on by honour, were infinitely superior to the infantry. The cavaliers, covered with iron armour, almost always fought on horseback; yet when the ground was unfavourable they dismounted, and uniting in a column presented an impenetrable front. But what assured them the victory in a plain, was the cause of their defeat in a mountainous country. Their horses with difficulty climbed the rough paths, and the enor-

mous weight of their armour delivered them up almost defenceless to their agile foes.

Further, the ignorance of the roads and geography of the country, and the want of provisions and magazines, were additional obstacles to the invading army, unknown to the inhabitant of Switzerland, who contented himself with the most frugal nourishment, and was acquainted with all the paths and defiles of his mountains. These advantages, with some others, restored the equilibrium which superiority of number destroyed; and the courage which love of liberty inspired in the Swiss, with their hatred of a horde of greedy mercenaries, caused the balance to incline in their favour.

After having triumphed over the house of Hapsburg, each of the eight cantons, enjoying the fruit of its toils, was occupied on its internal organization. Almost all, at the close of a century's warfare, found themselves richer in territory and population than at its commencement. Long before its termination, and even in the midst of dangers and combats, the

confederates, proud of their cause, made advantage of their success. Every where their banners, preceded by victory, brought with them popular liberty. It seemed to them unjust to refuse to others the blessing which they were securing to themselves by the dearest sacrifices. The neighbouring districts, occupied by their troops, were delivered from the yoke of Austria, and admitted to the confederacy of the Waldstaeten. In this manner Glaris and Zug received the benefit of freedom from the hands of their conquerors; and gratitude, as well as interest, converted them into faithful allies.

But in the progress of years, and when the confederates had acquired with certainty a decided superiority, they became less generous, and were satisfied with snatching the privileges of the house of Austria, without restoring them to the people at whose cost they had been exercised. The example of the towns of Lucerne, Zurich, and Berne, which had considerably enlarged their domains, seduced the Waldstaeten, and made them desirous of a similar aggrandizement. It was then

that a people, enjoying the purest liberty, and impatient of the least infringement of it, were seen to entertain the project of giving themselves subjects.

The confederacy, though increased in strength by the augmentation of the contracting parties, appeared interiorly to want a durable bond. Composed of states so dissimilar in population, power, and resources, the alliance often underwent shocks from internal passions, which sprang up in proportion as external danger became more remote. Each of the eight cantons, busied in its own concerns, neglected those of the general body, and cared little for strengthening the tie which united it to its allies. Uri, Schwitz, and Unterwalden, which were the centre of the Helvetic league, made contracts with the other cantons, while these failed to renew their reciprocal engagements with each other. The antient existing treaties were not the same for all. Zug, for instance, had not the same rights with the other cantons; and in case of an alliance or a war with a foreign power, it was bound to obey the determination of the

older ones. The confederation, however, had for its essential object to guarantee to all and by all their established constitution and received privileges.

The efforts made by each canton to dispense itself from every new obligation towards its allies, and to be its own security for its liberty and sovereignty, very often brought the confederacy into danger of dissolution. Schwitz and Zurich, led by ambitious chiefs, gave a terrible example of this selfishness by the long and bloody war which they waged against each other on account of the inheritance of the last count of Toggenburg. Without regard to the alliance subsisting between them, they raised the standard in 1486. Cities, princes, the pope and council, all in vain attempted to appease their rage. Zurich called in Austria to its succour, and formed an alliance with the natural enemy of the confederacy. Schwitz made its complaints to the other cantons, which partook of its grievances: thus a civil war was kindled, which lasted fourteen years, and gave up Helvetia to the devastations of friendly and hostile armies. Austria, in her exasperation against

the small cantons, was not contented with sending auxiliaries to Zurich, but also invited the king of France to second her projects. Charles VII, who then reigned, took advantage of this opportunity to purge his dominions of a horde of banditti, who, under the name of Armagnacs, infested the highways and ravaged the country. A formidable army, composed of these and other French troops, with the dauphin at their head, penetrated in 1444 into the territory of Basil. But the heroic courage of 1600 Swiss, at the celebrated battle of St. James, disconcerted the dauphin, and caused him to prefer the alliance of such a brave people, to the hazards of a war which began so inauspiciously. At length the canton of Zurich, seeing nothing around it but desolation, sacrificed its alliance with Austria to the desire of re-entering the confederacy, and bought peace of Schwitz in 1460 by a treaty ceding some farms and villages.

After these events, a rest of ten years sufficed to enable the Swiss to attack the house of Austria with fresh forces, and to punish it for the evils it had inflicted on

them. The confederates took from it Thurgovia, and by this conquest terminated a war which the emperor could no longer sustain, having in vain solicited the aid of Charles duke of Burgundy. This prince, surnamed *the Bold*, a title obtained by his valour, was rather the enemy of France than of Helvetia, and appeared desirous of re-establishing between these two countries, along the chain of the Jura, the antient kingdom of Burgundy. He had already driven from his throne René duke of Lorraine, and had taken possession of his states. France, alarmed by his projects, endeavoured to communicate her fears to the confederates, and by means of promises and expectations succeeded in drawing them into an alliance against the duke of Burgundy.

A new war commenced in 1477. The armies of Charles the Bold several times brought the Helvetic confederacy to the verge of ruin. At length were fought the battles of Granson and Morat, for which decisive actions Switzerland had reserved its whole force. They were crowned with the most brilliant success ; and Burgundy,

after having lost its sovereign in the plains of Nancy, purchased a peace in 1477 for 150,000 florins.

This war procured to the Swiss much glory and much booty. An immense quantity of arms, of effects in gold, silver, and jewels, fell into their hands. Never had these mountaineers seen such riches; but they became the apple of discord, and did more mischief than the arms of Burgundy. The division of the spoil caused dissensions. The democratical cantons menaced, while the aristocratical cantons of Berne, Zurich, and Lucerne, gained over to their party those of Friburg and Soleure, whose form of government resembled their own.

Thus civil war was a second time kindled, and the confederacy was a second time threatened with immediate dissolution. Deputies from all the cantons had assembled at Stantz, and already all hope of an accommodation had vanished, when, by one of those events which seem almost miraculous, the eloquence of a single man conciliated every mind. The hermit Nicholas de Flue was the mediator

in this great contention; and the cantons, by his persuasion, renewed in 1481 their federative compact, to which they admitted Soleure and Friburg.

In this manner the Swiss developed to the eyes of the world those defects in their constitution under which hereafter they were to fall.

Austria again sought to oppress the confederates. War had broken out between them and some towns and lordships of Suabia. The alliance contracted in 1498 by the cantons with the people of Rhætia, whom the emperor wished to keep dependent upon himself, was the signal of rupture; but eight battles in one year, all in favour of the Swiss, again compelled him to peace, which was signed at Basil in 1499. Two years after this event, Schaffhausen and Basil, which had long aspired to the honour of belonging to the Helvetic confederacy, were incorporated with it.

The Swiss, obliged during two centuries to stand on their guard against the ambition of the house of Austria, and in this long interval arrived at the highest point of their glory, lost, little by little, the sim-

plicity of their manners from the time that this last treaty, by securing their political existence, had augmented their power and riches. Passions, till then unknown, began to corrupt their hearts. The young herdsmen in humble circumstances became wearied of the tranquil pleasures of the pastoral life and the solitary abode of the Alps, and were ambitious of acquiring gold and military renown; while the rich families, caballing for power in the state, disturbed the peace of society by their jealousies, and their intrigues to obtain public offices. Greedy of foreign gold, they sold their voices to strangers; and selfishness by degrees abolished the sacred love of country.

The Milanese, France, and Savoy, ever at war with each other, had, by dint of money, made Switzerland the nursery of their armies. The youth of all the cantons enlisted under the standards of all these powers; and thousands of individuals were often seen going at once to seek death in a foreign climate, or returning to their own country some years afterwards, more

laden with the vices than the spoils of their enemies.

These considerable emigrations occasioned at different periods a complete stagnation in agricultural labours. Sometimes famine succeeded, and sometimes even pestilence spread its ravages in countries thus depopulated. Sometimes also bands of robbers were formed of soldiers, who, having finished their term of service, and become incapable of rustic toil, as well as insensible to the domestic virtues, satisfied by pillage their propensity to debauchery. Such was the corruption of manners, that the confederates themselves confessed they had lost more than they had gained by their victories. In a single year, that of 1480, there were executed in the different parts of Switzerland about fifteen hundred malefactors.

The sword of justice may strike terror into crime, but cannot extirpate it when the governors themselves are without courage and virtue. The successive wars of France against the Italian states awakened again, at the commencement of the six-

teenth century, the avarice of the Swiss magistrates. They sold the arms of the people under their care to the best bidder; and although they partook of the conquests made beyond the Alps, the confederates, while they enlarged their territory, enfeebled them by the diminution of population, and the introduction of foreign vices.

It was at this period, in 1513, that the canton of Appenzell was associated to the Helvetic league. This was the last incorporation; and the league thenceforth continued the same till the moment when it was entirely destroyed.

Helvetia was not the sole sufferer from the moral corruption of which we have just spoken. The greater part of Europe, torn by perpetual wars, partook of the same deplorable fate. Our hemisphere had entirely changed its aspect, from the victory which christianity had gained over paganism, and from the destruction of the colossal Roman empire by the barbarians. From the countries of the West to the deserts bordering the Caspian sea, a new world seemed to have been formed, in

which the different nations fluctuated by chance, now raising their heads for an instant, and swallowed up the next, never to appear again. In this horrible tempest, the ravages of which, after a lapse of near fifteen centuries, were still more or less conspicuous, the sciences and arts, those treasures of antiquity, had perished; but their indestructible elements had not entirely ceased to act, and this action could not fail to increase in proportion to the calm from political storms.

Germany and Helvetia produced simultaneously some enlightened and energetic characters, who combated the ignorance of the ministers of religion, and forcibly declared against ecclesiastical abuses. Secular authority, long in rivalry with the power of the clergy, and at length recognizing that the best laws are insufficient when opposed by the immorality of the people, favoured with all its influence the daring progress of the reformers of the church. Helvetia was soon divided into two sects: several cantons adopted the doctrines of reformation; but the Wald-

staeten, early declaring for the principles of the Romish church, never departed from them.

The introduction of this difference of worship relaxed, more than any other circumstance could have done, the bonds of the confederacy. Religious zeal, fomented by the priests of the two parties, inflamed the whole country; and fanaticism, combining with the political pride, ambition, and jealousy of the governors, prepared new grievances and matter for a new war.

Schwitz, formerly at the head of the democratical cantons, had assumed the task of defending their cause against that of Zurich; and now, in a religious quarrel, it undertook the same service against the same adversary. Zurich, whose walls inclosed the first reformer, declared itself the bulwark of the protestant states, and propagated the new doctrine wheresoever it could extend its influence. These two cantons soon came to an open rupture, and each, proceeding with an equal pace to its object, trampled under foot the rights of nations and of the people. Schwitz, maltreating the citizens of Zurich wherever it

found them, dragged to the scaffold one of the protestant ministers; and Zurich, by way of reprisal, and seconded by those of the canton of Glaris who had embraced the protestant religion, took possession of the lands of the abbot of St. Gall, and projected the secularization of his abbey. Soon after, in 1529, the troops of the two parties met at Kappel; but the affecting representations of the other cantons were for this time listened to, and peace was happily restored.

Meanwhile, neither the canton of Zurich nor that of Schwitz, in laying down their arms, had sincerely renounced their former jealousies, or given up their secret designs. They promised, indeed, that they would use no violence towards those who should be inclined to change their religion; but this promise could not be strictly observed. The passions were too much agitated, and the spirits too much exalted, to permit a return to the bounds of reason by virtue of a simple treaty.

The violences exercised by the canton of Zurich in the territories of the abbot of St. Gall, and the progress of the new

doctrine in the common bailiwicks, soon rekindled the flames of war. The people of Schwitz, united with their catholic allies of the mountains, marched in 1531 against the Zurichers, encountered them at Kappel and in the vicinity of Zug, beat them, and, after making a horrible carnage and practising unheard-of cruelties, forced them to sign a peace which for ever put an end to the further propagation of the protestant religion in Helvetia.

Thenceforth the confederacy composed of protestant and catholic cantons was for a long time exposed to the shocks and convulsions of religious zeal. The cantons of the same faith drew closer together, and, by alliances with the powers of their own communion, sought to strengthen themselves against the others. The priests of both churches never ceased, by their writings and discourses, to inspire the people with their holy rage, and to endeavour to make proselytes. This fermentation lasted for a century; and this long space of time, which on other occasions might have sufficed to extinguish the most rancorous pas-

sions, seemed only to administer fuel to these dissensions.

The cruel treatment at Schwitz of the individuals of six families of the canton who had embraced the protestant communion, excited the general indignation of all the reformed cantons. A new religious war broke out in 1655, and was carried on with all possible fury. The troops of Lucerne surprised those of Berne at Villmergen, and beat them; and the town of Rapperschwyl sustained a siege against the Zurichers.

However, notwithstanding this reciprocal animosity, the neutral cantons were able speedily to reestablish peace between the belligerent states. The fear of seeing foreigners interfere in a domestic quarrel, and especially the heavy burthens resulting from the expenses of war, were reasons sufficiently powerful to determine all parties to an honourable reconciliation.

The attention of the confederates was soon fixed upon the states whose territories were contiguous to Helvetia. Those colossal powers, France and Austria, always

rivals, gave each other terrible wounds, sometimes in the plains of Germany, sometimes in those of Italy. A common danger had always rallied the Swiss about one standard, neglecting their private discussions. This cause still produced the same effect; yet the inveterate distrust which prevailed between the several cantons did not permit the union to be sufficiently general to tighten the bands of the federal compact. Enslaved by its habits, proud of its privileges, separated from others by religion and manners, each canton was unwilling to sacrifice the least portion of its rights to the general interest. These pretensions carried to excess, necessarily gave room to disputes which drew civil war after them; and the beginning of the eighteenth century furnishes a new proof of this course of things.

The abbots of St. Gall, who had purchased the county of Toggenburg, encroached little by little upon the privileges of its inhabitants. The latter first complained, and then vigorously opposed the claims of the abbot. Berne and Zurich supported them in this resistance, whilst

the catholic cantons took the opposite side. Hence the antient quarrel about religion became in 1712 the cause, or the pretext, of a new rupture. War broke out with fury, and the fields of Villmergen became a second time its theatre; but the Bernese, who formerly had been defeated there, now took their revenge: they killed a large number of the catholics, and dictated the conditions of peace at Arau.

The confederates frequently since have given tokens of fanatic rage; but the dissensions springing from it never rekindled the torch of civil war, from the period just noticed, to the recent one of the destruction of the Helvetic league.

After the independence and sovereignty of the Helvetic body had been recognised by the treaty of Westphalia, the Swiss took no part in foreign wars. They thought that the defence of their liberty and country was the only cause which could justify the effusion of blood in war. They were not, indeed, without occasions for taking part in the quarrels of their neighbours, or even without powerful motives to interfere. The war of thirty

years, the immoderate haughtiness of Lewis XIV, the terrible contest for the Spanish succession, all in their turns might seem reasons for rousing from their apathy; but they resisted all these temptations, and, content with preventing by force of arms any entrance upon their territories, they obtained without bloodshed, and without hazarding their military reputation, that honourable tranquillity which ought to be the object of every war.

The resolution of the confederates to preserve a strict neutrality, was strengthened by the considerable changes which had taken place in the political condition of the surrounding countries. Helvetia, formerly encircled by a crowd of petty states, had now great powers for its neighbours. To the east, where formerly a duke of Austria ruled with little danger to her; to the south, where she had seen a duke of Milan imploring her support; now reigned a single monarch, whose dominions extended from the banks of the Rhine and the Adriatic sea to the Tartarian deserts. Burgundy had been swallowed up in the French monarchy, which having for limits

the Jura, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, inspired terror by the power of its arms, almost as much as it governed by its manners. The Duke of Savoy now wore a regal crown; and the German empire had acquired, by a more concentrated constitution, a strength formerly unknown to it.

But the confederates, while they withheld themselves from all participation in foreign quarrels, also prudently restrained their own dissensions, through the apprehension of seeing their neighbours interfere in them. Their numerous civil wars, and the partial alliances which had resulted from them, had established an equilibrium among these small states, which it was equally dangerous to all to destroy. Thus repose and tranquillity again entered these mountains, after having, during several centuries, been banished from them. The calm which succeeded such long and violent storms, blunted by degrees those vehement passions which war had exasperated. The habitude of quiet felicity gave birth to the domestic virtues; and the several tribes of Helvetia, cultivating their lands, and giving themselves up to indus-

try, commerce, and the arts, enjoyed life without troubling themselves with what passed abroad: they did not, however, lose the remembrance of what their ancestors had been, nor the confidence of being able to follow their steps when occasion might require.

This rapid glance thrown over the annals of history, teaches us at least that the canton of Schwitz was one of the first to lay the foundations of liberty, and that, by its energy alone, and in spite of the feebleness of its means, it was one of those which contributed the most to propagate it in the rest of Helvetia. Faithful to its principles, it never departed from them; and its constitution maintained itself entire till the day of the total destruction of the Helvetic league.

CHAPTER V.

Two things are sacred to the people of Schwitz, and held by them in the utmost veneration---their religion and their liberty. The defence of each of these has frequently put arms into their hands ; and in our days we have seen them fight with enthusiasm against French armies much superior to them in number, in order to maintain these objects of their attachment.

Christianity early penetrated into these mountains; and according to a very ancient tradition, a disciple of the apostle St. Peter, named Beatus, came hither in the first century of the christian era, and preached a crucified God. Yberg, a small community of the canton of Schwitz, boasts of having long had the felicity of sheltering this zealous missionary. Another saint, named Martin, is said to have worked still more miracles and produced more conversions than his predecessor, in the cantons of Schwitz and Uri, which, with due gratitude, declared him their patron. The kings of France also contributed much to

the propagation of christianity in the Helvetic mountains. Ambitious to extend their temporal dominion, they did not lose sight of that of the church. This, indeed, was the pretext, and still more frequently the means, which they employed to justify the violences exercised upon quiet and peaceable people.

The new christians of Switzerland, however, had neither priests nor bishops till after the establishment of the see of Constance in 570, when the small cantons, together with that of Zurich, became part of its diocese. The division of the country into cures or parishes was still longer delayed, and appears not to have taken place till the commencement of the twelfth century. Before this period there existed in the Waldstaeten only a very small number of churches, to which the faithful went ten or twelve times a year to offer their devotions. An antient tradition informs us, that the countries of Unterwalden and Schwitz had for a long time only one priest in common, who performed divine service alternately in each canton.

The number of places consecrated to devotion augmented in proportion to the growth of population in the valleys. They were seen to multiply very sensibly in the course of the eighth century, but without pomp, ostentation, or that external parade which elsewhere was rather a mark of the decline of religion, than of the fervour of piety. The greater part of the churches were constructed of wood, and were without bells: the sound of the horn convoked the worshippers; a wooden cup decorated the altar; and painted cloth composed all the sacerdotal vestments.

At the beginning, the scarcity of priests, and afterwards, their profound ignorance, were the causes that christianity was long in producing that change on the manners of the people of Switzerland which it effected elsewhere. They who first came to preach the gospel in the Alps, had rather in view the overthrow of the pagan altars than the purpose of civilizing the people whom they visited. Hence, in changing their religion, they changed little of their customs, and preserved the vices and vir-

tues of men in a rude and savage state. Hospitable in their cottages, frank and sincere with their friends as with their enemies, exact in performing their promises; they were cruel in war, and often barbarously abused victory.

Love for liberty was always their ruling passion, and on every occasion had the ascendancy over their respect for the church. They recognized the authority of the latter, but they placed its empire in things relating to another world, and would never, in this, yield it the smallest portion of that sovereignty which they claimed exclusively for themselves. They early professed these principles in their dispute with the convent of Einsiedlen; they frequently made alliance with emperors who had been excommunicated; and when the church launched its formidable thunderbolt against themselves, without dreading its anger, they quietly ordered their priests to continue in their functions.

The war which they had to sustain during several centuries, softened nothing of their antient rudeness, and did not render

them more submissive to the ordinances of the church, though it was a time when kings and emperors were obliged to humiliate themselves before the priesthood. The same herdsmen who went to pray over the tomb of a friend for the safety of his soul, or who came to church with their wives and children to implore the benediction of heaven upon those pastures to which, for the first time in the year, they led their cattle---these very men, when at war, destroyed churches, fired convents, massacred priests upon the ruins of their altars, and celebrated their solemn festivals with the carnage of battle.

The superstitions and errors of paganism had made, upon the simple and credulous minds of men yet in a state of nature, impressions too strong to be speedily effaced. A less austere doctrine would naturally be preferred to one which was more so; hence many usages of the pagan religion perpetuated themselves even to our days, notwithstanding all the efforts of the priests to abolish them. We may give as an instance of these customs of remote origin,

that which permitted young men before marriage to pass the night with girls of whom they were enamoured.

The native of Uri is of a tranquil character; that of Unterwalden is of a melancholy one. The inhabitant of Schwitz surpasses his neighbours in strength, vivacity, and good humour. He is passionately fond of dancing, which diversion enters into all his festivals. The rejoicings of the carnival were allowed without any check in this canton, and no where were they more noisy or numerous. The church could not give to this country a more agreeable festival. Hundreds of fires were kindled upon the heights, to which the people flocked in crowds, with dancing and good cheer.

The eve of twelfth-day was celebrated in a still more tumultuous manner. Grown men, youths, children, mingled together, ran backwards and forwards in the valleys, uttering joyful cries, and carrying with them all sorts of instruments capable of making a loud noise. On that day every thing was done that could be devised for diversion, and the joy was animated in

proportion as it was clamorous. The priests long employed useless efforts, both in the pulpit and confessional, against this kind of saturnalia; and it was only by degrees, and very late, that this riotous custom sunk into disuse.

The case was the same with respect to several superstitious opinions which formerly were held in great veneration in the valleys of Helvetia. Sorcerers were honoured, and were interrogated concerning futurity: an attentive ear was also given to the cries of dogs or of birds, which were regarded as lucky or sinister omens. A practice is still remembered which was formerly used on the vigil of St. Andrew. The young girl, who was curious to know who was to be her future husband, shut herself up with a wizard, stript herself naked, and in this mysterious conference was informed of the desired secret.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIANITY, as it was first taught to the pagans, was a system of great simplicity, and easy to comprehend. Baptism, the passion, and some prayers, were all the points to be studied in order to enter the pale of the church. But the zeal of the monks and priests, ambition and ignorance, soon accumulated a crowd of foreign ceremonies. The people, too credulous and simple to discern the true end and spirit of religion, voluntarily submitted to the will of the church, and accepted a number of mummeries, which, while they addressed themselves to the senses, promised them the enjoyments of eternity.

It is observed, that besides the ordinary ceremonies of the catholic religion, practices have obtained in the valleys of Switzerland which are unknown elsewhere. We shall relate some of these, as affording materials for the moral history of the mountaineers*.

* These customs have been taken from different manuscripts found in the churches of Schwitz.

On Christmas day, in all the parishes of the country, the birth of Jesus Christ, and the events which accompanied it, were represented with little wooden figures.

On Palm-Sunday a puppet representing the saviour of the world was led about upon an ass. The ecclesiastics, magistrates, and judges, the inhabitants of the place and its vicinity, joined the procession, and celebrated the entrance into Jerusalem with shouts of joy.

With the same gravity was represented the resurrection of Christ from the tomb; but the populace and children preferred the spectacle of his ascension. For this purpose there was placed in the middle of the church a figure suspended from the roof by a cord. The Christ then, at the sound of music and the general chorus of the assembly, after being covered with garlands of flowers, was drawn up to the ceiling and there remained suspended. Thence he threw down the garlands with which he was decorated, among the crowd, who received his gifts with loud rejoicings.

Such customs were likely to have a long duration among a gross and cheer-

ful people, and to this day some traces of them are discoverable. As they served to cover with a thick veil the true spirit of revelation, and the severe morality of its author, they were calculated to attach more and more to the church, men who with respect to knowledge were still in their childhood. This sufficiently explains how it happened, that at a time when the want of religion and of the christian virtues was most sensibly felt in the canton of Schwitz, it was one of those which showed most fidelity to the antient catholic church. The doctrine of Zuingle tore a part of the Helvetican republics from the dominion of the holy see, but those of the Waldstaeten always remained stedfast. Their troops more than once marched against the cantons which favoured the new doctrine. The inhabitants of the small cantons were always ready to fight for the old religion : never were they more profuse in pious foundations, religious vows, and the establishment of festivals; but, at the same time, never were they more inclined to luxury, intemperance, pillage, corruption, and excesses of every kind. A proof

of this is found in the regulations which were found necessary at that period. The laws of those ages are also their history.

CHAPTER VII.

THE clergy, while they dreaded the attacks of the reformation upon the empire of the church, had cause likewise to fear the decline of their personal consideration. The ignorance and immorality of the ministers of the altars had every where provoked an amendment in the discipline of the church, or, at least, had favoured it. In the first ages of christianity the respect of the people attended on those who came to preach the gospel to them. Without speaking of the dangers to which these apostles exposed themselves by braving the resentment of paganism, their zeal and resignation merited praise. Rich cures were not at that time the recompense of their cares for the salvation of souls. Left to themselves in wild vallies, in the midst of tribes of barbarians, it was requisite for

them to know how to procure the necessaries of life, and shelter from the inclemency of the seasons. Their situation compelled them to be at the same time priests and artisans.

Soon, however, their pride rejected this toilsome humility. They began to exercise seigniorial rights wherever they were able, as at Arth, Morschach, and Steina. Soon afterwards, by their private authority, they made laws which gave them subjects, from whom they exacted subsidies and tythes; they caused themselves to be declared free from taxes; they created substitutes and vicars; and when they had any dispute they summoned their antagonists before a foreign tribunal. They obtained permission to assist at the assemblies of magistrates, and to give their votes; and as far as to the end of the thirteenth century, the signature of the priests to the public acts is found standing before that of the landammans, who were the heads of the democratical governments.

But when, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the spirit of liberty began to revive in the Waldstaeten, retrenchments

also began to be made in the power arrogated by the clergy. An especial law, passed at this epoch, separated the temporal and spiritual powers, and excluded the clergy from the exercise of the former; it also took from them all participation in judiciary power, and abolished their right of dragging the citizens of Helvetia before foreign tribunals. The civil authority took possession of the nomination to cures, and the right of revocation; it even obliged the priests annually to solicit the conservation of their benefices. In the course of the seventeenth century they were even deprived of their tythes, and were subjected to taxation, and convents were forbidden to sell or alienate their lands, as they had heretofore done*.

But although the general power of the clergy was attacked on all sides, and a variety of measures was taken for its restriction, the private influence of individuals among them could not be prevented. Assimilated to the other members of the state, they defended the rights and privi-

* These successive regulations are found in the archives of the canton of Schwitz.

leges which the title of citizen gave them, and knew how to make the most of them. They assisted at the popular assemblies, where their opinion was listened to with respect. When they got up to speak, the people uncovered their heads, and kept profound silence. Their eloquence generally swayed the decisions of the assembly; and it is especially in the later periods that the authority of their opinions is discernable, since at this time a degree of knowledge was required in the priests; whereas formerly, and even down to the close of the sixteenth century, most of them were unable to read or write. Antient ordinances are still met with, importing that no one can be admitted to occupy such or such a cure without possessing at least these two parts of elementary instruction.

Thus, while the clergy were losing their real authority, they sought to indemnify themselves by the respect paid by the people to the individual members of the body. Originally, and as far as the seventeenth century, the priests, and even the bishops, had no other title than that of *Reverend Fathers in God*, while the abbots and su-

periors of convents received that of *Brothers*; but, when they had quitted their long beards, long garments, and simple manners, they assumed, in place of these modest appellations, the most swelling titles.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE legislators of Helvetia, while with a wise and prudent firmness they opposed the pride of the priesthood, and the abuses resulting from it, traced with an equally firm and careful hand the line of demarcation which was to separate the state from the church. Religion, in their eyes, interested every citizen individually with respect to the life to come; but for the happiness of the present life, all were interested in the state. They protected religion, not from the conviction that by its influence on morals it became the shield of the laws and the guardian of domestic prosperity, but because the acts of piety it enjoined were a means of attracting the favour of the saints or the deity upon such individuals, villages, or even en-

ture countries as practised them. As in antient Greece, groves, fountains, and towns had each their tutelary divinity, so here, every village, every trade, had its patron saint. The whole country, as we mentioned above, had put itself under the protection of St. Martin; and when any danger threatened the state, his altars were resorted to: but a public calamity seldom proved a corrective of manners.

The indefatigable activity of the priests soon found means to derive advantage from these superstitious dispositions, for the purpose of connecting the interests of the church with those of the state; and in a short time they were able to identify them. They succeeded in rendering the catholic religion a state religion, as the law of Moses was with respect to the Israelites, or polytheism with respect to the Greeks and Romans. It was difficult to imagine that the catholic, apostolic, and Roman church could ever acquire flexibility enough to bend to all the forms of a democratical government; and the small republics of Helvetia are the sole examples of this fact.

From the brilliant days of Morgarten, the Swiss lived only to liberty, glory, and their country. Their priests, with the view of rendering themselves necessary, marched with them to the field, and whilst their countrymen fought, they invoked the aid of the saints. When the business was over, thanks were given to them for the victory. These prayers and thanksgivings were renewed at every battle; and in order to preserve the memory of the succour afforded by a particular saint, an annual festival was instituted to his honour, and celebrated with all ecclesiastical pomp. The soldiers of Schwitz, for instance, swore to keep as a perpetual feast the Sunday after St. Martin's day, the anniversary of the victory at Morgarten. This vow was ratified in 1521 by the general assembly of the canton*.

In 1443 they resolved in like manner to celebrate their victory over the Austrians at Ragaz. They also instituted a perpe-

* This fact is taken from the chronicles of Tschudy. That author relates, that the day but one before this national festival is a day of prayer and fasting throughout the whole country, in commemoration of the alarms respecting the success of the battle.

tual festival for the famous battle of Morat in 1476; and in order to acknowledge (according to their expression) the good offices of the Virgin Mary in the success obtained over the protestant cantons near Cappel, they bound themselves and their descendants in a vow to celebrate religiously all the feasts of the Virgin.

The nation displayed equal gratitude towards the memory of those who had fallen in battle. Their names were transmitted to posterity, for the state caused services to be performed in every district for the welfare of their souls, and pious foundations secured the continuance of them. Their great-grandchildren prostrated themselves before the altars in prayer for the repose of their ancestors, and this custom long prevailed. In 1316 a mass was founded for the heroes who perished at Morgarten. It was celebrated in the parishes of Schwitz, Arth, Steina, Muthatal, Sattel, and Morschach. In 1386 another was founded for those slain at Sempach: a third in 1445, for the numerous victims of the long and bloody war with Austria: a fourth in 1476, for the brave men who died in the honourable fields of Laupen,

Morat, Grandson, and Nancy: a fifth in 1499, for those who fell at Ragaz and in the Suabian war. Lastly, a sixth was founded in 1532, for those who lost their lives at the battles of Cappel, Zuggerberg, and other actions of the same war.

If the republics of Greece and Rome erected the statues of their heroes, the pious inhabitants of the Waldstaeten built chapels for theirs in the very spots which were the scenes of their public services. Uri erected one to the honour of William Tell at Burglen, at the entrance of the wild valley which he inhabited, and another near the rock on the border of the lake, exactly where he found means to escape the vigilance of his guards. Schwitz also preserving a grateful remembrance of this hero, raised a third to him in the défile which separates Immisee from Kusnacht, the very place where the tyrant Gesler fell beneath his shafts,

The inhabitants of Steinen in like manner consecrated a chapel to the memory of Werner of Stauffach, their fellow-citizen, and one of the three heroes of Grutli: its date is the year 1400.

The battle of Morgarten has also its

chapel: it is situated in a meadow not far from the field of action.

The friendship which in their most glorious days reigned between the founders of the Helvetic liberty, seemed a sacred heritage which they transmitted to their remote posterity. Steinen, the birth-place of Werner, and Burglen, that of Tell, ever remained intimately connected, and their union became a kind of religious worship. The inhabitants of Steinen went once every year on pilgrimage to Burglen; and those of Burglen in their turns paid their annual devotions at Steinen*.

All the glorious and memorable events in the history of the Waldstaeten were thus linked, as it were, to the ceremonies of the church. The political festivals of these people were always celebrated with the apparatus of their religion. They went in procession to visit the fields of battle of their ancestors: the monuments erected to their heroes were the altars where mass was performed; in fine, there was no pub-

* A chronicle of Uri, dated 1387, relates that the tyranny of the Austrians was the origin and motive of these pious pilgrimages.

lic act in which the people engaged in a body which was not accompanied with the solemnities of the church.

From the manner in which things were presented to his mind, it was not possible that the inhabitant of the Alps should discriminate the church from the state, his religion from his country. The veneration he had imbibed from infancy for the deeds of his ancestors, and his enthusiastic love for the constitution they had bequeathed him, were to him inseparable from the duty he owed to the church, through which alone he had acquired those sensations by which he was animated. In fact, it was to the church that he was indebted for his knowledge of his country's history. He therefore could not take up arms for the defence of his country, without also engaging in that of his religion; nor defend his religion without believing that his country was endangered with it. Both were equally dear and sacred to him, but they were so, the one through the other; and every change in the constitution must in his eyes be equivalent to the destruction of the faith and worship of his fathers.

CHAPTER IX.

THE catholic religion, the cold and severe spirit of which seems to have influenced the character of other nations, made no change in the natural gaiety of the free native of the mountains. Joyous by disposition, all the solemnities of the church were converted by him into agreeable pastimes, and every religious festival closed with a feast. The youth of both sexes met by agreement in processions, or made pilgrimages together: on such occasions tender engagements were not unfrequently entered into; and often the pilgrims, forgetting heaven and the life to come, thought only of the present life and its enjoyments.

No diversion seemed complete to them without a dance. Music was also their favourite passion, and their consolation under affliction. Their dances are lively, not ungraceful, and even original. The inhabitants of the Muttathal excel in them, and their dances, as well as the music, are of their own invention; they seldom bor-

row either from their neighbours. It was only towards the close of the last century that the ecclesiastics were able to prevail on the people to abstain from dancing on Sundays and solemn festivals.

It appears in general, that it was chiefly after the sixteenth century, that the clergy, either by means of confession, or by their influence in popular assemblies, succeeded in civilizing to a certain degree the mountaineers, and correcting the rudeness of their manners. Several laws which date at this epoch testify the truth of this assertion. The passion for play seems to have been more general among them formerly than at present, for an ordinance of 1518 fixes the extreme sum which it was lawful to hazard. Another interdicts gaming on Fridays, Saturdays, the days consecrated to the Virgin, the vigils and festivals of the apostles, &c. and inflicts a fine upon the disobedient. Profaning the name of God was strictly forbidden, and a person convicted of this crime was condemned, by virtue of the law of January 10, 1705, to kiss the ground, or to appear before a court of justice.

Such laws, it is true, could not always be rigorously observed. The pride of these republicans was to be free citizens, and this quality was not a vain name, but a real title, which procured to its owners valuable privileges and advantages. When a citizen was attacked, either in his person or his property, every one was bound by the oath taken to his country to come to his succour. He who refused was declared guilty of perjury; he was condemned to recompense the person whom he had failed to aid, and, in case of disobedience, was banished the country.

Strangers who settled upon the territory of the republic remained eternally alien to it, and could never obtain the rights of citizenship, unless the people should give their consent. The fear lest they should become too powerful caused a prohibition to sell or let them lands. A female citizen of the republic, if she married a foreigner, lost during the life of her husband all her rights to the enjoyment of common property; but, on the contrary, a male citizen might marry out of the country, and his widow preserved during her life

the rights she received from her husband. This faculty, however, lay under restriction; for an ordinance of 1675 decreed, that under penalty of forfeiture of the rights of citizenship, no citizen should marry a foreign woman unless she had a fortune of at least 300 florins.

The strangers who were permitted to settle on the territories of the republic were termed *inhabitants*. How moderate soever were the prerogatives attached to this quality, their number rapidly augmented, and latterly amounted to three thousand. Each commonalty prescribed to its *inhabitants* the conditions on which residence was granted them. The assemblies of the people, moreover, made general regulations concerning them. A law of 1638 decreed, that for the future no one should be admitted to the right of *inhabitation* unless he should provide sufficient security; and in 1668 it was enacted, that admissions of this kind should no longer take place on any pretext whatsoever.

When an *inhabitant* married, he was obliged to deposit in the hands of the magis-

trate of his district, the sum of 300 florins by way of security; and to pay ten to the public chest: he was besides to furnish a musket and sabre fit for service to the arsenal. He could make no acquisition of immovable property of a value exceeding 100 florins, and he was bound to pay within the year the debts which he might contract in making this purchase; in default of which, the treasury took possession of his property. From the year 1676 the right of the chace was taken from this class, and confined to the citizens alone. They were permitted to fish only with the line; they could keep no goats; and the number of cattle which they were allowed, for a certain payment, to take to the common pastures, was fixed by a law dating in 1514.

From the year 1661, the *inhabitant*, when arrived at the age of 16 years, was ordered, on the day of St. Martin, to take an oath to the country. If afterwards he went abroad and wished to preserve his right of habitancy, he was obliged to renew this oath every ten years.

All these regulations had no other object than that of preventing foreigners

settled in the country from becoming powerful enough to form a party in it, and of keeping the citizens in a state of perfect independence, free from any dangerous or hurtful bias.

The republic, so jealous of the influence of individuals, was much more so of that which princes might acquire in it. A law of 1587 deprived of his honour and subjected to corporal punishment one who should support the cause of a sovereign, or endeavour to raise him a party in his community. Another law of 1516 forbade, under a penalty, the wearing the livery of a foreign lord, or any mark upon the clothes of belonging to him. It also forbade persons to put up in their houses or on their doors any foreign armorial ensigns.

These precautions were not unnecessary, for more than once they were assailed by foreign intrigue and ambition. The Swiss, warmly attached to their independence, and faithful to the laws they had imposed on themselves, at length no longer feared the secret machinations of their powerful neighbours.

Their code was simply the collection of

their written laws, arranged in chronological order. The people annually confirmed them, and swore to their maintenance. Custom, and the internal sense of equity, directed them in the exercise of their sovereignty. The simplicity and purity of their manners rendered superfluous the labours of legislation.

Most of the decrees of the general assembly related to the maintenance of the rights of the citizens, and to some administrative regulations. For the punishment of capital crimes they followed the Caroline code in all its rigour. A law of 1416 decreed that every one charged with theft, how small soever its amount, if he were accused by the testimony of twelve persons worthy of credit, should suffer death. A law of 1537 did not entirely forbid duels, but ordained that he who should wound his adversary in single combat should be condemned in a large penalty; and that, if death were the consequence, he should be punished as an assassin.

The law enjoined a particular respect to the sick and dead. When a man on his

death-bed had received his sacraments, every creditor was forbidden to demand his debt: it was his business to wait either the recovery or the decease of the patient. This ordinance is dated in 1662. He who had any demand to make on account of a dead person, was obliged to affirm on oath that what he demanded was a lawful debt: and, if the heir on his part should swear that the deceased had never mentioned this debt, the demandant was defeated of his claim, and the heir freed from responsibility. The same thing took place when the heir, instead of making oath himself, produced two witnesses affirming that the deceased had denied the debt; but the demandant had then a further resource, which was that of producing seven who should declare in his favour; in which case his claim was judged lawful.

CHAPTER X.

AT all periods the industry of the people of Schwitz was turned towards a pastoral life. The rich pastures of the Alps, and their valleys productive of plants of all kinds, pointed out the mode of life most proper for them. But this was exactly the mode which unfolded and fostered in them that inextinguishable love for liberty, and that hardy simplicity of manners, of which they have given a remarkable example, from the time when they first began to appear in the annals of the world, to the termination of their political existence. Solitude, more than any other circumstance, habituates the mind to independence, and gives it that stoical temper which conduces to its preservation.

The increase of their cattle was their principal object, and in these consisted their chief wealth. To such a degree did they multiply, that without impairing the propagation of the species, they annually exported seven or eight thousand head of horned cattle, into Italy, France, or Ger-

many, which sold at from eight to eleven pounds sterling apiece. This sum, joined to that which they received from the sale of cheese and butter, which they made in large quantity, was nearly their total revenue.

Like antient Rome, which studiously favoured the progress of agriculture, the republic of Schwitz constantly protected the business of rearing cattle. In the former, it was a crime for a man to neglect his field or vineyard: in the latter, he who did not bestow all his attention on his flocks and herds was vilified in the eyes of his fellow-citizens. The *chalets* (milking-huts) dispersed over the Alps are still the most remarkable of the kind in Switzerland; and the assiduity of the herdsmen of these mountains, as well as their skill and care in all the details of their rural economy, are truly worthy of praise.

The sums, which entered the country by means of the exportations above mentioned, supported and diffused a general easiness of circumstances. This was augmented by the establishment of excellent studs, and by flocks of sheep and goats,

which furnished sources for an inferior commerce.

The industry of these countries was through a course of ages so much directed to this sole branch of economy, that agriculture was entirely excluded. At this day it is here in its infancy; and the peasant who is so attentive to his pastures, and knows so well how to make the best advantage of them, is almost totally ignorant of the art of forcing the earth to yield other products. He does not venture to quit the round of his ancestors: he does not imagine that he can employ his land more advantageously: and as the north of Helvetia and Suabia supply him with all the corn he wants, he is contented with cultivating some kitchen-vegetables in his garden, and planting fruit-trees. The latter are very numerous in the country: they spread over all the valleys, and, forming a continued orchard, offer an agreeable prospect to the traveller. The laws have always protected this branch of industry. An ordinance of 1664 permits every citizen to plant upon the common meadow six fruit-trees, the product of which shall

belong to him and his children, but after their death shall return to the community. As early as 1440 there appeared a particular decree enjoining penalties against the robbers of orchards. Cherry-trees prosper remarkably in the valleys of Schwitz, and even among the rocks and in the most rugged spots. The fruit of this tree is another essential resource: it is dried, or a liquor is made from it known under the name of *kirchwasser* (cherry water), of which there is a considerable sale.

The dearth of provisions which from time to time has been felt in Helvetia, has, more than any encouragement from the state, contributed to the improvement of cultivation. An ordinance of 1502 had offered advantages to those who should till a piece of ground, but it produced little effect: custom, indolence, and prejudice, opposed all innovation, and it was necessary that the want should be felt. Recent experiments however have proved that corn may be advantageously cultivated in these countries, and even that vineyards will flourish.

CHAPTER XI.

It ought also to be remarked, that the extreme simplicity of the mode of life adopted by these people, and the paucity of their wants, render agriculture less necessary to them than to any others. Each family lives frugally on the fruit of its garden and the milk of its herds. Bread and flesh are rarely found on their tables. The herdsman, detained in the Alps or the wildest parts of the canton, scarcely ever sees them. Order and economy are the principal wealth of the peasant, and give him the means of supporting himself. The hemp which he cultivates, and the wool of his sheep, are converted by him into warm and durable cloathing. He is little seduced by the arts of luxury, and willingly leaves them to the richer man, towards whom he feels no jealousy; his pride consists in living independently in his cottage.

It is thus that, after the example of his fathers, and like to the old Romans, the Swiss has subsisted to our days, proud in his poverty, and remote from pomp and

effeminacy. It is true that, in the larger towns and villages of the canton, enjoyments have somewhat multiplied, and that some inroad has been made on this exemplary simplicity. Nevertheless, whether in consequence of the influence of manners, or the operation of laws, luxury has never made any sensible advances.

The more opulent families, desirous of preserving the good-will of the people, did not venture to distinguish themselves, either by their appearance, or by the expense of their household. They allowed themselves to wear clothes of finer stuff, but they were fashioned after the national model. The women were subjected to the same law, and all appeared in an uniform dress,

More information was found among the rich than among those of small fortune, for public education had everywhere been extremely neglected. It was entrusted to ecclesiastics or poor village school-masters, who were very ill paid. In the principal town was a college at which Latin was taught, but nothing else; it was therefore necessary either to hire a domestic tutor,

or to send the children abroad. The military service was another resource for the education of the youth of this country, who passed some years in that situation, and then returned home to occupy public offices.

Whatever might be the cause, the native of Schwitz was distinguished from his neighbours by the vivacity of his understanding, the spirit of his repartees, and the goodness of his discernment. In this respect he was recompensed by nature for what art had refused him. Further, the form of his government, and the right of every citizen to interfere in public affairs, matured his judgment, and gave him that sagacity which often surprised the foreigner, who was astonished to find a statesman in the doublet of a herdsman. In other things the ignorance of the countryman was but too visible; and seemed to have been fostered by the ambition of the higher orders, whose interests it favoured.

There were still to be observed, as in the early age of the republic of the Waldstaeten, three orders in the state, and three different degrees of intellectual culture;

the peasants, the clergy, and the nobility. There was, indeed, no hereditary dignity in these democracies, and every citizen was entitled to the same privileges; yet an attentive observer might very well distinguish between one who was descended from a titled family, and one of a plebeian origin.

This people, though perfectly free, did not, therefore, enjoy all the advantages of their liberty. They were still, at the end of the eighteenth century, what they had been four centuries before; that is, poor and little civilized. It was not to the severity of their climate, or the wild situation of their valleys, that these imperfections were owing: superstition, the force of prejudice, the fascination of habit, were the invincible obstacles which opposed their progress, and perpetuated their infancy.

The herdsman, habituated from his earliest youth to the round prescribed him, discouraged from the pursuit of any better method, and knowing no other wants than those of animal life, provided he could satisfy them, lived content, calculating the felicity of this world according to the

abundance of his leisure, and the extent of knowledge according to the number of ridiculous prejudices with which he had crammed his memory.

His industry was limited to the preservation of his little property and his religion, and to the scrupulous performance of the ceremonies enjoined by the church. Filled with confidence in the wise and prudent views which had directed his ancestors, he never varied from the line which they had traced for him. Every innovation seemed to him a sacrilege which would endanger his temporal or eternal welfare.

For some time past he rarely quitted his home. The glorious deeds of his progenitors appeared to him to contain every thing that bears the stamp of excellence and sublimity. Their actions were incessantly present to his memory. There is no country in Europe the history of which is so familiar to its inhabitants: even the children here were acquainted with its smallest details; and in hearing them talk one would suppose that instead of some centuries scarcely a few years had elapsed.

since the actions of William Tell, and the battle of Morgarten. Elated with these events and the glory of their ancestors, these poor people thought themselves invincible by the aid of their arms and their defiles.

Although in the assemblies of the people each citizen had a right to vote on all affairs submitted to discussion, it was very natural that, through want of experience and information, the mass should follow the impulse given them by their priests or *gentry*. This last title was given by the people themselves to all the opulent families which were not subjected to the labours of the field, and which exercised no trade. The *gentry*, therefore, possessed the government of the country: the sovereign, or the people, was only formidable to them by its own weakness. Credulous, selfish, and ungrateful, as in every democracy, the populace was inclined sometimes to one party, sometimes to another: they who exercised any authority over their countrymen, were those who knew how to flatter them; for adulation is often an equally certain in-

strument of corruption, whether it be directed against an entire body, or against a single individual.

The true lovers of their country often declared against this abuse, as prejudicial to the general interest, but their voice was not heard. They in vain predicted that the introduction of cabals would give birth to factions, would induce contempt of the most respectable laws, and would destroy liberty. No longer was a barrier sought against the encroachments of ambition; on the contrary, the assemblies of the people, whose duty it was to watch over the welfare of the state, were so negligent as in fact to annul the most prudent regulations. One of these, of the year 1551, forbade on very severe penalties all intrigues for bailiwicks, or simply honorary employments. This regulation even inflicted a rigorous punishment on the person who should give his vote to any one convicted of having solicited it: yet, notwithstanding this ordinance, such was the progress of corruption, that bailiwicks and other lucrative employments in the countries subject to the cantons came to be openly sold

in full assembly to the best bidder. To such a degree were sentiments of honour and justice extinguished among this people, that, not contented with having subjects, they did not deign even to make a point of giving them the most worthy and respectable citizens for magistrates.

It resulted from this mode of election, that he who had dearly purchased his employment, sought to recover from those committed to his charge, by acts of injustice and extortion, not only his capital, but an usurious interest for the sum advanced. This crying abuse long stained the reputation of the people who tolerated it, and the partisans of aristocracy drew from it their principal argument against the popular rule.

They did not confine themselves to selling bailiwicks at a high price: the place of landamman and that of his lieutenant were in a manner set up to auction; for, in order to obtain them, considerable presents were necessary, which soon became a kind of legal imposition. A lucrative bailiwick cost some thousands of florins; and a place of counsellor eight or nine

hundred, although it was only honorary, possessing no emoluments besides an almanack and a six-livre piece. The landamman had a similar salary, and besides received a duty on the seal; but in return he was obliged, at the time of his election, to pay the sovereign people the following singular tribute. The election took place at the general assembly in the month of May: every peasant at that time was accustomed to purchase a straw hat, and the landamman was expected to make him a present of it. Resistance was early made to this abuse, but the people would not hear reason: they even expressly decreed, in 1680, "that whosoever should still oppose it, should pay a fine of 100 crowns, and be excluded from the right of citizenship."

Whilst the people thus through selfishness opposed every reformation, they left in other respects a great latitude to their magistrates. The unlimited liberty of these republics was then sometimes illusory, and little resembling the idea formed of it.

Although the ecclesiastics naturally depended upon the rich families, they sometimes threw off the yoke, and obtained a

preponderating influence by means of the consideration they enjoyed among the people. In order easily to preserve this consideration, they suffered the shades of ignorance to subsist in the country. Neglecting the schools, they were the more assiduous in the service of the church. Their power consisted in the weakness of others. There were, however, among them enlightened men, philosophers, who would have wished to propagate knowledge; but for want of number and power they could only lament in silence.

The French revolution and declaration of the rights of man made a terrible impression on the priests of the Waldstaeten. The manner in which this new republic had treated the church filled their souls with holy indignation. They painted to their flocks in the blackest colours the crimes of the French, and accustomed them to hate a nation whose allies they had formerly been.

The rich families of the country, most part of whom had acquired abroad titles of nobility which were useless to them at home, had in this respect a common in-

terest with the clergy, and made common cause with them. The superiority of their information necessarily called them to be the guides of the people. Happy are those states whose most enlightened members hold the reins of government; but woe to those where talents and experience are the exclusive possession of a small number of families. In these cantons, the first magistracies, of little consequence as to pecuniary emolument, were highly so as to the consideration which, in the eyes of foreigners, they conferred upon those who occupied them.

The abolition of royalty, nobility, ancient titles, and privileges in France, were so many causes of rendering it obnoxious to the families who governed the small cantons; for they saw themselves at the same time stript of the credit which they had formerly enjoyed in that empire. Their hatred of its principles increased in proportion to the success which attended it. The victorious progress of Bonaparte in Italy, and the enfranchisement of the Val-teline, and the counties of Bormio and Chiavenna, formerly subject to the Grisons,

inspired in these families the just apprehension that a day would come, in which their subject countries bordering on Italy and Germany would be torn from their dominion.

Such was the moral situation of the mountaineers of the Waldstaeten. Some exceptions indeed might be made to this general view of the spirit of the people, nobility, and clergy; but they who were of different sentiments were few in number, and without power.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE inhabitants of the Alps, without troubling themselves with the terrible contest between people and kings, enjoyed in tranquillity the blessings of peace. Free from every foreign yoke, knowing no laws but those which they had given themselves, if they suffered under evils, it was only to themselves that they could attribute them. We have seen that they were rude and without culture; but custom guided them in the path of justice; and the absence of violent passions preserved them in that calm which the virtues always accompany. They lived in solitude, without renown or envy, and were on that account the happier. The political storms which murmured at a distance, seemed to stop at the summits of their mountains. States fell in pieces and disappeared from the map; a general confusion agitated the half of Europe; and they alone, scarcely apprized of the events, little thought that the mo-

ment was at hand in which they were to be involved in the vortex: foreign nations were trembling for their fate before they even suspected the approach of danger.

The French nation, within a few years, had levelled the throne of its kings, terrified the world by the splendour of its triumphs, and defeated the confederacy of united sovereigns. It remained victorious, but insulated in Europe; environed by princes reduced to insignificance, but whose hatred was implacable.

The magistrates of this great and new republic recognized the danger of their insulated condition. The elements of which this empire was composed, and the form of its government, were too different from those of other countries to hope any solid and durable alliance betwixt them and France.

Between states, as between individuals, there is no real union, except that which is founded upon similar principles and interests: similarity in power and riches never suffice for its consolidation. France wished to secure the fruit of her victories; she wished a guarantee for her future tran-

quillity; and to attain these ends she resolved to surround herself with countries whose organization resembled her own. She therefore with all her power favoured revolutions among her neighbours, by entrusting the reins of government into the hands of those who for a long time had been unsuccessfully combating the enemies of the rights of man. In this manner were created the Batavian, Ligurian, Cisalpine, and Roman republics.

Nations are always with respect to each other in a state of nature: there exists between them no other law than that of force and general agreement. There will never be any real public law, unless the dream of poets be fulfilled, that of the creation of a supreme tribunal, which shall decide concerning the grievances prevailing between different nations. It is, doubtless, painful that justice must give way to the combination of imperious circumstances; but such is the course of events in this world; and the wise man consoles himself if, among the wrecks of subverted order, he can hope to discover the elements of a better hereafter.

The Helvetic confederacy, incoherent in its parts, and long threatening dissolution, now saw this termination at hand. Different kinds of intestine disturbance; the remonstrances of the governed; the blind haughtiness of the governors; the mutual rivalship between the cantons, all united in the work of destruction. France, seeing with pleasure the dissensions which tore the confederates, did not delay to profit by them. She fomented the discord, fed the hatred and the hopes of parties, excited the cantons against each other, and thus made way for the revolution in Helvetia which was soon to break out.

The cantons of Berne, Zurich, and Basil, had already penetrated the secret designs of France, and were almost in open rupture with her, while the Waldstaeten, still in security, followed their antient routine, without troubling themselves with the alarms of their neighbours. They thought that by abstaining from interference with the affairs of others, none would interfere with theirs; and that the pacific prudence of their conduct would secure them from every danger. But the

first days of December, 1797, brought on the precursive signs of that terrible hurricane which, after having threatened for seven months, was at length totally to overthrow the government under which these people had lived the four past centuries. Zurich, the first canton of the Helvetic league, invited them to a general conference, "rendered necessary by existing circumstances, and the purpose of which was to concert measures for warding off the evils with which the country was menaced*."

Soon after, Berne announced that the French troops had taken possession of the Erguel, and the bishopric of Basil, and that the canton of Berne was now exposed to the danger of an invasion†.

* Circular letter of Zurich to the Cantons, dated 7th December, 1797.

† The bishopric of Basil belonged in part to the empire, and in part to Switzerland. The portion of the bishopric considered as territory of the empire was incorporated with the circle of Upper Rhine. The single valley of Moutier-Grandval, which made part of it, and of which the French took possession in 1792, was allied to Switzerland only by virtue of the right of fellow-burghership, granted it by the canton of Berne in 1486,

It invited that of Schwitz to send a representative, and to prepare to give effectual succours*.

The government of Schwitz, that is to say, the council of the country, or *Landrath*, heard not without inquietude the news from Berne and Zurich †. Not daring to take upon itself any measures in so delicate an affair, it convoked the sovereign people, who united in a general assembly on the 21st of December.

The assembly, convinced of the imminent danger which threatened the country, hastened to comply with the wishes of the confederates. The actual landam-

and renewed in 1743: but the rest of the bishopric, viz. the Erguel or valley of Imier, the lordships of Orvin, (*Ilfingen*) of Neuveville, and of the mountain of Diesse, which the bishop held in common with the canton of Berne, incontestably made part of the confederacy, by virtue of very antient and numerous treaties.

* Letter from the canton of Berne to that of Schwitz, dated December 14 and 17, 1797.

† This council was composed of the chiefs of the state, and of sixty counsellors, ten from each quarter. The chiefs of the state were the landamman, his lieutenant (*statthalter*), the banneret (*pannerherr*), the captain of the canton, the standard-bearer, the major-general, and the master of artillery.

man, Aloys Weber, and the late landamman, Meinrad Schuler, two virtuous men enjoying the confidence of the people, were nominated to assist at Arau in the conference demanded by the canton of Zurich; and received full powers to do, in conjunction with the other Helvetic states, whatever might be judged proper to secure and confirm the quiet, the safety, and general welfare of the confederacy. But their instructions at the same time bore, that, in case any thing was agitated which might endanger the liberty, the religion, and the safety of the country, or the constitution and integrity of the Helvetic body, they were to communicate to the diet the decree which the assembly had just passed, by which the people of Schwitz declared, "that they would remain faithful to the religion and laws which they held from their ancestors, and would expose themselves to the greatest dangers, and make the greatest sacrifices, rather than permit them to be in the least degree infringed" *.

* Expressions of the decree of the general assembly, dated 21st December.

In order to inspire the other Helvetic states with the same spirit and energy, the deputies of Schwitz received orders to confer confidentially with those of the other cantons on the means of smoothing the difficulties which, they said, arose in the aristocratical cantons between the governors and people, and of disposing the latter to employ all their force in the common cause.

The assembly also sent to Berne, in quality of its deputy, the antient landamman Charles Reding, an able politician and dexterous negotiator. It was the object of his mission to seek by conciliatory means to preserve the tranquillity of Berne, and of the whole Helvetic body*.

* Instructions given to Charles Reding, Dec. 23.

CHAPTER II.

THE canton of Berne, meantime, was greatly agitated. It ruled from the year 1536 over those smiling countries, bounded on the east and west by Jura, on the south by the lake of Geneva, and known by the name of the *Pays de Vaud*. This country, resembling a delicious garden, united all the advantages of a temperate climate. The rosemary and fig prosper there in the open air, and the town of Vevay is famous throughout Europe for the beauty of its flowers. A lively and intelligent people there cultivates the vine, and sows the land with all kinds of grain; but the constitution of the country, and the internal organization of the towns and villages had long opposed the advance of the public prosperity. The people from time immemorial enjoyed franchises and privileges which the usurping policy of Berne had insensibly annulled.

The Vaudois, excited by some of the boldest of their fellow-citizens, but still more by the secret promises of France,

loudly demanded their antient privileges. Berne irritated them by her refusal, and the favour of France rendered them enterprizing. In order to extinguish the flame that broke out on all sides, the government employed rigorous means. Some individuals, who had with too much spirit pleaded the cause of liberty and equality, were imprisoned; but these strokes of authority had not the expected success.

France, to whom this ferment of discord could not fail to be agreeable, took the part of the culprits. By virtue of antient treaties* she assumed the right of mediation between the Pays de Vaud and the canton of Berne, and declared, by the mouth of Mengaud, her chargé d'affaires with the Helvetic body, that she would

* The treaty of St. Julien of 1530 ceded, under certain conditions, to the lords of Berne and Friburg the possession of the Pays de Vaud, with *the rights which the duke of Savoy had exercised in it*. In 1564 duke Emmanuel Philibert finally renounced, by the treaty of Lausanne, his rights over this country, reserving to the inhabitants the enjoyment of all their privileges. This treaty was guaranteed by France in 1565, which guarantee was renewed in 1777.

render Berne responsible for the life and safety of the persons arrested*. The council of this city replied with firmness to this imperious declaration, that it was accountable for its actions to God alone, and that its constitution and laws were its sole arbiters †. Thus, France and its power standing on one side, and Berne with its sovereign rights on the other, these two countries were on the brink of a complete rupture. The former caused its armies to advance towards the western frontiers of Switzerland; the latter assembled troops for its defence, and warned the confederates to keep on their guard. The directorial government then subsisting, abusing the right of the strongest, and substituting intrigue and avarice to sound policy, demanded in menacing terms what was the purpose of the preparations of Berne ‡. The Avoyer and little council replied: We do not wish for war, but only to make our frontiers respected without, and to main-

* Note of Mengaud, Basil, 3d January 1798.

† Note of Berne, 5th Jan. 1798.

‡ Note of Mengaud, Basil, 5th January, accompanied with an arret of the French directory.

tain our sovereignty within*. Mengaud, without awaiting this answer, wrote again: "I declare to you that the members of your government shall be personally responsible to the French directory for the safety of the persons and properties of the inhabitants of the Pays de Vaud, become the objects of your vexation, and of the benevolence of the French republic†."

This insulting letter, which breathed nothing but war, and the affront offered by which could only be washed away by blood, exposed to full view the designs of France. Berne did not admit that it had taken arbitrary measures against the Pays de Vaud, and denied the existence of treaties which authorized the Vaudois to call in foreign interference‡. It continued its military preparations, invited its allies to hold their troops ready for marching on the first summons; and, at the same time, in order to neglect no conciliatory means, sent to the Pays de Vaud two deputies of the diet, with injunctions to restore order

* Berne, 8th Jan. 1798.

† Basil, 7th Jan. 1798.

‡ Rescript of Berne, Jan. 10th.

and tranquillity even at the expense of the greatest sacrifices, provided, however, that they were asked in a legal and proper manner*.

Wys of Zurich, and Reding of Schwitz, were charged with this commission. The canton of Schwitz permitted its deputy to accept the important office of mediator, on the condition that he should previously make a formal declaration, that neither himself, nor the canton of Schwitz, made themselves responsible for the consequences of this negotiation. Friburg, Soleure, and the Valais, also consented to the sending of the deputies.

When arrived at Lausanne, the capital of the Pays de Vaud, they immediately made known in a proclamation the object of their mission, inviting the people to state their grievances, and promising their good offices to get them redressed †.

The people, meantime, agitated by various passions and different wishes, were far from being agreed among themselves. In the midst of the general fermentation,

* Relation of Charles Reding, of Jan. 10th 1798.

† Proclamation at Lausanne, Jan. 15th.

three parties were distinguishable, all equally active, and aiming at separate ends. The great majority of the country demanded with moderation from the canton of Berne the re-establishment of their rights and franchises in all their integrity: this party had no intention to detach itself from the reigning city, and still less to avail itself of the dangerous support of France. Others had formed the bold project of taking advantage of circumstances, to cause the Pays de Vaud to be declared independent, and constituted the fourteenth canton of the Helvetic league. Others, in fine, were desirous, in imitation of France, to introduce in Helvetia the democratic system, and national representation.

The deputies, with a view of gaining the majority, received their demands favourably; and as the Bernese bailiffs were fled, and all the legal authorities were either disunited or without power, they entered into correspondence with the clubs or committees, as the sole means which they could employ for acting with efficacy upon the people. Soon acquiring the con-

confidence of the leading men in these committees, they succeeded in causing moderate counsels to be relished, and received a declaration importing that, according to all expectation, the Pays de Vaud would become pacified, if the formation of an assembly were permitted, composed at most of sixty members of the committees, which should receive the complaints and the desires of the country, and transmit them to the sovereign. In case this measure should be approved at Berne, the principal inhabitants engaged to use all their credit with the French directory, in order to prevent its interference in this domestic arrangement*.

But Berne, in its impatience, learning that there were still in the Pays de Vaud many communities which remained faithful to its government, resolved to make use of them in conquering the country. It was desirous, by a stroke of authority, of instantly terminating a quarrel, the prolongation of which would put to hazard the honour of the republic. Whilst, therefore,

* Relation of Reding, dated from Lausanne.

the deputies at Lausanne were employing all their efforts in persuading Berne to adopt a pacific accommodation, colonel Weiss received orders to assemble the partisans of government, to form them into an army, to get possession of the castle of Chillon, of which the insurgents had made themselves masters, and to re-establish order by force of arms*.

The deputies strongly opposed these measures, which were capable of raising the public indignation to the highest pitch, and of rendering the revolt general. They made their representations both to colonel Weiss and to the council of Berne, and declared that if these steps were persisted in, since all the fruit of their mission would be destroyed, they could no longer, in pursuance of the intention of their principals, remain in the Pays de Vaud in quality of Helvetic representatives.

At this period there was at the head of the Bernese government an old man, full of genius and experience, who joined to much strength of character, an implacable

* Declaration of colonel Weiss to the deputies at Lausanne.

hatred to the new organization of France: this was the avoyer Steiguer. The senate of Berne, guided by him, persisted in its violent resolutions. The orders given to colonel Weiss were confirmed; of which when the deputies were informed, they instantly quitted Lausanne on their return to Berne, and at their departure published another proclamation*, rather for the purpose of acquitting themselves of their final duty, than through the hope of any advantage from it towards the restoration of tranquillity.

Charles Reding appeared before the council of Berne, and held a discourse full of wisdom and energy. He displayed the nature of the troubles of the Pays de Vaud, represented the unanimous wish of the citizens to be restored to the possession of their antient privileges, and painted in glowing colours the critical situation of this people, dreading on one side the vengeance of Berne, and on the other the dangerous intervention of a foreign power.

“A people (said he) who think themselves driven to extremities, have recourse

* On Jan. 19th.

to the most violent means. Those whom I have the honour here to represent, had solemnly resolved to shed with joy the last drop of their blood for the maintenance of our constitution. I repeat to you this assurance in their name, and in the most positive manner; but I ought to confess to you with the same frankness, that your faithful allies of the canton of Schwitz would learn with the most sensible grief, that before essaying our arms against a foreign enemy, we had stained them with the blood of our brethren, in the blood of a people whom Providence had entrusted to the paternal care of wise and enlightened magistrates."

The deputies of the general diet assembled at Arau wrote to the same effect*; but the fate of Berne was already decided. The government of this canton, blinded by a proud sense of the justice of its cause, and reduced to that point in which men take counsel from despair, rather than from prudence, despised every idea of condescension towards its vassals, whose duty, in its opinion, was only to obey, and re-

* On Jan. 19th.

jected the moderate advice of the allied cantons.

Some days afterwards, however, colonel Weiss, who, shortly before, had flattered himself with striking terror into the insurgents, and bringing back the old order of things by the mere display of his arms, confirmed the alarming recital which Reding had made. “The new decree of the French directory (he wrote) has produced a change in all minds, and augmented the fermentation. Shall I speak plainly? In all our warlike preparations I see only the prognostics of a disastrous war, and the signal of an useless effusion of blood. I am convinced, that all the means of rigour you can employ, will have no other result than that of spreading the revolution over the whole of Switzerland, and preparing the fate of French emigrants for its governors. In my judgment, what wisdom and morality point out to be done in this conjuncture, is to treat these people with indulgence and kindness; to give way for a time to the passion which impels them; to watch over the assembly of de-

puties, and to endeavour to gain their confidence*.”

These prophetic words shed a secret terror over the council of Berne. They were the presage of a terrible calamity, but the struggle was begun: it was necessary to conquer or perish, and the honour of the Bernese patriciate did not permit a retreat.

The canton of Schwitz made another attempt, of which the object was to induce Berne to prefer measures of conciliation to those of rigour which it was about to put in practice. It insisted upon satisfying the Vaudois in their demands, and strongly advised a sacrifice now become necessary for the general good †. But these words of peace were likewise thrown away; and Schwitz recalled its deputies in order to shelter itself from the fatal consequences which such obstinacy threatened to bring upon the whole Helvetic body.

* Letter of Weiss to the council of Berne, Jan. 24th.

† Letter from the canton of Schwitz to that of Berne, Jan. 27th.

CHAPTER III.

THE town of Arau, in which the chargé d'affaires Mengaud resided since the 9th of January 1798, was at this time the theatre of that discord and destructive spirit which seemed to reign over Helvetia. The diet was divided in opinion, and agitated by opposite passions. Several of the members, surveying the imminent danger, predicted the fall of the Helvetic league. Their opinion was founded upon the spectacle before their eyes: the disunion and mutual jealousy of the cantons; the vices of the constitution; the narrow selfishness of each small state, which thought only of its own safety, without embarrassing itself with the interest of the whole, or being willing to make the least sacrifice for it; the general cry of the subjects for liberty, and the obstinate resistance of the aristocratic governments to their wish; their weak and inconsequent measures, dictated sometimes by rage, sometimes by fear; the multiplied attacks of France upon the old order of things; her successful efforts

to paralyse the governments by alarm, and to excite the people to revolution by hope; the mysterious silence of the emperor, who remained a quiet spectator of the conduct of the French with regard to Helvetia, whilst he was the only one of the sovereigns of Europe to whom the fate of the Swiss could not be indifferent: all these circumstances united, confirmed the apprehensions of this part of the deputies.

Others, founding their hope upon the innocence of the greater part of the cantons of the causes of complaint alleged against the aristocracies, or habituated to regard the fall of the confederacy as an impossibility, flattered themselves that the storm would soon be dissipated. The augmentation of the number of the cantons was, according to them, the sole misfortune to be dreaded.

The democratical states expected, at the worst, to see the aristocratical governments dissolved, and independence restored to the countries under their yoke. With respect to themselves, they confided in their security, and thought they had

nothing to fear, provided they interfered in the quarrel between the oligarchy and France no more than they were obliged to do by existing treaties.

Interests so opposite, and the consequences of which were so painfully felt, threw a melancholy light upon the vices of the federative system. Several deputies took occasion from it to propose, as the sole means of restoring order and safety, the union of all the parts of Switzerland, and the formation of a single individual state.

Others, sensible of the danger of such a considerable and precipitate change, which could not fail to react upon all the parts of the administration, knowing the evils of political revolutions, and acquainted with the difference of characters, wishes, and wants among the people of Switzerland, trembled at the idea of a general change. They aimed solely at reforms which might be useful in the federative system by the development of its principles, and wished gradually to bring on a better order of things.

But the great majority, led by the re-

collection of the blessings of a hundred years peace, by that of the flourishing condition of their country, and the crimes with which the French revolution had been stained, detested every kind of political innovation. Proud of the independence which they had hitherto enjoyed, it appeared to them equally intolerable to receive laws either from a haughty enemy, or from discontented subjects. They chose rather to expose themselves to the dangers of a destructive war than to consent to a revolution; and rather to fall while defending themselves, than dishonourably to yield without resistance.

The opinion of this majority was triumphant in the conferences of the diet. The aristocratical states made an appeal to the patriotism of the democratical, and inspired them with equal hatred of the projects of France. It was of importance to cause the confederacy to be respected by the idea of the union reigning between its members; and in order to conceal the contrary fact from all eyes, it was thought sufficient to insist upon administering a solemn oath, in which all the Helvetian

states should join. To this the democratical cantons replied, that if it were desirable to make all Europe believe that the Swiss were entirely agreed among themselves, a proof of it should be given by satisfying the just demands of the people.

The oath required was however taken at Arau, on the 25th of January, by all the cantons and their allies, with the exception of Basil, which, four days before, had changed the form of its government. This oath was the only one which had been entered into by all the united cantons since the existence of the Helvetic league. Almost all those who partook in this solemn ceremony had tears in their eyes; some, through the joy they felt from an act which they hoped would prove the safety of their country; others, through the better-founded presentiment of future misfortune*.

The very evening of the day in which this remarkable event took place, official

* On that very day they were informed at Arau of the fatal event at the village of Thierrens, which decided the entrance of the French troops into Switzerland.

dispatches announced the progress made by the insurrection of the Lemán, now at its height: the bailiffs were flying or imprisoned; the arms of Berne were every where torn down; trees of liberty were planted; and the artillery of Chillon was transported to Vevay in order to be employed against Berne. This news, like a thunder-clap, caused the instant dissolution of the diet. General Menard, on January 26, entered the Pays de Vaud at the head of his column. Berne summoned the cantons to send their troops to her succour.

The people of Schwitz met on February 1st in general assembly, and not without indignation learned the late events. They unanimously resolved to fly to the aid of Berne. Two battalions of six hundred men each received orders to hold themselves ready, the one to march with the troops of the great cantons, the other to wait for those of Unterwalden and Zug*.

In the mean time it appeared that the same tumults which agitated the Lemán began to be felt on the borders of the lake

* Decree of the general assembly, dated the 1st of February.

of Zurich, as well as in the greater part of the states governed aristocratically, in which the people, contesting with their governors, aspired to liberty, and sought to obtain it. The people of Schwitz, observing that this shock of passions paralysed the strength of the state, and delivered the country without means of resistance to the attacks of the enemy, ordered that a council of war, composed of four members, should precede the troops sent to the common defence*. This council was instructed to employ all possible means to produce a cordiality between the people and the government of Berne; to sound the dispositions of the Bernese, and in case they should be found united, and firmly resolved to oppose the enemy, then, to consent to serve in every part of the territories of Berne. But, in a contrary case, and even on a supposition of the rupture of the federal compact, they were to withdraw their troops, and return to the canton.

* To this end were named: the ancient landamman Schorns, the ancient bailiff Xavier Weber, major Jacob Zweyer, and the deputy Martin Antony Schuller.

These instructions prove that the people of Schwitz, faithful to their democratical principles, were by no means willing to lend their arms to the city of Berne, in order at this crisis to oppress the inhabitants of the country; but, already apprehensive of the downfall of their own authority, and regarding only their particular preservation, they forgot that all Switzerland, losing its firmest barrier against the attacks of France, would become exposed to similar dangers.

The canton of Schwitz mean time communicated its resolutions to its allies of Uri and Unterwalden, and invited them to a conference at Brunnen, where they might discuss the measures to be taken for the defence of Berne, and for that of their own cantons at this perilous season.

The conference took place on February 7th. Unterwalden at first made some difficulties in sending aid to Berne, since the condition of a foreign aggression, specified by the federative constitution, did not yet exist; but at length it consented to join its troops to those which Schwitz proposed to send. It was further resolved,

that, as the danger was not as yet very near, the present assembly should be dissolved; but that the members should be bound to meet at the same place, on the first requisition for the purpose made by the canton of Uri*.

Berne, which began to tremble at her future prospect, had solemnly declared on the same day, that in a month's time there should be formed a committee composed of respectable and enlightened citizens, which should make those changes in the constitution of the state that might be thought advantageous to the country, or rendered necessary by the spirit of the time, and the force of circumstances. These improvements, begun *without foreign interference*, were to be completed within the term of a year.

This important concession, extorted from the pride of the governors of Berne, came too late to prevent an explosion, now inevitable: it did not remove the distrust arisen between them and the governed,

* Resolutions contained in the minutes of the conference of these three cantons, holden at Brunnen on February 7th.

and which separated them eternally: the flame, which might easily have been stifled at its first breaking out, was now become too fierce to be extinguished. Berne, at length reduced to despair, loudly invoked the succour of all its allies. But they, on their parts, pressed by difficulties, did not hasten to comply with its wishes. The cantons of Zurich and Schwitz alone sent each a battalion, of which the latter was commanded by Aloys Reding, captain of the canton (*Landes-Hauptmann*).

CHAPTER IV.

It was not long before Schwitz itself fell into domestic troubles. This canton, while it disapproved of the conduct of Berne with respect to the Pays de Vaud, seemed to have forgotten that it, as well as the other states of Switzerland, had dependants and subjects who aimed at complete liberty. In common with the other cantons, with the exception of Appenzell,

it governed the Italian bailiwicks of Locarno, Val Maggia, Lugano, and Mendrisio; with the eight antient cantons, Thurgovia, Sargans, the Rheinthal, and the free upper bailiwicks: with Uri and Unterwalden, the bailiwicks of Bellinzona, Riviera, and Val Bregno: and it possessed Gaster and Uznach conjointly with the canton of Glaris. But besides the districts over which it exercised a divided sway, there were others of which it was the sole sovereign: these were the town of Kusnacht, situated on the border of the lake of Waldstacten; the valley of Einsiedlen or of our Lady of the Hermits; some villages near the lake of Zurich; and the country of la Marche.

Although these latter, who were styled immediate dependents, had great privileges, they yet felt their dependence, and wished to enfranchise themselves. The general fermentation appeared to them a favourable opportunity for freeing themselves from the yoke, and obtaining the right of burghership in the canton. They were the first to make their claims loudly heard.

La Marche is that fine country which extends from the mountains of Rederten and Flaeschen, on both banks of the Aa, to the southern borders of the lake of Zurich; forming at first a narrow and rude valley, known by the name of Weggithal, but afterwards presenting a pleasant and fertile plain. Its fields and meadows are covered with fruit-trees, and tufted trees decorate the declivities of the mountains.

The inhabitants chose their landamman and a privy council composed of forty-five members. The seat of this council was Lachen, near the lake of Zurich, and it had the determination of minor civil causes. The appeal from it was to the sovereign council of Schwitz. Another council composed of nine members gave sentence in causes which concerned the inheritances, fortune, and honour of the citizens; but from it likewise an appeal lay to the canton. In criminal matters it only decided whether or no there were grounds for proceeding. In case of the affirmative, a tribunal was formed at which the chancellor of Schwitz (*Landes-Sekelmeister*) presided, and which consisted of

the landamman and all the members of the council of the country, each of whom was to associate a colleague taken from the principal inhabitants. The people here, as in Schwitz, exercised their right of sovereignty, by uniting once a year in a general assembly. It was held at Lachen the first Sunday in May, under the shade of a great poplar. Two counsellors and the chancellor of Schwitz were to assist at it.

The people of la Marche had lived near four centuries* under the protection of this constitution, in a very easy dependence on the canton of Schwitz, when, seized with that inquietude which agitated all Switzerland, they demanded a larger measure of freedom. The signal had already been given by the people who inhabit the two shores of the lake of Zurich, for they had risen against the sovereign city.

This circumstance was little favourable to the success of the demand made by the

* The canton of Schwitz had obtained the lower Marche by the treaty of peace concluded with Austria in 1412, and the upper Marche by that of 1427 made with Frederic the last count of Toggenburg.

canton of Schwitz on the country of la Marche, of furnishing, according to the laws and antient usages, its contingent of the troops destined to the succour of Berne. The council of war met at Lachen, and proposed the measure to the general assembly; but the people, who had already testified their discontent at the attempt of retaining the subjects of Berne under the yoke, made great opposition to the proposal; and upon the motion of some enterprising leaders, they decreed that an address of the following tenor should be made to the canton of Schwitz:

“The people of la Marche, having maturely reflected upon the rights of man; and considering

“1. That the sovereign, that is, the canton of Schwitz, in conjunction with the other states of Switzerland, has generously pleaded the cause of subjects, and, with a truly patriotic zeal, has advised satisfying them in their demands, which has produced such an effect, that the aristocratic cantons have granted them full and entire liberty;

“ 2. That the canton of Schwitz acquired the country of la Marche without expense or effusion of blood;

“ 3. That the inhabitants of la Marche have shared with those of Schwitz in the dangers of all the long wars sustained by the canton, without having partaken with them in the benefits of their numerous conquests;

“ 4. That the country at length having respectfully, on April 18, 1792, addressed the council of Schwitz for a diminution of the burthens under which it laboured, and which were continually augmenting, was repulsed in an improper manner;

“ Have determined, that the strictest justice requires that the country of la Marche should enjoy full and entire liberty, should be freed from its dependence upon the canton of Schwitz, and be permitted to govern itself; and the said people has resolved to make a formal demand to this effect, promising upon this condition to take up arms for the defence of liberty, of their country, and holy religion*.”

* This address was prepared at the town-hall of Lachen on the 10th of February 1798 by the ordinary

This new language excited the indignation of the people of Schwitz, and threw them into great perplexity. It was no longer a time for the sovereign to assert his rights by force; and the methods of prudence and persuasion which it was necessary to employ promised no great success. The council of Schwitz, however, published a proclamation conceived nearly in the following terms :

“ You well know, dear and faithful subjects, that our first cares have always been to secure your happiness with our own. From time immemorial you have, with us, enjoyed the fruits of our paternal attention; and while the scourge of war afflicted the circumjacent countries, you have been indebted to our indefatigable zeal for the preservation of peace and tranquillity.

“ Arrived at length at this period, in which dangers from without and from within menace even our happy country, a period in which the necessity of union is more than ever apparent in order to pre-

commission and the council of war united, and unanimously accepted the next day by the general assembly and by all the magistrates of la Marche.

serve us from imminent misfortune, we have been tenderly affected and penetrated with gratitude at the conduct of those of our subjects, who, without yielding to a seduction now become almost general, have approved their obedience and fidelity to their country and its government in a manner which ought to serve as an example to all the rest.

“ Yet those of our dependents, who, animated with a different spirit, have manifested desires justified perhaps by the force of circumstances, shall not be less the objects of our paternal affection; and we promise without delay to occupy ourselves with the means of recompensing the attachment and fidelity of the former, and of satisfying the moderate demands of the latter, by all concessions compatible with the general welfare. We shall constantly make it our object to augment their happiness, and attach them to us by still stronger bonds*.”

The proclamation closed with threats against the promoters of revolt, and the

* Proclamation of Schwitz, February 13th.

disturbers of the public tranquillity. It was published in the churches of Einsiedlen, Kusnacht, Pfaeffikon, and Wollrau, and posted up in the usual places.

But the country of la Marche suffered itself to be moved neither by hope nor fear. Times were changed; and what, a few days before, would have been received as a favour, was now regarded as a due. Menaces no longer inspired terror, nor promises confidence, and both failed of their effect. In circumstances of such difficulty, the wiles of policy are swept away by the torrent of passion, which, in its rapid course, overthrows all the mounds placed to oppose it.

The council did not stop at these measures. It wrote to the magistrates of la Marche in terms of displeasure. "The canton of Schwitz (these were its words) has done, with respect to other states, every thing in its power to conciliate the governors with the governed, and quiet their mutual complaints; it has so powerfully pleaded the cause of the people, that almost all the aristocratic cantons have adopted the democratical form of govern-

ment: it was even occupying itself with the happiness of its dependents, and seeking all means of drawing them more closely to itself; and this was the moment chosen by the people of la Marche to revolt, to declare themselves free and independent, and violently to withdraw from the authority of their lawful sovereign*.”

The magistrates of la Marche were enjoined, upon their personal responsibility, to make known to the people this letter, and the proclamation accompanying it. This latter piece is too remarkable not to be worth transcribing in part. It proves how hard it seems, even to democratical governments, to renounce their power, and how much they are disposed, in want of better means, to employ artifice and cunning for its preservation.

It runs thus: “How offensive soever are the events which have lately taken place among you, they are unable to change the sentiments of affection and pity which we feel towards you. Honest and virtuous villagers! open your eyes and behold the abyss into which perfidious instigators de-

* This letter is dated Feb. 16th.

sire to plunge you. Make use of your good sense; reflect if these vain promises and deceitful illusions of absolute freedom with which they cheat you, can ever be realized. Do you suppose you can subsist and form an independent state by yourselves? And were you for a moment to succeed in constituting your republic, do you imagine that the other states of the confederacy, all interested in their mutual protection, and in maintaining each other in their relative position, will consent to acknowledge it? But even admitting that in the midst of the great change which is taking place among us, such a republic could be formed and consolidated; do you think, worthy villagers! that you would reap much advantage from it? Would you not, on the contrary, have an increase of taxes to pay, in order to supply the expense of an administration necessarily become more costly? Would you be happy under the rule of some ambitious persons, who would oppress you so much the more, as you have reserved the fewer supports against their oppressions? Can you, after these considerations, prefer the un-

certain futurity which awaits you, to the mild and peaceable lot which you have enjoyed under the dominion of your natural sovereign?

“ But the formation of a free and independent state is not the object of your conductors. The honest and simple villager is not acquainted with the plots that are formed against him. He does not know what are the mischievous projects of some party leaders, who aim at entirely changing the political state of our country, and giving it a form destructive of the faith and religion of our ancestors, and of our happy tranquillity. One of those projects has fallen into our hands. It points out the intention of its authors to be the forming of la Marche into one of those departments into which Switzerland is to be divided. Perhaps they have urged you to a separation from our canton, only to be able the more easily to unite you to another, and that, without caring whether such an union would be advantageous or hurtful to you.

“ One of the fundamental principles of this new constitution would be the abso-

lute freedom of all religions, and of the philosophical principles of the day. Judge then for yourselves, how with such principles the religion of your fathers could be maintained."

This address, though artfully composed, and touching upon the dearest interests of the people, made no impression upon those of la Marche. At this period, even had prophets come to lift the awful veil of futurity; had they announced the approaching scenes of sorrow and calamity; those bloody combats of the neighbouring powers and the barbarians of the north in these countries now so flourishing; those villages burnt and destroyed; those troops of children dying of hunger, or going to seek under a happier sky new parents and a hospitable roof; had they predicted all these misfortunes, which were too soon realized, who would have given credit to their words?

The country of la Marche thus refused all accommodation; and the canton of Schwitz, soon environed with perils of every kind, lost all hope of ever resuming its dominion over this district. Its wishes

were limited to the desire of its being declared an integral part of the canton, and admitted to a participation in the sovereignty.

During these transactions, two subject towns also ventured to make demands, but of a much more moderate kind.

One, named Wesen, in the country of Gaster, and situated near the lake of Wallenstadt; from the year 1438, had been a dependence on the cantons of Schwitz and Glaris, to which it had been pledged by the count of Toggenburg, without having ever been redeemed. Its application was limited to the demand of exemption from some incidental charges*.

The other, Uznach, on the borders of the lake of Zurich, solicited the privilege of governing itself, under the protection of the cantons of Schwitz and Glaris, and on consideration of an annual tribute which it offered to pay†.

But events succeeded each other with so much rapidity, and in so alarming a

* Letter of Wesen to the canton of Schwitz, dated February 13th.

† Letter of Uznach, of February 13th.

manner, that it could not be determined how or where to negotiate with them. All the countries subject to Switzerland shook off their chains, and advanced with steps more or less hasty in the career of revolution. The people who surrounded the Waldstaeten set themselves in motion, and already were heard the cries of liberty raised by those who dwelt beyond the Alps.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Bonaparte, in consequence of his victories in Italy, had conquered Lombardy, and out of it had formed the Cisalpine republic, the Helvetic body sent two deputies to Lugano, charged to maintain a good understanding with this new power. These deputies, Felix Stokmann of Obwalden, and Boumann, at first received tokens of respect and friendship from the Cisalpine directory, which had its seat at Milan*; but things presently took another turn.

* Relation of those deputies, February 7th.

This government, scarcely assured of its own existence, displayed a character analogous to the heat of the climate under which it existed, and the nature of the circumstances which had established it. More solicitous to make a figure than to be useful; more inclined to disturb the repose of its neighbours by intrigue, than attentive to the means of consolidating its new constitution, it raised itself a party among the Italian bailiwicks, and caused it to be insinuated to these people that they ought to profit of the approaching fall of the Helvetic confederacy, in order to unite with the Cisalpine government, as the Valteline in the Grison country had done.

The nature of this tract, separated from the rest of Switzerland by the loftiest mountains; the poverty of its inhabitants; the necessity under which they lie of drawing their grain from Italy; and the parity of language; all seemed to concur in favouring the wishes of the Cisalpine directory. To this was added the news of the approaching arrival of a body of French troops, the final destination of which was

unknown, but which in the mean time was to form a line on the Italian frontiers of Switzerland, extending from the lake of Como to the lake Maggiore. This approach of troops occasioned much disquiet, and caused the time to be predicted when trees of liberty would be planted in the towns of Lugano and Mendrisio*.

We have already spoken of the fermentation which manifested itself in the rest of Switzerland, and of the revolution which had taken place at Basil. This canton, after having solemnly recognized the imprescriptible rights of man, had declared, in a letter to the canton of Zurich, that it for ever renounced its rights of coregency over the Italian bailiwicks.

Zurich attempted to parry the blow which such a declaration struck at the ancient federative system. It particularly ordered its representatives at Lugano to guard from every kind of foreign influence over the affairs of that country. "As soon as circumstances shall require it (said the canton) address yourselves to the Cisalpine government, as well as to the ad-

* Relation of the deputies, February 11th.

administrator-general of the finances, Haller, who has made known to the Helvetic body, in the most afflicting manner, his desire of being useful to it. And since, in the present circumstances, rigorous means are out of the question, employ those of persuasion towards the magistrates and heads of the people, in order to prevent all excesses and disorders; and promise, in the name of the cantons, that all legal demands shall be granted to the country. In case of any extraordinary and urgent event, address yourself to the cantons of Schwitz and Unterwalden for instructions and succours*.”

These orders arrived too late. The chiefs of the Cisalpine party had gained the people by their discourses, and by pamphlets profusely distributed. They did not, indeed, wish to be united to the Cisalpine state; on the contrary, the great majority, whilst they demanded liberty, did not desire a separation from Helvetia, and preserved their national hatred against the Milanese.

* Letter of the canton of Schwitz to the deputies, dated February 15th.

This resistance from the people only redoubled the activity of the Cisalpine faction. Some young men, endowed with an ardent imagination and some uncultivated talents, were at its head; they were few in number, but daring and enterprising. The enfeebled condition to which the confederates were reduced, and the presence of the French and Cisalpine troops which deluged the frontier, favoured their rash attempts. Almost under the eyes, and certainly with the tacit consent, of the Cisalpine directory, they enrolled a body of idle people and banditti from the countries of Bergamo and Brescia, clothed and armed them, and made use of them to obtain by force what they could not have obtained by good-will*.

The rumour of the approach of Italian troops soon spread on all sides. A courier was immediately dispatched from Lugano to Milan for the purpose of pre-

* The author of this work, sent in 1800, in quality of a Helvetic commissioner, for the re-organization of the Italian cantons, had every possible facility for becoming acquainted with the chiefs of the different parties, and for acquiring even a moral conviction of the participation of the Cisalpine directory in the events above related.

venting hostilities: this passed on February 14th. On the 15th, at five o'clock in the morning, 240 foreign soldiers, who came over the lake of Lugano, disembarked at the town, announcing their intention to force an union with the Cisalpine republic. Young men of Lugano were at the head of this troop, which called itself the vanguard of a considerable column. The alarm immediately became general, and the beat of the drum gave the signal of defence. The chiefs of the Helvetic party took up arms, and were soon joined by a good number of volunteers. The Cisalpines began to fire upon them; and a secretary sent by the former to the commander of the Italian troops to prevent the effusion of blood, was stopt and taken prisoner by fifteen Cisalpine soldiers. Others forcibly penetrated into the houses of the Helvetic representatives, and retained them as hostages while the combat was passing under their windows.

An hour was spent in fighting, at the end of which the Cisalpines were obliged to retire in the boat that brought them, leav-

ing behind them four standards, thirty muskets, and those of their soldiers who had stood guard over the Helvetic representatives, and were made prisoners in their turn. These were sent to Pomezia. In this affray only a single Helvetic volunteer was killed, named Taglioretti. A second courier was immediately dispatched to Milan to give an account of what had passed, and measures were taken for the further defence of the town of Lugano.

Order seemed re-established, although the fermentation was far from being appeased. The representatives of the Helvetic body were evidently strangers to all that passed. Without influence over the people, without power to make the concessions which would have rendered them favourable, they waited for the event in a fearful uncertainty.

Towards the evening of the same day, at the instant of sun-set, there suddenly appeared in the market-place a numerous crowd of people drawn together by the Cisalpines, or self-named patriots; for the latter enjoyed neither cessation nor repose till they had accomplished their purpose.

Presently two or three thousand armed men, uttering terrible cries, surrounded the house of the representatives. After a temporary tumult, there issued from this crowd a deputation, at the head of which was the advocate Pellegrini. "We demand (he exclaimed) our sacred and imprescriptible rights; the liberty of Swiss, after an age of slavery! We are at length in a condition to govern ourselves!"

The representatives alleged that they did not possess sufficient powers; but this reply, instead of calming the people, aggravated their fury. They imperiously reiterated their demand, requiring that the declaration of liberty should be given instantly, and in writing. Then the deputies, fearing the consequences of a refusal longer protracted, delivered to the deputation the following paper:

"The people of Lugano having assembled near us and demanded to be free and independent of Switzerland, in order that, in these difficult times, they might the better concur in the defence of the country, we answered them that our powers

did not extend so far, and that, consequently, we could not comply with their demand; but upon their reiterated application we added, that neither could we reject it.

*“ In the name and by the order of the
Representatives of Switzerland,*

(Signed) “ INFIELD, Secretary.”

Lugano, Feb. 15, 1798.

Scarcely had this work of compulsion been executed when information was received that 300 Cisalpines had just entered Porto, a village situated on the southern part of the lake of Lugano, in the Cisalpine territory, and that a carriage loaded with muskets from Varese had set out for this village. This news was immediately followed by the arrival at Lugano of two officers, one French, the other Cisalpine. They repaired to the representatives, and summoned them within two hours to assemble the people, that they might declare whether they chose to be united to Switzerland or the Cisalpine republic.

At the same time they delivered the following note:

To Messrs. the Representatives of the Swiss Cantons, 22d Pluviose, 6th Year of the Republic.

“ Liberty, which inflames the hearts of all patriots, has penetrated into your cantons. Your brethren beyond the Alps have in the face of mankind proclaimed the democratic system, for which your ancestors shed so much blood. The sacred fire has also spread on this side the Alps, and the patriots of this country have resolved to live free, or die. You are therefore summoned, in the name of all those who are ready to shed their blood for democracy, to renounce all the rights you pretend to possess over these bailiwicks, to disarm your volunteers*, and to restore liberty to this people, which offers you friendship and fraternity. Make your decision: if within an hour hence you persist in your pretensions of sovereignty over this people, which has sworn

* Most of the volunteers were partisans of Switzerland, consequently determined Anti-cisalpinés.

to be free, dread becoming the victims of its wrath. Spare the blood of your brethren! but if you thirst for it, the republican bayonets will be dyed in that of their enemies.

“Health and friendship, if you desire it.”

(Signed) STEPHANO RIVA, Commandant.

JOHN BAPTIST QUADRI, Adjunct.

ANTONIO FONTANA, Secretary.

Boumann, faithful to his duty, did not suffer himself to be intimidated by the menaces of the young men who signed this address: he still alleged the limited extent of his powers. Yet, urged on all sides, he was obliged to promise to consult with his colleague Stockmann; but the latter had already taken to flight. The danger of passing mount Cenere* during the night alarmed him less than the cries of an enraged people. Boumann then asked and obtained a delay till the return of the courier whom he had sent to the minister Testi at Milan.

When the flight of one of the deputies was made public, a guard of twelve men

* Mount Cenere separates Lugano from Bellinzona.

was given to the other. Mean time the revolution proceeded ; trees of liberty were planted ; a provisional government constituted itself, and solemnly proclaimed, that the people, with the consent of the Helvetic representatives, had decreed liberty and equality. This government at the same time published a general amnesty.

All this was the work of a single day (Feb. 15). The two parties, Helvetic and Cisalpine, stood face to face ; the blood of Taglioretti shed by the Luganese cried for vengeance. The chiefs of the Helvetic party, more numerous and prudent, would not, perhaps, have yet agreed to the revolution, had they not been forced to it by the audacious proceedings of the Cisalpines, which obliged them to strong counter-measures. The people had been set in motion ; and to the friends of Helvetia there remained no other means of preserving the country to her, than that of giving way to the revolution, in order to defeat, in the most essential point, the projects of the Cisalpines,

The courier dispatched to Milan returned on the following day. At the instant he was seen to disembark, a considerable crowd collected about him, and accompanied him to the representative. On every face was read the fear of being united to the Cisalpine state. Boumann publicly opened and read the letter he had just received. It was in the following terms:

*The Minister of Exterior Relations to Messrs.
the Helvetic Representatives at Lugano.*

Milan, 27th Pluviose, Year 6.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ The executive directory, to which I have this day communicated your letters of the 14th and 15th February, has been greatly surprised at the disagreeable information they contain. It charges me to assure you, gentlemen, that being an absolute stranger to the troubles at Lugano, it has learned with a lively indignation the rash enterprise which certain Cisalpines have engaged in upon the territory of a power in friendship with our new republic, and with which the directory

sincerely desires to preserve a good understanding.

“ The Cisalpine government, in case of troubles in the surrounding states, will confine itself to measures for the security of its frontiers, without in any manner intermeddling with quarrels with which it has no concern. This conduct it will steadily observe. What has passed at Lugano is such a violation of its principles, that the directory charges me, gentlemen, to invite you to communicate to me the names and qualities of the Cisalpine individuals, who, in order to justify their shameful attack, have dared to support themselves by a pretended order from their government. In the mean time, the directory will take the most prompt and efficacious measures to prevent any armed force in future from passing beyond the territory of the republic; to discover the guilty, and to cause them to be punished in an exemplary manner.

“ I have the pleasure, gentlemen, to send back your last courier with this answer, which will apprise you of the intentions of my government with regard to

yours, and will enable you to communicate them to your high principals.

(Signed) "TESTI."

The contents of this letter, of which copies were instantly taken, caused a satisfaction comparable only to the hatred which the people felt against the Cisalpines who were authors of the preceding day of tumult. They demanded with loud cries that the French officer, and the Cisalpine named Palasio, who had commanded at the attack, should be delivered up to them. Boumann, in order to shelter them from the fury of the people, insinuated to the irritated crowd, that the maltreatment of a French officer, who had, besides, taken no part in the late hostilities, might bring the greatest evils upon the country. He difficultly obtained the liberation of this officer, and gave him an escort to his boat. Palasio escaped death solely through the management of the representative, in giving him provisionally his lodgings for a prison.

The dignity of the Swiss nation would not permit Boumann to remain in a coun-

try where the authority of the cantons and of their representatives was disallowed. His presence could only add to the disgrace of the downfall of the confederacy, and in no respect could prevent it. He departed, leaving behind him all the country between Lombardy and mount Cenerè in a state of complete insurrection.

The people of Mendrisio had, on February 15th, imitated the example of those of Lugano, by planting a tree of Helvetic liberty; and on the 20th they swore, in the open air, in the face of heaven, to remain united to Switzerland, and to maintain the catholic religion. The supreme power had been delegated to a committee of provisional government, charged to negotiate with the Cisalpine, and the small republics which were successively formed out of the different Italian bailiwicks; for each of these bailiwicks considered itself as a free state, independent of its neighbours, and treated with them as from one potentate to another.

It is to be remarked, that neither the

people, nor those who directed their movements, wished for the formation of a single republic, of which the country to which they belonged would have made only a small and insignificant portion. The Alpine tribes seem to have inherited, with the mountains which separate them from each other, a disposition to federalism, which it is very difficult to destroy. Each citizen, proud of the soil which gave him birth, sees his country only in his own district, and has no ambition to participate in the government of another. Habituated to a certain routine and a certain number of ideas, he cannot look beyond them. The greater part of the Swiss countries embraced the revolution which destroyed the Helvetic league, only in the hope that the same revolution would supply them with the means of erecting themselves into little separate and independent republics. It is not then surprising that at the termination of the general confusion, seeing themselves further than ever from their object, they should have opposed with all their might the introduc-

tion of the plan of government laid down for them.

At Mendrisio, as well as in the other Italian bailiwicks, men's minds were divided between the Cisalpine and Helvetic states. On February 22d John Baptist Quadri of Lugano, Felician Pasta of Mendrisio, and Biondi of Blenio, appeared before the committee of government, calling themselves patriots, or of the Cisalpine party, who, after the check at Lugano, had retired near the lake of Compione. They demanded that a deputation should be sent on the part of Mendrisio to the directory at Milan, in order to solicit an union with this new republic. "You are already (said they) united with it by the same idiom, the same soil, and the same interests, whilst you are for ever separated from Helvetia by arid and almost impassable rocks; by the recollection of the evils its proconsuls have unworthily inflicted upon you; by your interests, your manners, your laws, your religion, and your language." They sent to the committee an address terminating in these words: "Remember that the Cisalpine

country gives you bread, while Helvetia can only furnish you with stones*.”

The committee replied, that the people alone, united in a general assembly, could pronounce upon an object of such importance, and that it should be convoked for this purpose within three days. The deputies, foreseeing that their mission would have the same fate here as at Lugano, hastened to report to their party the answer they had received; and some hours afterwards they re-appeared at the head of their people, drums beating and colours flying. When arrived at the market-place, they immediately encircled the tree of liberty. One of them, swarming up it, took off the hat of William Tell, and placed in its stead the Cisalpine cap. The mob took the hat, tore it in pieces, and threw them into a pond; and during all this tumult, the chiefs took care to distribute Cisalpine cockades in profusion; and proclamations announced their union to this republic.

But on the next day the tocsin was heard through the whole country. The

* This address, rendered into Italian, is deposited in the archives of Mendrisio.

communities of Stabio, Ligornetto, and Genestre had taken up arms to revenge the affront offered to the Helvetic ensigns. Battle was joined in Mendrisio; but a destructive fire from the windows of the houses obliged the assailants to retire, leaving behind them their killed and wounded. The troop of Cisalpines, intoxicated with their success, laid the whole country under contribution. The committee, who had no succours to expect from Helvetia, and who dreaded the resentment of France and the Cisalpines, saw no other means of preserving the communities from these vexations, than to exhort them to consent to the required union. A courier was therefore sent to Milan, charged with presenting this request, and especially with imploring support against the excesses of the self-called patriots.

The result of this step was the sending of Cisalpine troops to Mendrisio; but before their arrival the Luganese had armed themselves, attacked the Cisalpine party, defeated them near the village of Cavali, and pursued them beyond Mendrisio. Entering that town, they took their revenge

upon the tree of Cisalpine liberty, and threw some of the factious into prison. While they were engaged in this expedition, the Milanese troops arrived in the evening of March 4th; upon which, the men of Lugano were obliged to retire to their own territory, after having had a conference with the commander of those troops. The Cisalpine tree was again planted at Mendrisio, and all those who had been arrested were set at liberty.

The Luganese, however, would not remain contented with what they had done. They loudly complained to general Berthier, who, moved by their representations, sent one of his officers, general Chevalier, to sound the real intentions of the people. When Berthier was succeeded by general Brune in the command of the army of Italy, Lugano addressed itself to him also, and represented to him the regret of the Italian bailiwicks at being separated from the mother-country. The general, at length convinced of the justice of their complaint, and of the intrigues which had taken place, ordered a convocation of all the communities, and left them freely to

express their wishes for or against the Cisalpine union. The fate of the bailiwicks was soon decided: all the people by acclamation demanded to continue united to Switzerland, and the Cisalpine troops evacuated the country.

CHAPTER VI.

MEANWHILE, confusion and discord had in a few days spread over the whole of Switzerland. The Pays de Vaud on February 15th had accepted the plan of the new constitution. The communities of Toggenburg and Thurgovia, those of the canton of Schaffhausen, of Rheinthal, of Werdenberg, and of Sargans, had demanded liberty and independence. The governments of Lucerne, Zurich, Schaffhausen, Berne, and Soleure, yielding to the force of circumstances, had recognised the rights of man, proclaimed the sovereignty of the people, and declared themselves provisional governments, till a new order of things should be introduced. The

regeneration of Helvetia drew nigh; and a French army prepared to accelerate the downfall of the antient edifice.

It was now only that the chiefs of the small cantons were convinced of the necessity of giving independence to all their subjects. They found it was indispensable to concentrate all their force to resist the common enemy; and this could not be effected without satisfying the desires of the dependent districts, who were entirely bent upon becoming integral parts of the state. This sacrifice, which circumstances had rendered light, was then unanimously resolved upon.

In consequence, the people of Schwitz, convoked in general assembly on February 18th, deliberated upon the demand of those *under immediate jurisdiction**. Much eloquence was not wanted to persuade them. Four thousand men voted by acclamation the liberty of three thousand dependents, and granted them participa-

* By this title are understood the villages and hamlets on the borders of the lake of Zurich, the abbey of our Lady of the Hermits, or the country of Einsiedlen, and the individuals whom we have designated under the name of *inhabitants* of the canton.

tion in the rights of sovereignty*. All hearts were melted, and all were happy. Some hopes were also given to the countries of Gaster and Uznach. A committee was appointed to negotiate with the canton of Glaris the renunciation of the rights exercised over them. La Marche alone was forgotten, and treated with profound indifference.

But a courier from Uri disturbed the tranquillity of this family festival, by the news he brought of the disturbances in the bailiwick of Bellinzona. The bailiff Bizener was in great danger; and foreign troops must by this time have taken possession of the chief town and its environs. This invasion alarmed the canton of Uri, and spread terror and agitation all around. The people, for their own defence, wished to recall the troops the canton had sent to the aid of Berne, and communicated to Schwitz their complaints and apprehensions.

At this recital, consternation and silence

* An act of this event was drawn up on the following day, February 19, of which all the cantons were officially informed.

reigned through the assembly; but, in a short time, by an unanimous vote they gave proof of the interest inspired by the fate of their most antient allies, and of the confederacy. It was resolved to request Uri not to recall its troops from Berne, in order that a dangerous example might not be given to the other cantons; and a promise was made of sending to its succour the second battalion destined for Berne, and which was to be commanded by lieutenant-colonel Aloys Ab-Iberg, who was besides invested with the dignity of representative of the canton.

The courier was sent back with this answer, containing a resolution equally generous and prudent.

CHAPTER VII.

THE revolution had made a rapid progress in the Pays de Vaud: its new constitution was in action; the Bernese property had been sequestered, and the communities of the French part of the canton of Friburg prepared to follow the example of their neighbours.

Friburg, the chief town of the canton, without the means of defence, and menaced by a French army which was only two leagues from its walls, implored the aid of its neighbours. Berne sent it two members of the council of war, the tribune Wyss of Zurich, and the counsellor Muller of Uri, directed to concert the measures proper to be taken.

That radical vice of the federative constitution, the want of union in aims and efforts, continued to be painfully felt. Each canton waited till it was compelled by the circumstances of the moment, to do what it ought voluntarily to have put in execution at the very instant of the danger

of its neighbours: each of them calculated only for itself, and acted apart from the rest, without considering whether this or that measure could enter into a general and well-arranged plan.

The dependents of the bailiwicks of Baden, lower and upper, gave assurances of fidelity and submission to their sovereign, and were in consequence invited to take up arms for the common defence. The county of Sargans also offered to fight for the country, but on the condition of being recognised a free and independent state, and being aggregated to the alliance of the eight antient cantons.

At this period there was therefore no part of Switzerland which had not taken up arms on one side or the other, or which had not asked or offered succour against common enemy, except the canton of Valais. Schwitz expressed to Berne its surprise at this exception: so essential a member of the Helvetic confederacy ought not, it thought, to remain an idle spectator of the general calamity*.

* Letter from the canton of Schwitz to that of Berne, February 26th.

The danger still approached more nearly, and was likely soon to be at its height. The Bernese magistrates clearly perceived the speedy destruction of the league, and yet, with incredible pertinacity, persisted in the dangerous course they had adopted. Intrigue was their sole and last hope: from it they expected the means of preserving the direction of the vessel of the state, assailed on all sides by so violent a tempest.

Lucerne, whose rulers, more wise and prudent, had voluntarily abdicated the sovereign power, gave a second time to the city of Berne the only counsel which could restore peace to Helvetia. Its provisional government at the same time announced to the cantons of the Waldstaeten, that the troops of Lucerne were not destined to take the least part, directly or indirectly, in the disputes concerning the support of the aristocratical governments; but that they, as well as all the inhabitants of the canton, would fight with all their power, and exert the greatest energy, were a foreign enemy to threaten the integrity, the liberty, or the independence of the coun-

try: that, in consequence, orders had been given to the commander of the armed force, to station his troops at Langenthal and other points of the line, till they had learned on what conditions it was possible to preserve peace with the French republic.

Lucerne, in this letter, gave a complete enunciation of its sentiments concerning the existing circumstances. "We are persuaded (said the magistrates of this canton) that the Swiss nation in general will never be unanimously induced to the defence of the states menaced by foreign aggression, till the aristocratical governments shall have adopted the democratical system, and shall have given security that it is not for the maintenance of partial privileges and prerogatives, but for the preservation of the persons and properties, the liberty and country, of all, that they are summoned to the field.

"We conjure you (they proceeded) in the name of our country, to make before all the states of the Helvetic league a declaration similar to ours, that those whom it concerns, moved by our observations,

may yield to the force of circumstances, and, by a reform now become necessary, take from our enemies every plausible pretext to attack us. For, till this be done, the people and their governors, separated in interests and opinions, will be incapable of uniting upon any point; and the country, torn by internal dissensions, will remain defenceless, and become the prey of foreigners."

It was all in vain: the magistrates of Berne remained inflexible. General Erlach received full and unlimited power to make every hostile disposition that he might judge necessary, and to commence the attack, if, at the expiration of the armistice on the 2d of March, the French should not have evacuated the Pays de Vaud and the valley of St. Imer. Frisching, and Tscharner, who had been sent on January 27th to Payerne, in order to negotiate with general Brune, received directions also to demand this evacuation, as a previous and necessary condition to all accommodation.

Such was the spirit of the Bernese council. Several representatives of the confederacy were much displeas'd that Berne,

of its own motion, and without the least consultation with the rest, should have taken a resolution so important, and so nearly connected with the future fate of all Helvetia. It is well known what was the result of the negotiations begun at Payerne between general Brune and the Bernese deputies. Hostilities commenced: Soleure and Friburg fell under the power of the French; and Schawenburg, after his victory at Soleure, advanced with hasty steps towards Berne.

The disorder which reigned among the Swiss troops was such, that they appeared beaten before they had fought. The chiefs had no consistent instructions; the soldiers were divided in sentiment; they knew neither where nor why they were to fight.

In order to give an idea of this war, and of the manner in which it was carried on, we shall here exactly copy the narration which has been made to us by an ocular witness, who, during this short campaign, served in one of the battalions furnished by the canton of Schwitz. It is only by the assemblage of similar materials that it is

possible to trace a sketch of the confusion which accompanied the military operations of the troops of the different cantons.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE person above mentioned expresses himself as follows :

“ On the 2d of March, our commander, Aloys Reding, was required by colonel Graffenried to march his corps with all speed to the height of Oberveil near Buren, where we were informed that we should find the troops of Glaris and Uri. We began our march half an hour after receiving the order ; but scarcely were we on the road when we met not only a number of baggage and ammunition waggons, which were retiring, but a great many fugitives of the Bernese troops, who, in their rage against their officers, swore terribly, talked at random, and only agreed with one another in saying that they were sold and betrayed. Our officers in vain attempted to rally them, and to obtain their

company to our post of Oberveil; they continued their flight in great disorder.

“ We arrived towards evening at Oberveil. Most of the inhabitants had fled, carrying their effects along with them. They who remained acquainted us that we had nothing to do but retire, for it was not their intention to defend themselves against the French.

“ Mean time, the aide-de-camp Auf der Maur, whom our commander had sent to Buren to receive orders, returned to inform us, that for the present Graffenried could give us no positive instructions; but that, if any thing important should happen, we should be immediately apprised of it. He assured us that he had every where seen the greatest disorder in the Bernese army, amounting almost to a total dissolution; and that he had not met with the smallest vestiges of the troops of Glaris and Uri.

“ This news was calculated to change the joy and satisfaction of our men into sorrow. A sudden murmur was heard in the ranks; the soldiers surrounded their officers, crying, ‘ Let us return home; why

should we take upon ourselves the defence of a country, the inhabitants of which are either at war with each other, or, through their unwillingness to fight, throw out suspicions against their chiefs!

“This unpleasant disposition increased. We were alone; the succours of Uri and Glaris did not arrive; we had neither support nor instructions. Our captains consulted together, and, reflecting upon the positive order of our general assembly to bring back the troops in case the Bernese should refuse to defend themselves, ordered a retreat towards Bouchsee. It took place that very night.

“Lucerne, mean time, had taken the resolution of advancing its troops, and opposing them to the French. The advices received in this canton of the excessive demands of Brune, and of hostilities already begun in several points, had determined the representatives to this vigorous measure. They felt that a firm and assured countenance was become necessary. They, doubtless, blamed the unyielding haughtiness of the Bernese, who would not make a sacrifice for the good

of the country: but things being come to this point, national honour and the terms of alliance made it their duty to fly to the aid of their neighbours, without longer examining whether their preceding conduct had been right or wrong.

“ They ordered colonel Mohr, who was posted with his corps at the Langenthal, to advance immediately to that point of the canton of Berne at which his presence might be necessary. They added to this order expressions flattering to the troops of Lucerne. ‘ We are persuaded (said they) that you will know how to imitate the example of our ancestors---to conquer or die for your country.’ ”

Scarcely was this dispatch, meant to be read to the soldiery, sent off, than one arrived from colonel Mohr, dated at St. Urbain, March 2d, unfolding the melancholy state of affairs. “ The disorder (he wrote) is at its height, all are flying. We are at St. Urbain, Pfaffnau, Rotwyl, Altburen, and Grosdietwyl. The troops of Unterwalden and Zug have joined us, and at this moment 300 Bernese arrive, who have been engaged since two o’clock in

the morning, and are spent with fatigue. We have lodged them in the neighbouring barns. We send out extraordinary patrols, because we are ignorant what may happen during the night. I request of you with all possible speed to let me receive your orders respecting my future conduct."

The government of Lucerne without hesitation renewed its former orders, and added to them, that even upon the supposition of the total defeat of the Bernese troops, a requisition should be made of those of the other cantons within reach, and a new line of defence formed with them, which should be reinforced by the *Landsturm*, or general levy of the country, which had already been ordered. It further announced a second requisition made to all the states of Switzerland for sending reinforcements.

We shall now resume the narration of the ocular witness, who will more exactly instruct us with respect to the real state of things.

"A few hours after the entrance of our troops into Bouchsee, we saw general Er-

lach arrive, accompanied by his staff, and the relics of several Bernese battalions, which had received orders from government to abandon their first line of defence. We were rejoiced to see at length companions in arms, with whom we promised ourselves a valiant resistance. On a sudden, on March the 3d, at noon, there was a cry to arms: it was reported that the French were at Schupfen, a village at about a league's distance from our position. Our commander, Aloys Reding, had already once been to desire orders from general Erlach; but the latter, worn out by fatigue, was reposing, and could not be seen. He had then recourse to colonel Graffenried, who said to him, 'I can give you no instructions, not yet knowing myself what I am to do; but let us see what are your intentions?' 'To make a junction with the troops of Glaris and Uri which are at Berne,' replied Reding.

"In fact, we departed for Berne. During the march we beheld on all sides, to the right and left, the country covered with Bernese fugitives, who were making haste to regain their homes. When arrived

as far as the paper-mill, our commander made us file off to the left along the road to Worb, and went himself to Berne to acquaint the council of war that he should not enter the city with his corps, since the place was not in a state of defence. He demanded, on the contrary, that the troops of Uri and Glaris should come and join us near Worb.

“ The members of our council of war came to us during the night, and approved the resolution of Reding, who, on the next day, returned to Berne to concert measures with the commanders of Glaris and Uri. He found them coming out of the town-house, where they had been demanding of the Bernese government, in a note containing their reasons, their consent to retreat. Aloys Reding not only approved this note, but, accompanied by counsellor Muller of Uri, immediately proceeded to the town-house, and gave to the government, in a few words, a faithful report of the real state of things. “ Disorder (said “ he) paralyses every effort. The disunion “ of the people ; their want of confidence in “ the civil and military authorities ; the lan-

“ guage of the fugitives whom I met with
 “ yesterday on my whole march; and the
 “ conviction of the absolute impossibility
 “ of repelling the enemy in the midst of
 “ such circumstances; have altogether
 “ made such an impression on our troops,
 “ that it has been with the greatest diffi-
 “ culty that we have hitherto prevented
 “ their revolt. This disposition must ne-
 “ cessarily soon spread to the other auxi-
 “ liary corps. And how has it happened,
 “ that in these days of peril the contin-
 “ gents of three other cantons are not here,
 “ but keep at a distance on the limits of
 “ the canton of Lucerne? I have received
 “ orders from my sovereign not to sa-
 “ crifice my people uselessly: it is there-
 “ fore necessary that I execute my retreat
 “ to Worb, and make a junction with the
 “ troops of Saint Gall, Uri, and Glaris.”

“ We quitted Berne a few hours after-
 wards. On the next day, at four in the
 morning, a Bernese officer brought us a
 requisitory from his government to march
 in haste towards the Graueholtz. The
 members of the council of war and the
 commanders of Uri, Schwitz, Glaris, and

Saint Gall, assembled to deliberate upon this order. The result of the conference was, that it should not be obeyed. We knew neither the position of the enemy nor that of the Bernese; but we knew that the French were advancing in considerable force towards all those points, finding scarcely any resistance, and that the city of Berne was already making dispositions to surrender.

“These events induced us to continue our retreat. After a march of about two hours, we were joined by some of our officers, whom we had left behind for the purpose of obtaining information after our departure. They brought us intelligence of the success of the Bernese at Neuenegg under the command of Graffenried. The government of Berne again conjured us to stay. We acquainted our soldiers with this news, which revived their courage and enthusiasm: they demanded with loud cries to be led to the enemy, and swore that they would sacrifice themselves to the last man, were there the least remaining hope of saving Berne and resisting the French. We then marched back again.

“ Within less than an hour and quarter we were at Worb ; but on arriving there, all our hopes were destroyed, for Berne had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Nothing therefore remained for us but to quit Worb a second time, and return to our own country. We departed.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE Waldstaeten, mean time, were ignorant of what had passed, and had no suspicion of the capture of Berne. Vague rumours of battles lost, and unsuccessful engagements, had, indeed, arrived from time to time among the mountains, but the inhabitants had not been discouraged by them. The general assemblies of Uri and Unterwalden had taken place ; orders had been given for sending troops to the succour of Berne ; and the greatest preparations were making for the defence of the country itself.

The general assembly of Schwitz on the 4th of March took the same measures. A

hundred and fifty chasseurs, commanded by captain Hediger, and a battalion at the head of which was Aloys Gwerder, received orders to march to Lucerne, and to be disposed of wherever necessity might require. The general levy was ordered. All strangers who refused to concur in the public defence were obliged to quit the country. Corporal punishments were decreed against those who should spread false alarms. The general assembly caused all its former subjects, and especially those of the country of Marche, to be summoned to declare whether they would or would not unite themselves to the Waldstaeten, and contribute to the measures of defence. The council of war, which was supposed to be still at Berne, was enjoined every where to publish that the canton of Schwitz would treat as enemies all those who should favour the French, or afford them assistance.

Such were the unanimous dispositions of the people of this canton. Fear, hope, anger, pride, and all the passions which usually precede political storms, and prepare the way for brilliant and vigorous

enterprises, here exerted their influence. Everywhere, in the plains and valleys, an unexampled activity prevailed. The most contradictory reports, the falsest suppositions, circulated with astonishing rapidity, and threw the whole country into combustion.

Extremely alarming accounts arrived one upon another. On one side the Waldstaeten learned that Soleure and Friburg were upon the point of yielding: on the other, Lucerne acquainted them that the enemy had attacked Hutwyl and Arwangen, and that their general levy had been sent to oppose them: "Make haste (said the canton) to come to our assistance; celerity and great efforts alone can save us."

Uri, Unterwalden, Zug, and Schwitz, did not delay. They resolved to send the speediest succours. Uri on the same day summoned the canton of Schwitz to make a last effort to recall the inhabitants of la Marche to their duty, and promised, in case of failure, to make common cause with it in subduing the rebels.

The more the general danger augment-

ed, the more pressing the subject countries became in their demands upon the states of whom they were dependents. Thurgovia and the Rheinthal were in the same case, and made warm solicitations. The deputies at the diet of Arau, still hoping that the chance of war would be favourable to aristocracy, had hitherto eluded them with much dexterity; but when they saw that all was at hazard, they ceased to resist, and aggregated these countries to the Helvetic confederacy.

The inhabitants of Gaster expected their liberation with equal impatience. The sovereign cantons had sent thither deputies, who negotiated to this purpose with the popular committees; but the latter, dissatisfied with the delays of the negotiation, began to suspect chicanery, and a premeditated design of eluding their demands. The populace collected, and men armed with clubs and stakes, on the 5th of March, forcibly entered the convent of Schænis, where the deputies were at table with the ladies of the chapter. Terrified by this violence, they immediately granted full and entire liberty, with the simple re-

servation of the ratification of the cantons of Schwitz and Uri, whose mandataries they were.

The council of Schwitz was then constrained to bend to the imperious law of the strongest: On the succeeding day they solemnly recognised the independence of the countries of Gaster, Uznach, and Wesen; and remitted to the former the deed of mortgage which they possessed against it. All these concessions were clogged with no other conditions than that the liberated countries should oblige themselves to maintain the antient religion, to respect the properties of the chapter, to exact among themselves no transit duties upon merchandize going from one country to another, and not to be mutually burthensome in case of foreign war.

It was not till after all these events that the terrible news of the fall of Berne was known in the Waldstaeten. It then appeared that the danger was approaching irresistibly. The lower part of the canton of Unterwalden deliberated whether it would not be better to recall to the defence of the country the troops sent to Berne,

than to leave them at the disposal of the states nearest to the enemy. Schwitz decided in the negative.

Lucerne wrote to the Waldstaeten, that in the uncertainty whether the French would attack that canton also, it had taken all the measures for defence, by means of a general levy; and it conjured them, until the danger should have disappeared, to leave their contingent upon the border of the canton, to form a second line of defence. The council of Schwitz was of opinion that it ought to do still more. It gave orders to two battalions newly destined for Berne, immediately to advance to Lucerne. It caused these troops to be accompanied by several deputies, charged with scrutinizing the dispositions of the people of Lucerne, and discovering whether they were firmly resolved to conquer or die for their country. Uri and Unterwalden likewise sent troops and deputies with the same instructions; for the Waldstaeten, determined to oppose the most vigorous resistance to the enemy, refused to partake the dangers of their neighbours, further than they were assured of a proportional resolution on their parts.

With respect to the upper part of the canton of Unterwalden, it could not send a second contingent to Lucerne, having occasion for all the troops which it could muster, for its own security. Certain information was received that the French had already penetrated as far as Thunn. Instead of being able to give succour, this country was obliged itself to require aid of its neighbours.

The government of Zurich, still at variance with its people, who demanded liberty, also addressed the small cantons. A national assembly had been formed at Meila, a village situated upon the lake of Zurich, and under the eyes of the ruling city. This assembly held the language of authority, and arrogated to itself the sovereign power. The governors of Zurich required of the Waldstaeten to send troops upon the frontiers of their canton, in order to prevent a civil war; and to send deputies into the city itself for the purpose of consulting with them on the measures to be taken in the present crisis.

How desirous soever the people of these cantons might be to be useful to all their neighbours, they could not accede to this

demand. The canton of Schwitz even thought it a part of prudence to terminate amicably its own dispute with the inhabitants of la Marche, who continued in the resolution to obtain a solemn declaration of their liberty. An act of perpetual renunciation of all the rights which this canton had exercised over the country and its inhabitants was decreed on the 8th of March. Two deputies of Schwitz were commissioned to carry them this instrument, and had directions to solicit them in suitable terms to permit the union of the two countries, in order to consolidate their mutual prosperity by the bonds of friendship.

Never would the subject countries of Helvetia have sought to throw off the yoke, without the concurrence of events as extraordinary as they were numerous and unexpected. A long and bloody civil war might finally have ruined Switzerland, and have delivered it defenceless to the dominion of foreign powers; but the union of all the causes which brought on its astonishing revolution was necessary to induce its governors voluntarily, at least in

appearance, to desist from those powers and prerogatives, which they regarded as a lawful patrimony and a hereditary apanage, that could not be contested them.

Meantime, while the Waldstaeten, after having fraternised their former subjects, were preparing for a vigorous defence, they unexpectedly learned that France did not mean to act hostilely against them, or against the other cantons. General Brune had positively assured the deputies of Lucerne, as well in writing as by word of mouth, that he had no orders to pass the territories of the cantons of Friburg, Berne and Soleure. The minister Talleyrand had written to the same purpose in the name of the French directory; and in his letter he felicitated the canton of Lucerne on its spontaneous revolution, effected on the 31st of January. These happy tidings had been immediately published in the town by sound of trumpet, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants; after which, the government of the canton, dismissing the auxiliaries of the Waldstaeten and of the other states, expressed its grati-

tude, and declared to them that it did not mean to separate its interest from theirs; adding, that although full of confidence in the promises of the French government, it would not cease to watch over the common safety, and to take all the precautions which might assure it.

The troops of the Waldstaeten then returned to their homes, but with orders to hold themselves ready to march at the first signal. This measure appeared necessary; for, notwithstanding the sudden change in the face of affairs, who could hope that, after events so disastrous, the tranquillity of Switzerland would be instantly and durably re-established?

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

IT is universally acknowledged that the French government, notwithstanding all the good fortune attending the operations of its victorious armies, had not flattered itself with so easy a conquest over the Helvetic league. If the Swiss, more united, had made a proper use of the advantages which two victories over the French would have procured them, they might have attacked France on its weakest side, have made an useful diversion, and, perhaps, have given the emperor a pretext for renewing the war, and time to come to their succour.

The directory foresaw what might have happened; for which reason, in its quarrel with the three cantons in the neighbourhood of France, it laboured with so much dexterity to separate their interests from those of the rest of Switzerland. This it was which induced it to employ all imaginable artifices to paralyse the action of

the small cantons; to be so lavish, here of promises, there of menaces; to give, one after another, to general Brune and its agents in Switzerland and the neighbouring states, orders so perplexed and contradictory: this, in fine, was the cause of the excessive joy testified by the directors at Paris, when they received the unexpected intelligence of the surrender of Friburg, Berne, and Soleure. They had not been able to conceive that they should, at so small an expense, conquer these last ramparts of liberty, and subdue men whom Europe had long been accustomed to reckon in the number of its bravest warriors.

But the breach was now made; the ancient charm of the inviolability of the Helvetian territory had been destroyed. It only remained to France, in the uncertainty of her present position with respect to the emperor, to finish what she had so fortunately begun. The conquest of Switzerland and of the formidable barrier of the Alps would procure her the double advantage of covering the weak part of her own frontiers, and menacing the hereditary states of the emperor. All necessary

measures were taken for attaining this end, which was at the same time an infraction of equity, sound policy, and the law of nations. Nothing could stop the execution of the projects formed by the governors of France: they reckoned as nothing the hatred of the Swiss, and the execration of all Europe, justly due to their meditated perfidy. Men habituated to recognise no other law than that of the strongest, and no other divinity than blind fortune, the associate of all their enterprises, could not be restrained in their ambitious designs by considerations of propriety and justice. They wanted nothing but a pretext to justify, at least in appearance, their odious attempt; and this pretext was soon found in the very innocence of the peaceable people whose repose they meant to violate.

The herdsmen who inhabited the Helvetic Alps, in the consciousness of their wise and prudent conduct, thought themselves perfectly detached from the quarrels of France. They felt, indeed, a secret horror for a people who had been weak enough to stain themselves with so many

crimes in the name of liberty; but they had always studiously avoided every thing which might draw upon themselves the anger of such powerful neighbours. Their magistrates hoped that, by standing aside, the storm would not reach them, but would spend its ravages upon the aristocratic cantons. Yet they could not shake off a secret inquietude on reflecting upon the superior strength of France, on the facility she would find in subduing by her arms the rest of Switzerland, and especially on the very significant project of a general constitution for Helvetia, which began to circulate on all sides.

The canton of Schwitz first came to a decision, and resolved, at any price, to ascertain its future lot. It began by abolishing even the appearance of any remaining injustice with which it might be charged; and for that purpose it passed a decree in the general assembly on the 10th of March, that all under its jurisdiction, who had not already obtained an express declaration of their liberty and independence, should henceforth enjoy them, and

should, from the present moment, be aggregated to the title of citizens of the canton. It then convoked the cantons of Uri, Glaris, and Unterwalden, to a conference at Brunnen, in order to concert with them an embassy to the French general, and to agree upon the measures of defence which might become necessary. The canton of Lucerne, and the upper part of Unterwalden, had already inquired of general Brune if they had any thing to fear on the part of France. The general made the following answers:

To Lucerne.

“CITIZENS,

“The great nation has not ceased to prove its regard for the ties which attach it to the canton of Lucerne. It has given no orders for undertaking hostilities against this country: the great nation, on the contrary, *desires to preserve its antient relations* with the canton of Lucerne, well convinced that, through its love to liberty, it will always be worthy of being the country of the descendants of William Tell.

“Berne, 20 Ventose, Year 6.”

To Unterwalden.

“CITIZENS,

“The great nation has not yet ceased to honour those ties which unite it to the canton of Unterwalden. It therefore has not ordered the least hostility against this canton. The great nation, on the contrary, *desires to preserve its antient relations with the canton of Unterwalden.*”

Berne, date as above.

These solemn assurances from Brune were calculated to restore to the confederates the hope which they had almost totally lost. Nevertheless, the deputies of the four small cantons above named assembled at Brunnen, according to the invitation of Schwitz. That of Zug joined them. Schwitz proposed an address to the French general, which was agreed upon, and entrusted to a deputation to carry it to the head-quarters at Berne. It was expressed in these terms :

“CITIZEN GENERAL,

“The representatives of the democratical cantons of Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden,

Zug, and Glaris, have the honour to communicate to you in the name of their principals, that is, of the general assemblies of their respective cantons, the following observations :

“ None among us can believe that it is in the intentions or the principles of the French government to disturb the small democratical cantons in the exercise of a liberty, which the French nation seems to have had in view to give to the rest of Switzerland : nevertheless, citizen general, we cannot conceal from you, that the approach of your troops, the uncertainty of their destination, and the rumours which circulate on this subject, have excited among us the liveliest disquiet. We should not be worthy of the esteem of the great nation, were we to attach a less value to the maintenance of that liberty which our ancestors, to whom you still assign an honourable place in your daily writings, have acquired to us by their valour and the effusion of their blood.

“ As a partaker and witness of the glorious efforts of your great nation, you, citizen general, ought better than any one.

to know what is the influence of the enthusiasm of liberty upon a free and courageous people.

“ Notwithstanding all the rumours propagated, notwithstanding all our apprehensions, the confidence which it is our satisfaction to have in the justice of the French government has not for a moment been shaken.

“ It is this confidence which has determined the assemblies of our people to send you representatives for the purpose of obtaining from you, citizen general, the consoling promise that the French troops shall not enter our territories, and the positive declaration, that the directory has no intention to disturb us in the exercise of our religion, of our independence, of our liberty, and our political organization. This democratical organization possesses our love and attachment, as a good mother which for ages has procured our happiness. It has consecrated as its principles, in all their purity, the rights of man and the sovereignty of the people ; it is therefore in perfect consonance with that adopt-

ed by the French republic. We have anticipated the sole objection which might have been made to us: some democratical cantons had subjects or dependents; they no longer have any. All are free as ourselves; and by this salutary reform of our organization, we have removed every thing which might be contrary to the principles of France.

“ Deign then, citizen general, to give us some assurance of the friendly dispositions of the French directory, and to be convinced, that we desire nothing more ardently than to live in peace and good understanding with the great nation.

“ Accept from an honest people of mountaineers, who know no other goods than their religion and liberty, and possess no other treasures than their herds and their industry, the sincerest promise to do every thing compatible with their freedom and independence, in order to give proof of their attachment to the French republic.

“ Accept also, citizen general, the solemn promise which we make in the name of our cantons, never to bear arms against

the French republic, and never to ally ourselves with its enemies. The necessity of defending our liberty can alone put arms into our hands.

“ May these open and sincere declarations procure to us in exchange those which we respectfully request of you to grant! In that case, our fears and inquietudes will give place to the sentiments of gratitude and affection which we shall eternally vow to the French government, and its worthy general.

“ Berne, 16th March, 1798.

“ *Health and Respect,*

“ The Representatives of the People of Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden, Zug, and Glaris:

Thaddeus Schmid, landamman
Schmid, captain-general
De Menteln, counsellor

} of Uri.

Bueller, statthalter
Ab-Iberg, antient statthalter
Castell, director of the salt-works
Metler, deputy

} of Schwitz.

Wursch, landamman
Zelger, captain-general
Xavier Wursch
Joseph-Mary Christen

} of Unterwalden.

<i>Charles-Francis Kayser</i>	}	of Zug.
<i>Francis-Joseph Andermatt</i>		
<i>Antony Hess</i>		
<i>Aloys Staub</i>		
<i>Joseph Baumgartner</i>		
<i>Zwölfel, president</i>	}	of Glaris."
<i>Zopfe, member of the council</i>		
<i>Muller, the same</i>		

General Brune not only received these deputies with all the distinction due to their character, but gave them also an answer which dissipated all their fears, and restored them to the greatest security. It was as follows:

BRUNE, *to the Democratical Cantons*

" CITIZENS,

" I assure the representatives of the democratical cantons, that, in the events which have drawn the French army into Switzerland through the *provocations* of the oligarchs of Berne, the democratical cantons have never ceased to preserve the friendship of the French republic, and that it is not among its designs to carry its arms into their territory.

" Berne, 26 Ventose, year 6."

The Waldstaeten, upon so positive an

assurance, gave themselves up to the agreeable illusion, that their danger was over, and thought that the operations of France had no other end than that of humbling the pride of the aristocratical governments. Their hope was increased by the events passing in their neighbourhood. The city of Zurich, by an arrangement concluded at Kusnacht on March 10th, had at length abdicated the sovereign power. This circumstance was very fortunate for the small cantons, especially for that of Schwitz; for, in case Zurich had been inclined to carry things to the last extremity, they could not have been dispensed from sending them assistance, as they had formally engaged to do a few days before*.

* The deputies Abbeg and Balthasar Holdemer of Schwitz, delegated to the country of la Marche, with orders to declare it free and annex it to the canton of Schwitz, risked on this occasion, by a step equally arbitrary and imprudent, the setting of their canton essentially at variance with that of Zurich. They announced to the commissioners of la Marche, that Schwitz had determined to engage the town of Zurich to acquiesce in the demands of the people of the country, and, in case of

The only thing which could still be an object of inquietude to the democratical cantons, was the project of a republic one and indivisible which was circulated through Switzerland. But this subject of alarm also vanished, when Brune of his own accord announced a Rhodanic and a Helvetian republic, and a third under the name of the republic of William Tell. The last was to be composed of the smaller cantons, who were to preserve their antient forms and usages. Respect for these countries, which were at the same time the cradle of liberty, and the birth-place of those heroes to whom even France had erected monuments, seems to have given rise to this project; but it was of short duration.

Men who deplored the loss of the strength of Switzerland, and expected its recovery only from the most absolute unity, combated this principle of federalism. Brune yielded to their reasonings, and unity was resolved upon. To this

its refusal, to constrain it by force. The deputies had never been authorised to make such a declaration.

effect, he published the following proclamation, dated Berne, the 22d of March, 1798*.

BRUNE, *General in Chief, to the Citizens of all the Cantons.*

“ In the midst of the last efforts of oligarchy against liberty, and of the effervescence produced by the shock of passions, a desire was expressed of dividing Helvetia into two republics; but repugnance to such a division was soon felt by all the Swiss, and wishes tending to obtain republican unity have been manifested from all parts.

“ Touched by the numerous representations even of those who had at first solicited the division of Switzerland, I readily yield to their present desire for unity, and the more so, as I am convinced that it is now that of the majority of the nation.

“ In consequence, the deputies who were to have repaired to Lausanne to form a legislative body, will, immediately after their nomination, assemble at Arau, and

* It was followed by a second of the same tenor from commissioner Lécarter.

there, joined to the deputies of the other cantons, they will form the legislative body of the HELVETIC REPUBLIC, ONE AND INDIVISIBLE.”

CHAPTER II.

THIS proclamation was a thunder-clap to the small cantons, and at once replunged them into the same alarms and dangers from which, a few days before, they thought themselves for ever delivered: but it became also the signal of war, and of the most vigorous preparations for defence. Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden, Zug, and Glaris, knew the feebleness of their means, and the strength of the colossal power with which they had to contend: but, determined to make any sacrifice in order to preserve, if it were still possible, their country and constitution, they did not calculate the disadvantage of their situation, and only listened to the voice of their country crying for succour. Cotent-

poraries will not assign its just value to this generous self-devotion; but posterity will be more equitable, and it is for posterity to judge the conduct of this people.

Uri invited its allies to speak in the most energetic manner, and to sacrifice every thing rather than accept the new constitution. On the demand of the canton of Schwitz, it convoked all the others of the Waldstaeten, with Appenzell and the country of St. Gall, to a solemn conference, in which each was to pronounce whether it were proper to receive law from a stranger, and abandon without resistance a system of government which had been accompanied by a felicity of several centuries; or to save the honour of the Swiss name by the employment of all their force, in the most vigorous defence.

The circular letter of the canton of Uri electrified all the parts of Switzerland to which it was addressed. Every where were seen, not only men in the vigour of life, but old men, children, and even women, without regard to the weakness of sex or

age, who prepared to offer their arms for the service of their country.

The deputies of the five small cantons united on the 1st of April at Schwitz, to hold the assembly convoked by Uri, and weigh the destinies of the government and religion. Those of Unterwalden were behind the rest; for the people of part of this canton still wavered between the option of an energetic conduct, and that of an accommodation with the foreign power. A letter from the canton of Lucerne had caused this momentary hesitation. When Schwitz had learned what was passing, it also wrote, forcibly urging the faith of treaties, and conjuring the canton not to separate itself from the common cause: but the courier charged with this dispatch had not reached the borders of Unterwalden, before the latter had already by its decision anticipated the wish of its ally. It sent deputies to Schwitz, who made known its determination rather to perish under the attacks of the enemy, than to abandon its alliance with those cantons with which it had partaken the happiness of former ages.

A particular circumstance rendered the first meeting of the democratical states singularly interesting, and greatly contributed to augment the common enthusiasm. Deputies from Toggenburg, Rheinthal and Sargans, who were not expected to appear in this assembly, came and demanded, in the names of their respective people, to enter into the league of the five cantons for the defence of the country. The deputies of Appenzell and of the country and city of St. Gall also attended the meeting.

The assembly of the five cantons was touched with this application, as an authentic proof of genuine public spirit; but, for want of sufficient powers, it could not venture to take upon itself to admit them in its bosom, and grant them deliberative powers. Prudence, besides, and the fear of giving a plausible ground of displeasure to the French general, who had already marked out these countries by name in the territorial division of the new republic, sufficiently justified this refusal. They were, however, permitted to form a separate assembly; and it was resolved that

each should draw up a memorial to the French directory, both which should be sent conjointly and in the same manner.

These two assemblies were unanimous in their resolution absolutely to reject the proposed constitution; and, if circumstances should require it, to make the greatest final efforts for the preservation of the old one.

When these assemblies had finished their conferences, there arrived at Schwitz deputies from the country of la Marche, who offered to make common cause with the five antient cantons; but it was signified to them that they came too late, and access was refused to them.

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the upper part of the canton of Unterwalden, whose deputies were at Schwitz, on a sudden changed their intention, and returned to that which they had first manifested. The people were well convinced of their right to maintain inviolate the constitution of their ancestors; but they calculated at the same time, that sooner or later they should be constrained to submit to force. They

took the tenderest interest in the fate of the most antient members of the confederacy, but recognised the necessity of uniting with the majority of the Helvetic nation, and of sacrificing individual political existence to the general good, and to the prevention of a civil war. The lower part of this canton, and even the canton of Schwitz, sent in vain deputies to the general assembly of Sarnen*: the people would not permit them to appear in the assembly, and wrote immediately, in concert with the abbey of Engelberg, to announce to the French general at Berne their acceptance of the Helvetic constitution. During this interval, general Brune had resigned the chief command of the French army in Helvetia to general Schawenburg.

The defection of this part of Unterwalden irritated the small cantons, but did not discourage them, or divert them from their resolution. Whatever were to be its success, it could not fail to be glorious and praise-worthy.

On the 5th of April the deputies of the

* Sarnen is the chief town of the upper part.

small cantons* departed for Berne, with the intention of proceeding to Paris, after having obtained the consent of the French authorities; but Schawenburg, and the commissioner of government Lecarlier, to whom they addressed themselves, refused them passports. The order had already been given for metamorphosing the feeble relics of the confederacy into a republic, one and indivisible: it was now the business of the agents of the directory to find pretexts, and imagine grievances, in order to put its inflexible will in execution.

These pretexts were not long waited for. The peasants of Schwitz were irritated against the people of Lucerne, who had consented to the indivisibility of Switzerland; and had erected trees of liberty in every village. The places on the borders of these two cantons had perpetual intercourse with each other, and quarrels on account of their different opinions could not fail to arise between the inhabitants.

* These deputies were Aloys Muller of Uri; Lewis Weber of Schwitz; Zweifel of Glaris; Joseph Blum and John-Jacob Mesmer of St. Gall. Some were also sent by Appenzell, Toggenburg, the Rheinthal, and Sargans.

The consequence of one of these was, that the people of Schwitz came to Greppen to cut down the tree of liberty, and strike the Helvetic tri-coloured standard, which they carried off in triumph to Kusnacht. In other places, the peasantry of Lucerne united with that of Schwitz in committing similar excesses; and no measures of rigour taken by the governments of these two cantons were sufficient to put an end to them, so much were the minds of the people heated.

Schawenburg and Lecarlier, attentive to all that passed, eagerly seized the occasion of these partial disorders to declare enmity against those cantons who refused union with the Helvetic republic. They therefore sent back with haughtiness and disdain the deputies who came to wait upon them; and in consequence, the addresses which the latter were to present to the French directory never arrived at their destination: but we think it our duty to lay them before our readers, and at the same time to communicate to them the note which the deputies presented to the commissioner Lecarlier. These se-

veral writings bear the stamp of a truly republican spirit, and of the dignity and noble frankness of their authors, and deserve preservation in the annals of history.

To Commissioner Lecarlier.

“The representatives of the people of the most antient democracies in Switzerland, justly alarmed at the consequences of the important changes now going on, but still more justly encouraged by the generous declarations of the French government with regard to the democratical states, have lately been assembled at Schwitz in order to deliberate on the conduct to be held by them in the present circumstances, and on the means to be employed for the preservation of the truly free and democratical constitution of the people of these cantons, who would be reduced to despair by the loss of it. This assembly, filled with confidence in the sentiments of justice which animate the executive directory of the French republic, had resolved to address to it the most urgent representations on this important object, and its deliberations on this head

were about to be terminated, when the deputies of Appenzell, of the city and country of St. Gall, of Toggenburg, of the Two Religions, of the Rheinthal and Sargans, arrived also at the place of assembly, and desired to join it, in order to treat of the interests of their people.

“ Although the constitutions of these countries are similar to ours, and they equally share our apprehensions and our wishes; some difference in the motives, and other particular considerations, have prevented us from joining their observations to ours in one and the same address; but we should have thought that we justly merited the reproach of equitable persons, had we dissuaded our allies from a step, from which, for ourselves, we expect the happiest consequences.

“ We are equally persuaded, citizen commissioner, that neither you nor the executive directory will disapprove our conduct with respect to these countries.

“ In taking the liberty of communicating to you the memorial which we have the honour to address to the French directory, we thought it right

to inform you of the preceding circumstance.

“ Your humanity, your justice, the numerous proofs of goodwill which you have given to our nation, and your knowledge of the true situation of our democratical states, assure us of the zeal you will employ in supporting our respectful observations before the directory, and of the new claims you will acquire to our eternal gratitude.

“ Accept, &c.

“ Schwitz, 5th April, 1798.

“ In the name of the Representatives of the Communities of the Democratical Cantons of Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden, Zug, and Glaris.

WEBER, landamman and banneret.

SCHUELLER, antient landamman.

JOHN ANTONY ULRICH, secretary
to the canton of Schwitz.

“ *Memorial of the Five Democratical Cantons, addressed to the French Directory.*

“ CITIZEN DIRECTORS,

“ The French republic, in declaring itself a friend and ally of the Swiss nation,

and promising to respect its right of sovereignty, appeared at first to have only had in view to favour the efforts of the inhabitants of the aristocratical states, for the resumption of that primitive liberty of which the democratical cantons were the source and authors.

“Tranquillised by these principles, so solemnly recognised by the French republic, we were very far from believing that it meant any prejudice to the liberty and independence of the popular governments, whilst it was pleased to propose them as models to the other people of Switzerland.

“Meantime, the approach of armies, the uncertainty of their destination, and public rumour, all soon concurred in spreading an alarm among us likewise, the peaceful inhabitants of the valleys of Switzerland. But our opinion of your equity, citizen directors, and our confidence that your conduct will always correspond with your principles and promises, were able without difficulty to calm our apprehensions.

“We chose, from the bosom of our general assemblies, representatives of the

people, whom we sent to general Brune at Berne. The reception which he gave them, and the written and verbal assurances which they brought from him, entirely confirmed us in the security to which we had ventured to resign ourselves.

“ We had scarcely begun to enjoy the benefits of this security, when on a sudden we received, from the provisional government of Soleure, the plan of a new Helvetic constitution, and a pressing invitation to concur in it; at the same time we learned, though in an indirect manner, that all the cantons of Switzerland would be obliged to submit to it.

“ We can find no expressions strong enough to paint to you, citizen directors, the consternation which seized us upon the receipt of intelligence which the concurrence of so many circumstances rendered so improbable.

“ In vain should we attempt to describe to you the grief with which it fills our souls. Nothing, in our estimation, can equal the misfortune of losing the constitution founded by our ancestors, adapted to our manners and wants, and cemented

by the enjoyment, during several centuries, of all the comfort and happiness of which our peaceful valleys are susceptible.

“ Citizen directors, if it be possible that you have conceived the project of making some changes in the form of our popular governments, permit us to confer with you on this point in the language of freedom and sincerity.

“ Permit us, in the first place, to ask you plainly if you have found any thing in our constitutions which is adverse to the principles of yours.

“ Where can you find a mode of government which more exclusively than ours puts the exercise and the right of sovereignty in the hands of the people? in which civil and political equality is more perfect? in which every citizen enjoys a larger sum of liberty? We bear no other chains than the light ones of religion and morality; no other yoke than that of the laws which we have given ourselves. Elsewhere, perhaps, the people may have much to desire in these different respects; but with us, the descendants of William

Tell, who have maintained without the least alteration the constitution he left us, and for the preservation of which we speak to you with all the energy inspired by the consciousness of pleading the most just of causes; with us there exists but a single, an unanimous wish, that of remaining subject to the government which providence and the courage of our ancestors have bequeathed to us. And what government, citizen-directors, can be more consonant to yours?

“ We, the people of these countries, whose sovereignty you have so often promised to respect, we are the sovereigns of these small cantons; we elect our magistrates and displace them at our pleasure; the sections of our cantons elect our councils, which are our representatives, the representatives of the people.

“ Such, in the abstract, are the bases of our constitutions. Do they not rest upon principles similar to those on which your government is founded? How, then, can you have a wish to annihilate our happiness by infringing our political organiza-

tion? What can be your motives to do it, and what kind of advantages can you derive from it?

“Supposing even that you had the power, we believe that your justice will not permit you to employ it for the introduction among us, by force, of a constitution which scarcely the hundredth part of our citizens will be able to comprehend.

“We are a people of herdsmen and mountaineers, who, faithful to the simple manners of our ancestors, have been able hitherto to live with few wants, and to content ourselves with our happy mediocrity. The small revenues of our cantons would scarcely supply salaries for the great number of public functionaries which the new constitution would give us. Resources must be found in the properties of individuals, which, for the most part very moderate, would in a short time be exhausted, and this inevitable consequence would threaten our country with speedy and total ruin.

“Do not then be surprised, citizen directors, if the certainty of this afflicting prospect causes us to abhor this new order of things, and to regard it as a

burthen, the weight of which exceeds our strength.

“ Your profound views in politics, your exact knowledge of the character, the situation, and the resources of the people who surround you, will come to the support of these representations, and your humanity, more eloquent than ourselves, will plead with you for us.

“ The great nation, whose glory consists in filling the annals of its history with acts of justice and generosity, can never sully them with the recital of the oppression of a peaceable people, who have done it no harm, and who have neither the will nor the power of ever injuring it.

“ Far from dreading such a fate, your known principles lead us to foster the consoling hope of soon learning that you have planned the new constitution only for those parts of Switzerland which shall request it of you; and that, in the midst of the changes you are about to effect, you will suffer the democratical governments to subsist, as so many monuments of your admiration for the heroes whose work they are, and whose noble deeds you have so often extolled.

“ Deign, citizen directors, to give us another proof of your benevolent intentions towards the small cantons, by ordering that the communication between them and the rest of Switzerland may not be interrupted.

“ Especially deign to free us soon from our cruel uncertainty; and then our peaceful valleys shall resound with the expression of our gratitude towards the great nation and its worthy magistrates.

“ Schwitz, 5th of April, 1798.

“ In the name of the Communities and Councils of the Democratical Cantons of Uri, Schwitz, &c.

Schmid, antient landamman } of Uri.

Schmid, captain-general } of Uri.

Weber, landamman and banneret } of Schwitz.

Schueller, antient landamman } of Schwitz.

F. A. Wursch, landamman } of Unterwalden.

Zelger, captain-general } of Unterwalden.

Francis-Joseph Andermatt } of Zug.

Charles-Francis Kayser } of Zug.

Antony Hess } of Zug.

Aloys Staub } of Zug.

Joseph Baumgarten } of Zug.

Zweifel, landamman } of Glaris.

Felix Muller, statthalter } of Glaris.

Antony Ulrich, secretary of the canton of Schwitz.”

Memorial of the People of Appenzell, St. Gall, Toggenburg, Rheinthal, and Sargans, to the Executive Directory of the French Republic.

“CITIZEN DIRECTORS,

“Your example has roused men from their long apathy. Since the great nation has recalled liberty to the earth, all have successively shaken off their chains.

“With what satisfaction must not the heart of the Swiss patriot be filled, when he reflects that from us the great nation took the first sparks of that sacred fire, kindled by our ancestors, whose valour struck the first blows against the tyrants of Europe!

“We, citizen directors, are the descendants of these men, and, we venture to say, are worthy of this honourable name; for, by means of the political regeneration which has taken place among us, we have re-entered into the possession of that ancient liberty which we had lost through the course of time, but which our brethren have generously and voluntarily re-

stored to us, by sacrificing the sovereignty which they exercised over their equals and brothers.

“ In a word, citizen directors, we are all free at present, after the model of the democratical canton of Appenzell, which for three centuries and a half has enjoyed the rights of man in their plenitude, and which, together with us, demands the preservation of its democratical constitution.

“ What then was our surprise when there was suddenly presented to us a constitution hitherto unknown to us !

“ Permit us, citizen directors, with all the liberty that becomes free men, to communicate to you our sentiments on this head.

“ We ask of you, in the first place, why it is wished to democratize us ? Is not our constitution sufficiently democratical ? Is not our people the sole sovereign ; the authority by which laws are made ; which chooses its magistrates according to a representative system, planned in such a manner that a purer is not easy to be conceived ? These are facts which it is

impossible to render dubious: we hope, therefore, citizen directors, that you will approve the sole wish we form, that of remaining in the repose which we enjoy, with the power of governing ourselves according to the example of our ancestors, and our brothers, the democratical cantons.

“ Further, the constitution which is proposed to us is suited neither to our local positions, our manners, our customs, nor, especially, to that poverty which is the true wealth of a pastoral people; since it is the most certain shield against factitious wants, and leaves us content and happiness. This constitution, applicable; perhaps, to richer countries, would soon have annihilated our domestic resources. Would not that be the greatest misfortune which could happen to us? and would you, citizen directors, prepare the way for our ruin and that of our children by forcing us to accept it?

“ No, citizen directors, you cannot! your pure and upright intentions, your republican principles, the justice which di-

rects your decisions, all assure us that we are secure from the danger with which we have been threatened.

“ May these few words inform you of our desires, of our wishes, of our hopes! Will you listen to them? Yes, you will; and then we shall recognise in you, and in the great nation which you so worthily represent, the firmest supporters of Swiss liberty.

“ Schwitz, 5th of April, 1798.

“ The Representatives of Appenzell, Saint Gall, &c.

BISCHOFBERGER,	BOLT,
SPIESS,	DUDLY,
KUNZLE,	GSCHWEND,
MEYER,	BERNOLD.”

CHAPTER III.

WHEN the deputies of the small cantons were returned home, and had apprised their principals of the bad success of their mission, the rage and indignation of the people arose to their height. A general insurrection took place in all the country between the lakes of Waldstaeten and Constance, and through the whole chain of the Alps. All the heat and fury that passion, enthusiasm, and fanaticism could inspire, was the consequence of these tidings. Fathers and mothers exhorted their children to die for their country. Some invoked the anger of heaven upon the destroyers of the liberty and religion of the Swiss; others prophesied and announced the divine vengeance. The disastrous days of Morgarten and Naefels seemed to be renewed, except that France had taken the place of Austria: the tree of liberty which she was desirous of planting, in the eyes of the enraged inhabitants of the Waldstaeten, was the abhorred cap of

Gesler, before which they were to be compelled to humble themselves*.

Schawenburg and Lecarlier, without fearing the consequences of the despair which they were about to infuse into the mountaineers, hastened their operations. The commissioner addressed the following proclamation to the five small cantons, and those of Appenzell, St. Gall, and Sargans†.

“ CITIZENS,

“ I have made known to your deputies the express will of the French directory, of which they will apprise you. To resist

* In pictures, long anterior to the French revolution, representing the action of William Tell, the latter is always clad in the national Helvetic colours, green, red, and yellow; but it is singular enough, that Gesler, a person whose memory is odious to the Swiss, is constantly dressed from head to foot, as well as his satellites, in the three French colours. This observation may be verified in the chapels of William Tell at Burglen, Uri, and other places. This circumstance has contributed more, perhaps, than has been imagined, to the decided aversion of the inhabitants of the small cantons towards the French.

† Dated from Berne, 22 Germinal, year 6: 11th of April, 1798.

this will, would on your parts be a conduct equally remote from prudence and from your personal interests. Your welfare and quiet demand from you to unite with the other parts of Switzerland; the social contract which will connect you is adapted to your respective situations. The new legislative body is charged to make such changes in it as may be judged necessary.

“ Attempts have been made to prepossess you against the new Helvetic constitution, and to paint it to you in the blackest colours. Men who wish to sacrifice the happiness and repose of their country to their private interests, have told you that this constitution deprived you of your liberty, fettered your commerce, overburthened you with imposts, and attacked liberty of conscience. I mean by an open and honest declaration to rectify the erroneous ideas under which you labour on these subjects.

“ The sovereignty will always remain in the hands of the people, since the electors who are to nominate the public functionaries will themselves be nominated by the people. This mode of election, equally

democratical with that which has been in use among you, will have the advantage over it of preventing all disorders.

“The new constitution, far from fettering your commerce, or hindering the increase of your herds, will open to you the markets of France, by giving you new titles to the good-will of the great nation. Taxes will not be levied in proportion to the public functionaries whom you are to nominate, but will be portioned with justice, according to a mode relative to the nature and extent of your resources. The constitution guaranteeing in a positive manner the freedom of worship, it would be superfluous to add any thing on this head.

“I conceive that I have now answered your principal objections against the Helvetic constitution, in a manner which entitles me to hope that, by your ready acceptance of it, you will spare yourselves the incalculable evils which will be the inevitable result of a longer resistance on your part.

“(Signed) LECARLIER.”

Schawenburg accompanied this address with hostile proceedings. He caused on the same day to be printed and dispersed with profusion, placards importing that the priests of St. Gall, Toggenburg, and Appenzell, as well as those of the five smaller cantons, should be responsible with their heads for the public tranquillity; and that if, within the space of twelve days, the primary assemblies of these countries should not be convoked to vote on the acceptance of the constitution, the ecclesiastics and governors should be declared accomplices of the oligarchs, considered and treated as such*. Not content with these menaces, and for the greater certainty of success, Schawenburg caused all communication to be cut off between these and the other cantons.

But these hostile measures, these menaces and imperious declarations, did not humble the spirits of the mountaineers; on the contrary, they inspired them with new energy, by inflaming their rage and

* This declaration is dated from Berne, 22 Germinal, year 6.

pride. Habituated for ages past to be treated by the European powers upon the footing of a free and independent people, how strange must appear to them the denominations of rebels and fanatics which the French agents lavished upon them without reason! France, which, following the example of the Swiss republics, had proclaimed in the face of the world liberty and equality of rights, suddenly advanced to violate the country of William Tell, and spread through it the ravages of war, because it would not receive law from a stranger! France, which preached 'war to thrones and peace to cottages', now caused its armies to march against the wretched cabins of those herdsmen whose felicity had so long been an object of envy! France, which so lately continued to declare its friendship towards the Swiss democracies, and assured them that it would never break the bonds of union, now attacked these petty communities! It deceived them with the greater facility, as the inhabitants of the small cantons trusted to the promises they had received, not through their opinion of the morality

of the rulers of France, but because they gave them credit for greatness of soul enough to disdain having recourse to treachery; while the superiority of their strength offered them sufficient and less guilty means.

These reflexions, and the consequences flowing from them, would naturally present themselves to the minds of a people equally jealous of their rights, and proud of their recollections. In the midst of the afflictive impressions which the conduct of France occasioned, the people of Schwitz united on April the 16th, 1798, in a general and extraordinary assembly, in the very place where they had so often sworn fidelity to their constitution, in order to hear the odious proposition which had been made to them. Their deputies, driven from Berne with ignominy, gave an account of their mission, and read the menacing proclamation of the French general.

It would be difficult to give an image of the effect which the relation of these deputies produced. A dead silence first reigned over the assembly; but presently

the liveliest agitation succeeded this apparent calm. No one could comprehend how it was possible to make such demands, and still less, how any one could accede to them. The idea of having enjoyed, during nearly five centuries, an unbounded liberty, and of being required in an instant to sacrifice it to the unjust resentment of a foreign power, excited a warm indignation through the people, and raised their courage and enthusiasm to the highest pitch.

The assembly then, electrified as it were by love for their country and zeal to defend it, swore by common consent to reject the demands of France, and to maintain the honour of the Swiss name, its religion and liberty. "We acknowledge no other master than God," was repeated on all sides, "and we will serve no other! We will endure no foreign yoke! What is this liberty to which they would have us sacrifice our own? What have we done to the French, and wherefore do they come to attack us? But we have steel, hands, and the example of our fathers!

We will die like christians, or live free like them."

When this first effervescence was somewhat subsided, the people turned all their rage against the new constitution. They decreed, that any apologist of it, either in public or in private assemblies, should be declared guilty of the crime of *lese-nation*, and delivered as such to trial before the tribunals.

In order to take the measures necessary for immediately putting the country in a state of defence, there was created upon the spot a council of war consisting of six members, who had power to associate six other colleagues chosen from among the villages*; and the people were enjoined, in the name of the oath taken individually to their country, to obey the council of war in all things. It was further ordered, that every man capable of bearing arms should every day perform his exercise, and

* The names of the members of this council were, Aloys Reding, Benedict Bellmond, David Staedeli, Dominic Bueler, Lewis Auf der Maur, and Werner Hettlinger.

that the others should be employed in working upon the fortifications. All the absentees, with the exception of those who were beyond the limits of Switzerland, were commanded to return to their homes, on penalty of forfeiture of their right of citizenship.

These decrees of the general assembly were immediately put into execution, and communicated to those cantons and countries of Switzerland which had assisted at the last conference of Schwitz, and promised to concur in the common defence. They were required to make all their preparations without delay, and to send deputies to sit in a central council of war, and concert together the plan of the campaign.

The council of war was scarcely established, when there arrived on the day of its creation deputies from the free bailiwicks, and from those of the canton of Lucerne, who announced in the name of their communities, that they wished to unite with Schwitz, and participate in its fortune. The enthusiasm of defence had gained all that part of Switzerland which

was not yet subjugated by the arms of France; and the safety of the confederacy seemed only to depend upon some happy circumstance, which, rousing at once all the people of Helvetia, should have made them act simultaneously and in concert against the enemy.

Meantime, the canton of Lucerne, in obedience to the orders of the commissioner Lecarlier, had sent a body of troops to the borders of Schwitz, in order to intercept all communication with it, and for the same purpose had armed a bateau on the lake. The canton of Schwitz, on this intelligence, had sent off its third battalion, accompanied by a hundred chasseurs, on the 18th of April, and ordered this body to advance as far as Kusnacht. Lucerne, apprehending a civil war, wrote immediately that it had not ceased to wish to live in amity with the canton of Schwitz, but that, having accepted the new constitution, it had not been able to refuse a step required by the commissioner Lecarlier, and had been forced to place a weak cordon of troops on its limits. But Schwitz replied, that it was impossi-

ble to restore order and tranquillity in its territories, if the canton of Lucerne did not co-operate in maintaining the government established in it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE canton of Schwitz was indisputably the soul of the alliance, and the centre of all the military operations. No indécision, no fear, paralysed the efforts of the governors of this canton; the terror which the name alone of France inspired in half the globe, was lost upon this people, who did not calculate the strength of its enemy, but only viewed its injustice. Every individual felt that he had a good cause, and considered only the insult offered to his country. If a similar self-devotion, and a will equally unanimous, had directed the rest of the confederates, it is to be presumed that Schawenburg and his army would have found their graves in the Alps.

But the greater part of the cantons and countries which, a few days before, had made the most solemn promises to Schwitz of sharing its perils and glory, violated their oaths when the danger approached. Selfishness, jealousy, a little spirit of local interest, and all the vices of federalism, divided the cantons, towns and villages. It was not the brigades of Schawenburg that destroyed the confederacy; the causes of this destruction were within itself; its fall was inevitable even had not France interfered.

The deputies which Schwitz had sent to sound the dispositions of the people of the bailiwicks returned with favourable reports. Most of the countries which they visited had engaged themselves by writing to join the alliance of the five democratical cantons.

But the reports from St. Gall, the Rheintal, Toggenburg, and Appenzell, were much less satisfactory.

The country of St. Gall declared, that it would joyfully have complied with the desires of the canton of Schwitz, had it not

itself lain under very embarrassing circumstances; but that Thurgovia having accepted the new constitution, and marched a body of troops towards its frontiers, it was rendered incapable of doing anything for its allies, and was forced to think of defending itself.

The town of St. Gall answered to the same effect, and employed the same reasons.

The Rheinthal acknowledged that indeed it had acceded in its general assembly to the last decree of the canton of Glaris, and promised to concur with all its power in the defence of the country and its independence; but it excused itself from sending auxiliaries, before its fears were removed of an attack from Thurgovia, and it was acquainted with the resolutions entered into by the canton of Appenzell, Toggenburg, the town and country of St. Gall, Sargans, Gaster, Uznach, and the country of la Marche. It promised to give aid to the five cantons, as soon as it should cease to feel anxiety for its own safety; it announced, in the mean time, the mission of two officers

to take a seat in the council of war at Schwitz*.

The catholic part of Toggenburg said that it could not determine whether or not it should send succours, before its communities had assembled to vote on the acceptance or rejection of the constitution †.

Appenzell wrote, that it had firmly discarded every idea of change in its political constitution; but that nevertheless it could not actively concur in the plans of general defence; both because it was impossible for it to send to the council of war those officers for whom it had occasion in its own service, and because it wished first of all to be assured of the dispositions of Toggenburg with respect to itself. It further alleged, that several of its communities having accepted the new constitution, the rest of the canton stood in an extremely difficult and irksome situation.

Thus several of the firmest supports of the Waldstaeten failed them on a sudden,

* These officers arrived, but the council of war would not admit them.

† It determined for the acceptance.

and destroyed their fairest hopes: the petty districts of Sargans, Uznach, Gaster, and la Marche alone remained faithful to the cause of their allies. Sargans declared that it would defend the country with the small means in its power; Uznach engaged to furnish eight hundred men; and Gaster immediately caused four companies to march, with orders to join the army of the five small cantons, which, with these feeble succours, stood solely exposed to the shock of a terrible foe, against whom they were to try the hazards of the field.

CHAPTER V.

EVEN these five cantons, far from understanding their true interests, and strengthening themselves by union, seemed only apprehensive of their personal dangers. More ready to ask succour, than to grant it to their neighbours, they were not under the direction of a common will, which could cast a view upon the wants of the whole: each thought and acted only for itself.

Before the war had yet commenced, the lower part of the canton of Unterwalden demanded of Schwitz assistance against the upper part, which, as we have already observed, had united itself to the Helvetic republic. Schwitz made no hesitation in complying with the desire of its ally. It immediately sent to Unterwalden two members of the council of war* to take cognizance of the state of affairs, and ordered colonel Aloys Gwerder to proceed with his battalion to Brunnen in order to be in readiness to act as occasion should

* Jacob Zweyer and Joseph-Francis Ab-Iberg.

require. It also invited the canton of Uri to take similar measures.

But Uri delayed. The governors of this canton were not agreed among themselves, and wavered in their resolutions. The country, encircled on one side by mountains covered with snow and almost impassable, on the other, by a stormy lake difficult to navigate, and defended by a handful of practised and courageous soldiers, seemed to be able to suffice for itself. This was the cause of its indecision and repugnance to take part in a foreign war.

The canton of Schwitz, animated by a totally different spirit, and regardless of the feebleness of its means, did not imitate the example of the oldest of its allies, but thought only of protecting the entire league. It was vigilantly attentive to destroy every germ of discord which might agitate the interior of the country, and reckoned as nothing a sacrifice which could contribute to augment the force to be opposed to the enemy. When that class of the population of Schwitz which we have designated in this work under the title of

inhabitants came to express its desire of participating in the rights of citizens, since, in the present crisis, it was about to share with them in the perils of war, its request was instantly granted. The general assembly on the 18th of April declared, that the *inhabitants* who should have ranged themselves under the banners of the canton, and have fought for the country, should be admitted, they and their posterity, to the title and rights of citizens. With respect to those who should not bear arms, they were referred to a commission, which, in consideration of a very moderate sum, should have the power of proposing them to the adoption of the general assembly. At the same time a promise was made of having regard in future to the old men and children to whom this decree could not extend.

During these transactions, the deputies which each of the small cantons was to send to the council of war at Schwitz, arrived there. Those from Unterwalden, were Meinrad Faeller and Joseph-Mary Christen; from Zug, captains Aloys Staub and Hurleman of Walchwylen; from Gla-

ris, colonel Paravicini and his son Emilius. Uri alone kept silence; no one appeared on its part, and a courier sent to that canton returned on the 19th of April without bringing a consolatory reply. The council of war felt a lively displeasure at this conduct, but thought fit to dissemble, because the participation of Uri was too important to allow the neglect of any means for obtaining it. It immediately sent some of its members in order to engage the people of this canton not to wait in inaction till the danger should approach their own frontiers, but rather to prevent it by giving prompt succour to those of Unterwalden. This step was not totally useless. The general assembly of Uri decreed a supply of troops, and nominated two officers to assist at the council of war at Schwitz.

The confederates, meantime, thought they might commence their operations, and trace out the plan to which the mountainous part of Switzerland was to be indebted for its safety. The council was unanimous in deciding for offensive war, with the exception of the deputies of Uri,

who, imitating the prudent circumspection of their canton, declared that they could not accede to such a project, without being previously authorised by their principals.

The council of war was therefore a second time obliged to send a deputation to Altdorf, and to negotiate the necessary powers. But the council of Uri replied, that since the subject of discussion was a very extensive plan of operations, the consequences of which must be decisive of the safety or ruin of the country, it thought itself unable to give its deputies the authority required; especially as the last general assembly, in decreeing succours to the canton of Unterwalden, had ordered that the troops employed for this purpose should have no other destination, and that, consequently, it had appeared desirous of confining itself to a war purely defensive. This council added, that it wished its deputies to remain at Schwitz as short a time as possible, since it could scarcely dispense with their presence to assist in the preparations for their own defence.

The council of war read this answer; and, lamenting over the evils which such imbecility presaged, permitted the deputies of Uri to return home.

CHAPTER VI.

THE day on which the fate of Switzerland was to be decided, now rapidly advanced. The French brigades, put in motion, marched in several columns, and threatened the small cantons on all sides with a speedy and vigorous attack. It was then that the confederates began to discover their weakness, and the insufficiency of their means. Individual courage was to compensate the want of numbers, and enthusiasm and temerity, the deficiency of tactics and military experience. All methods were therefore employed to produce these effects upon the minds of the people, and exalt their spirits to the requisite degree.

Full scope was given to the eloquence

of the priests, who, on their part, fulfilled their mission with all the ardour of fanaticism, hurling from their pulpits the thunderbolts of religion upon the French armies, which, not content with making war upon the earth, seemed desirous to challenge heaven itself. Sacred standards were planted*; and the priests promised the joys of paradise to those who should die fighting under their shade. In the cottages and fields were sung patriotic songs accompanied with military music†; in fine, every thing announced the rage of vengeance, and the desire of dying for their country,

The council of war hastened to profit of this disposition of the people, and to apply it to the execution of their projects;

* These standards, loaded with relics and images of saints, bore various inscriptions proper to inflame a simple and credulous people, strongly attached to the doctrines of the catholic religion,

† The favourite song of the inhabitants of Schwitz, especially of the more enlightened class, and that which the officers sung as they led their soldiers to the foe, had been composed some years before by Henry Zschokke, author of this work, and set to music by Hornschuh, a composer of Berne.

but the whole army of the allies, all their forces united, all in short that they had to oppose to the French, did not exceed ten thousand men.

Notwithstanding this evident inferiority, it was resolved not to wait the enemy, but to go and meet him, and endeavour, by some brilliant action, to rouse the other parts of Switzerland, and restore them to the antient confederacy. The success of this plan, how rash soever it might seem, turned, however, upon a single victory, a single general engagement; for the French, at that time scarcely amounting to 30,000 in Helvetia, would have been assailed in all quarters, and could not have preserved any rallying point. The discontent against them was become general, and their defeat was universally wished. Never did the sentiment of national honour rise higher among the Swiss, than when the petty cantons were seen boldly to make head against the force of France; and even the friends of the revolution would have preferred the success of the Swiss arms, to that of the foreign arms which came to effect it. The half

of Helvetia already revolutionised had desired a change, but one without foreign influence, and was inconsolable to see that foreigners took so active a part in this event. If the conquerors of Berne had been obliged for an instant to retreat; their first retiring step would have been the signal of a general insurrection, and of their entire destruction.

The confederates, although convinced of the importance of success in the beginning, yet neglected the measures proper to obtain it: they knew not how to command fortune, and render the chance of battle favourable to them. While the French dispersed their troops, and formed a line which extended from Berne to the banks of the Thun, it would have been easy for the confederates to unite all their forces, to attack the enemy in the weakest point, and to make an incursion into one of the neighbouring cantons, whose inhabitants only waited for such a step to declare openly in their favour, and join them in falling upon the French. This operation was the more easy, and the more certain of success, as the Swiss joined to the per-

fect knowledge of the mountains and of their defiles, the advantage of everywhere meeting with the most exact information of the position of the enemy; whilst the latter could only act at hazard, and upon uncertain grounds.

Instead of this, the confederates, constantly shackled by the unfortunate spirit of federalism, which induced each canton first of all to aim at completely covering its own boundaries, partitioned their small army upon a line of about twenty leagues in extent, thus presenting at all the points of their territory a vain image of defence, and in no part a real and sufficient force.

The right wing, under the command of colonel Paravicini, bore on the southern point of the lake of Zurich*. This officer was to invade the canton of Zurich, whilst colonel Andermatt of Zug was to take possession of the free bailiwicks. They had orders afterwards to make a junction between Zurich and Bremgarten.

* It was composed of 600 men of Glaris; 400 of Sargans; 600 of la Marche; 402 of Gaster; 200 of Uznach; 500 of Schwitz; and 600 of the farms and villages formerly subject: Total, 3302 fighting men.

The centre was commanded by Aloys Reding, *Landshauptmann* of Schwitz. In order to establish an easy communication between the two wings of the army, he had orders to take possession of the town of Lucerne, and make himself master of the whole canton. For this purpose he had at his disposal 2,400 men of Schwitz, 750 of Zug, and 500 of Unterwalden.

The left wing, resting upon Brunig, covered with forests and the chain of mountains separating the Oberland from the country of Obwalden, the upper part of the canton of Unterwalden, was formed by the union of 800 men of this last canton, 600 of Uri, 400 of Schwitz, 54 of the little republic of Gersau, and 400 of Glaris. In the sequel, Obwalden also sent 600 men: but this division of the army never had an effective force of above 2,854 men: It was commanded by major Hausser, who was directed to descend the Brunig, to enter into the valley of Hasli, belonging to the canton of Berne, and to take possession of Brientz and Thun.

Whilst the confederates were thus preparing for offensive war, the rich abbey of

Our Lady of the Hermits would not remain an useless spectator of this great contest. Hitherto parsimonious of the treasures which it had accumulated during so many ages, and trembling lest they should become the prey of the French, it had as yet contributed to the defence of the country only benedictions, absolutions, relics and miracles, notwithstanding the representations made to it at different times on the insufficiency of its succours, by the canton of Schwitz. But the approach of danger rendered it more generous: it made the canton a present of a thousand louis-dores, offered it all its plate, and authorised it to borrow, on the property of the abbey, all the funds it might want for the expenses of the war.

Meantime the rest of Helvetia, which had accepted the constitution, saw with pain these reciprocal preparations, and awaited with anxiety the result of this bloody contest. Whatever might be the fate of the small cantons, whether to sink beneath the burthen of their enterprise, or to rise from it victorious,—each alternative gave the prospect of the evils and

disasters inseparable from war, and the country was too poor long to support the expense of it.

The Helvetic directory, recently created and assembled at Arau, foreseeing the terrible consequences to the small cantons of so unequal a struggle, endeavoured to divert them from it by representations drawn from their own interest, and from the manifest nature of things. It addressed to them the following memorial:

“You cannot be ignorant that the great majority of the states formerly confederated, have accepted a constitution which, by uniting them into one, has made only a single nation of them, and which has already become active in its principal branches, after having been solemnly accepted. The first authorities instituted by it are in the full exercise of their functions; and their wishes would have been accomplished, if the whole of the cantons had acceded to the fraternal alliance, and followed the example of more than three-fourths of Switzerland. But instead of this desired union, the Helvetic directory learns, with a surprise mingled with com-

passion, that the non-united cantons, not content with testifying for themselves the greatest aversion for the new political organization, notwithstanding all that could be urged to rectify their errors on this subject, attempt also to seduce the neighbouring cantons, and to detach them by means of seduction, and even of violence, from the Helvetic republic of which they have consented and sworn to form a part; and thus to drag them along with themselves into the abyss which they are digging under their feet.

“The executive directory, chosen by the representatives of the people, and surrounded by the public confidence, fulfils one of its most sacred duties in striving to bring back to just principles those members of the former Helvetic body who are wandering from them; and will not cease its efforts till it shall have exhausted all the persuasive means to enlighten them respecting their true interests and the necessity of an union, and shall have corrected the errors of all those who still oppose it. But circumstances are urgent, and the decisive moment approaches. A French army

prepares to attack the cantons not yet united. Presently, 25,000 veteran soldiers, conquerors of the half of Europe, to whom no rock is inaccessible and no valley impenetrable, will come, and compel you, sword in hand, to do that which prudence, and the love of your country, well understood, counsel you now to do.

“ The executive directory in consequence invites the council of the canton of Unterwalden, and of the other non-united cantons, to send to it deputies without delay, who may join in concerting with it the means of averting from their country the storm which now threatens it. They will be received as brethren, and with the warmth of friendship; and we shall employ every effort to exchange the worn-out tie of federalism for a strong and perpetual tie. Reflect, that in the meantime the heart of every good Helvetic citizen is torn by the idea which presents itself, that these valleys, in which formerly so much energy was displayed in fighting for liberty, are about to be dyed with the blood of a people cruelly deceived, who have been ordered to defend the cause of fana-

ticism and a mistaken liberty, and who are thus driven to their ruin by exposing themselves to the incalculable evils of war.

“Arau, April 24, 1798:

“The President of the executive directory,

“LEGRAND.

“By the directory,

“HURNER, provisional secretary.”

The cold and tranquil tone of this paper, so evidently contrasting with the energetic and vehement language of the confederates; the menaces of Swiss directed against Swiss; that of the employment of the forces of a foreign power to subdue the inhabitants of the small cantons, whilst the very name of the soldiers of this power sufficed to irritate them; the reproaches thrown out against their magistrates and leaders, whilst they ought to have been gained in order to gain the people; all seemed designedly combined in the address of the directory to paralyse its effect, and render it absolutely useless.

The lower part of the canton of Unterwalden wrote on April 26th to the council of Schwitz these remarkable words: “They wish to intimidate us by the pre-
sage of an unfavourable issue: were even

the picture they present to us to be instantly realised, we are not the less remote from changing our immutable resolution, that of defending the most just of causes, the cause of God and humanity."

CHAPTER VII.

ON the 22d of April, at break of day, about 1,300 men of the canton of Unterwalden began their march to reduce that part of this canton which had withdrawn itself from the league. Lewis Auf-der-Maur, a young Swiss born at Naples, and Emilius Paravicini of Glaris, were charged with the conduct of an enterprise the result of which was to secure to the confederates the important defiles of Brunig.

The people of Obwalden (the upper part of the canton) had placed an outpost in the wood near the village of Kerns: this post fired some alarm shot on the approach of the troops of the Waldstaeten, and instantly the inhabitants of Kerns assembled under arms to the number of about

300. They seemed determined to defend the entrance of their habitations ; and perhaps within a few instants the flames of civil war were about to be kindled, and the blood of Swiss to be shed by Swiss.

But the voice of nature prevailed over mere political considerations. The people of Obwalden, ashamed of having obeyed the imperious commands of a stranger, and forgotten the bonds which for ages had united them to their neighbours of Unterwalden, burned with the desire of repairing their fault, and speedily obliterating the stain by a conduct more generous, and more conformable to their feelings.

The chiefs entered into a parley. Those of the Waldstaeten demanded a passage by Sarnen as far as Brunig. This proposition was sent in haste to the government of Obwalden which resided at Sarnen ; and while the answer was waited for, the soldiers of both parties intermingled amicably, and refused to hear of acting offensively towards each other. " We are brethren (said they); we will no longer fight except under a common standard, and

against a common enemy, for the maintenance of our antient and dear constitution.”

The government of Obwalden, with the view of shielding the country from the horrors of war, had thought it a duty to persuade the people to bend to the circumstances which demanded a change in their political frame; but the menacing approach of the confederates, and especially the present disposition of the people of Obwalden, rendered the situation of its governors very critical. Not being able to oppose the passage which the troops of the Waldstaeten required, they determined to grant it; and a deputation was sent with this intelligence. But the allies were not contented with this first act of submission. They demanded of the council of war at Sarnen, that the assembly of the people should be convoked, and that its vote should be taken concerning the plan of the constitution presented by France.

It was easy to foresee what would be the decision of the people in this matter. While the allies were on the road to the defiles of Brunig, the general assembly of

Obwalden solemnly decreed the maintenance of its old constitution, and the rejection of the new; and information of this was immediately given to the lower part of the canton of Unterwalden. Soon after, 600 men of Obwalden went to reinforce the army of the allies at Brunig.

This army, however, remained inactive several days, and thus lost a favourable opportunity*. A great part of the people of Oberland were ardently desirous of its arrival; and nothing would then have been easier than to take possession of Hasli and the adjacent valleys. The brave mountaineers who dwell between the Grimsel and the Brunig, and they who live at the foot of Stokhorn and mount Eiger, would joyfully have ranged themselves under the banners of the warriors of Waldstaeten to carry with them their rage and vengeance as far as the walls of Berne. This is not a hazarded supposition; for, when the body of troops stationed at Brunig had orders to advance,

* The canton of Unterwalden had forbidden, by a letter written April the 23d to the landshauptmann Zelger, the passage of the Brunig till further orders.

and entered the great and romantic valley of Hasli, watered by the Aar, as yet an infant stream; the village of Meyringen, the richest and most populous of the valley, with an unanimous voice rejected the new Helvetic constitution which it had been forced to accept, and declared that it would take part with the allies against the French troops*.

But it was already too late to expect an useful diversion in that quarter; and time was wanting sufficient to raise the inhabitants of all the valleys, to arm and marshal them so as to be put in a state for rendering any essential service.

Whilst the left wing was advancing, and taking a position on the limits of the canton of Berne, the right wing began to move. Andermatt, colonel of the canton of Zug, marching at the head of 1500 men, took possession of the free bailiwicks, and on April the 24th placed a garrison in the towns of Meyenberg, Mouri, and Boswil. He did not venture to advance further, through fear of too much exposing the limits of his canton, for the French

* On April the 28th,

were marching towards him on all sides. He waited till Paravicini should have reached the lake of Zurich, and Reding have taken possession of Lucerne. During this interval the inhabitants of the free bailiwicks rose in a mass, and came to range themselves beneath the blessed standard of the Waldstaeten, armed with stakes, forks, clubs, and halberds.

The French advanced posts already showed themselves at the villages of Dalikon and Haeglingen. Andermatt, on April the 25th, made a movement as far as Wellen, and dispatched major Hotz with 200 men to Niederwyl, in order to stop the march of the enemy. The next day, in presence of the French, he took possession of a height situated near Haeglingen. The troops engaged, and the chasseurs of Zug distinguished themselves greatly by their courage and address: they killed many of the enemy, who were beaten, and obliged to rally behind a body of cavalry which came opportunely to their assistance. Andermatt ordered the halberdiers of the bailiwicks to march to oppose them; but instead of keeping their ground, they

shamefully took to flight. Then the French, recovered from their first check, and reinforced by fresh troops, recommenced the attack. Andermatt was routed, obliged to retire precipitately and in disorder, and to gain Mouri as well as he was able: he had, however, very few killed, while the French lost many from the well-directed fire of the chasseurs*.

The council of war of the Waldstaeten, to be more at hand for the operations of the army, had fixed itself at Kusnacht, near the lake of Lucerne. As soon as they were apprised of the retreat of Andermatt, they sent him the reinforcement of a battalion commanded by Reichenbach. This succour came in good time to revive the courage of the troops of Zug, and serve for a rallying point to the fugitives.

Paravicini was also in motion. The town of Rapperschwyl had accepted the new constitution; which circumstance deprived the allied army of an essential post, and interrupted the direct communication

* The details of this affair are taken from a letter written by colonel Andermatt to the canton of Zug, from the head-quarters at Mouri, 26th of April, 1798.

of the two banks of the lake of Zurich. The possession of this town was therefore a necessary object, and Paravicini obtained it without the smallest difficulty. Being defenceless, it opened its gates at the first summons: seven hundred men of the troops of the Waldstaeten entered it, while others occupied the posts of Pfaeffikon and Wollrau, on the southern shore of the lake.

The occupation of the town of Lucerne by the central column was now the only thing wanting to put the allied army into the position first planned by the council of war. Aloys Reding, who commanded that column, was still posted at Kusnacht, on the frontiers of that canton.

The troops of Schwitz who were under his orders waited with impatience the signal of attack. Every thing announced that it would be successful. The inhabitants of the communities of the canton of Lucerne came in crowds to felicitate them on their enterprise, and encourage them to persist. "Come on! (said they) the first shot you fire against the town of Lucerne will be the signal of the general in-

surrection of the canton: we will attend you, and fight by your side."

Some fanatical priests who accompanied the soldiers still more inflamed them by their impassioned harangues. Two of them, Marianus Herzog, rector of Our Lady of the Hermits, and the capuchin Paul Styger, had long been distinguished, and had inspired the people of Schwitz with a blind confidence in them. The last especially, a violent and dauntless speaker, was the oracle of Kusunacht. He rode on horseback in his capuchin's habit, with a brace of pistols at his girdle, holding in one hand a crucifix, which he called the genuine tree of liberty, and in the other a sword; and thus paraded the ranks of the army. Canting and ferocious, proud and cringing, eloquent and well acquainted with mankind, he was soon able to gain the confidence of the soldiers, and to acquire the same authority over them as their chief.

The council of war, seeing that the enterprise against Lucerne could not without danger be longer deferred, ordered the necessary dispositions, and caused the

march of the troops to be preceded by the following proclamation :

“ We cannot yet persuade ourselves that the French nation, if it is just, and means to be faithful to the principles it has professed, will make an attempt so contrary to these principles, and which would cover it with eternal reproach. What! would it aim at the destruction of the Swiss democracies? of those constitutions which it has made its own model? to the founders of which it has raised altars? What an astonishing and cruel contradiction!

“ Swiss! brothers! there is no constitution which promises and gives more true liberty than our own: we acknowledge, after God, no sovereign but the people; in its hands is the supreme power; and how many times has the French republic promised to respect its sovereignty!

“ Let the great powers prove false to their promises if they judge proper; it belongs to us, who are honest and sincere, to remain faithful to ours.

“ Penetrated with a sense of the justice of our cause, we have sworn in the face of

heaven to defend until death our happy constitution, our country and our religion.

“ Let those among you who are animated with the same wish (and who can be otherwise without being unworthy of the Swiss name?) take their places at our sides, and range themselves under our standards, the standards of freedom. A pure and cloudless liberty will be the reward of their generous devotion.

“ But let the man who is base and vile enough, who is so little of a Swiss, as to consent to bow his head under a foreign yoke, remain at home, and keep far from our cohorts: let the ambitious and the feeble-minded fashion themselves to the rule which tempts them; both will be crushed under it. But we, who have no other ambition than to be free, it is ours to fight and conquer. Yes, companions, we shall come forth victorious from the struggle: our fathers equally had numerous foes to contend with, and they were victorious. Let us imitate their example, and the God of justice will declare in our favour!”

This proclamation, of which we have given the sense, without attaching ourselves positively to the letter, could not fail to produce a great effect on the multitude, and rally round the council of war the great number of malcontents in the town. It was every where distributed with profusion, and what was expected from it took place: it occasioned a general fermentation in the canton of Lucerne.

Deputies from all the parts of this canton came in crowds to solicit the troops of the Waldstaeten speedily to enter their country. They lavished the most flattering appellations on the soldiers of the allies, calling them the saviours of the country, the tutelar angels of the church; in a word, the enthusiasm caused by their presence was at its height. The house in which the blessed standard of the Waldstaeten had been deposited was perpetually surrounded with a crowd of people, who offered money only for a sight of it; so that the chiefs were obliged to cause it to be publicly exposed at Kusnacht.

At length, in the night between the

28th and 29th of April the troops of the Waldstaeten began their march for Lucerne. Reding ordered that those of Unterwalden who were stationed at Stantztaad under the command of Zelger, and the eight hundred men of Zug posted near the lake of that name, should dispose their march, so as to appear at the same time with himself at the gates of the city. This order was only partially executed; for the troops of Zug could not obey it, the French having already passed the Reuss, and being on their march to the chief town of that canton.

At break of day the troops of Schwitz arrived at the summit of Wesemli and Mousegg, showed themselves as far as the walls of Lucerne; those of Unterwalden did the same on the other side; but scarcely any of the auxiliaries of this canton made their appearance, although they had promised to join the allies to the number of three thousand. Scarcely two or three hundred were got together, and these kept aloof.

Reding then sent Emilius Paravicini to Lucerne with the following summons:

“ We cannot divest ourselves of the endearing habit, consecrated by a long union, of addressing you as allies, and saluting you as such. Nor have we yet been able to persuade ourselves, that although you have had the weakness to submit to a foreign constitution, you at the same time have wished to break an alliance which has subsisted for ages.

“ Nevertheless, we could not but be severely afflicted to find that, yielding to the perfidious insinuations and menaces of a foreign nation, Swiss, our brothers and allies, had given orders to cut off our communication with the rest of Switzerland, and, by this measure, had attempted by the force of famine to compel us to abandon the happy constitution of our fathers, in exchange for one which appears to all of us insupportable.

“ Moreover, your own people, still worthy of the Swiss name, and cherishing its liberty, having loudly manifested to us their desire to join us in defending the constitution of our fathers, we have resolved to comply with their wishes, and to deliver you from the disgraceful obligation

which you suppose you have incurred, to act hostilely against your brethren and allies.

“In consequence, we summon you in the most urgent manner to open your gates to us, to receive us in the quality of friends, allies, and brothers, and to consent that we should make common cause with your people, who, as well as ours, are the sovereign of their country.

“Decide—do not delay:—within an hour we shall obtain by force of arms what you may now refuse to our friendly demands, and what we should wish to owe to your fraternal sentiments. You alone will be responsible for all the blood which may be shed: open then your gates, and unite with us. Believe, that it is more to your advantage to employ your forces for the defence of our common country, than to direct them against your brethren, against the most antient of your allies; and be persuaded that the God of justice and vengeance will bless our united efforts.

(Signed)

“The Members of the Council of War of the Cantons of Schwitz, Unterwalden, Zug, and Glaris.”

Great was the consternation in the town at the reading of this paper, for the number of armed burghers was too inconsiderable to expect a long defence. The citizen Vincent Ruttiman, nominated within a few days by the Helvetic directory, national prefect of this canton, accompanied by some other functionaries, repaired to the besiegers, in order to settle with them articles of capitulation, and by this means preserve the town from the disorders which might be apprehended from the rage of the soldiers. Security of persons and properties was promised; and this promise was communicated to the troops, with orders to enforce obedience to it. Ruttiman then directed the gates to be opened. The people of Schwitz and Unterwalden took possession of them, and spread tumultuously over the town.

Meantime, the chiefs of the allies assembled at the town-house, and determined upon the articles of capitulation, which we now present to our readers.

CAPITULATION

Between the laudable Cantons of Schwitz, Unterwalden, Zug, and Glaris, and the laudable Canton of Lucerne.

Art. 1. The free communication between the respective cantons shall be immediately re-established, and no obstacle shall be made to the entry and exit of commodities.

2. The town of Lucerne shall be guarded by peasants drawn from Entlibuch, and other parts of its canton.

3. No one, either at Entlibuch or elsewhere, shall be disarmed. The arsenal and the garrison shall be under the inspection of the people, to whom shall be delivered the arms necessary for the defence of the country.

4. It shall be free to the people to give themselves a constitution, and to unite with the allies for the support of the common cause.

5. The town of Lucerne shall not invoke any succour against the allies; and in case of its determining to act in concert with them, it engages to give them

for auxiliaries only men taken from a part of the canton which has not accepted the new constitution.

6. The commissaries who may have been sent to solicit succours shall be instantly recalled.

7. There shall be delivered to captain Hedlinger, and drawn from the arsenal of Lucerne, the quantity of cannon and ammunition mentioned in an inventory made for this purpose.

8. Moreover, there shall be paid to the allied-cantons, for the expenses of the war, the sum of 10,000 florins; and the canton of Lucerne also engages to furnish them with corn to an equal value.

9. The allies shall always have free passage through the territories of the town and canton of Lucerne.

The above articles have been agreed to by the national prefect, and signed with his hand, at Lucerne, on the 29th of April, 1798.

(Signed) VINCENT RUTTIMANN,
National Prefect.

We must not here omit a singular and characteristic anecdote. The troops of

the Waldstaeten, after having entered the town, immediately assembled about the church; and it was their first concern to leave all their arms under the care of a few sentinels, and to enter the temple in order to return thanks to heaven for the success of their enterprise, and religiously to hear the mass said on the occasion. If the people of Lucerne had been aware, a score of men would have sufficed to shut them up in the church, and make them all prisoners of war; but, happily for them, no one was struck with such an idea, and they performed their devotional exercises without molestation.

When mass was finished, these warriors quitted the altar, and ran with noise and tumult to the taverns and drinking-houses, after which they dispersed themselves through the streets. The officers did all in their power to prevent these disorders, but in vain.

The tree of liberty was overthrown in the midst of cries and imprecations, and the relics of the cap and standard, with which it was decorated, were carried in triumph about the town.

Others went in crowds to the town-house, and demanded the keys of the arsenal. It was in vain that the chiefs represented the injustice of this pillage, and appealed to the capitulation which had been just signed: the capuchin Paul Styger, by telling them that every thing was allowed by the law of the strongest, rendered remonstrances of no avail, and encouraged insubordination. The arsenal was therefore pillaged, and the effects which it contained were partly destroyed and partly sold by the soldiers, or sent to Brunnen on bateaus disposed for this purpose on the lake of Lucerne.

But two alarming pieces of intelligence suddenly arrived to dissipate the intoxication of the soldiers, and put an end to disorder.

The messenger who had been dispatched to Zug in the morning with the news of the capture of Lucerne, returned, saying that he could not pass. The French, without the smallest resistance, had taken possession of this canton, and were now threatening that of Schwitz.

The other bad news was, that the right wing was menaced in its position near the lake of Zurich by the French brigades, who were filing along the two banks.

These events, and still more the cowardly indecision of the peasants of Lucerne, compelled the council of war to change its plans and dispositions. It held an extraordinary sitting, the result of which was, that instead of an offensive war, and the projected invasions, it should confine itself to the necessary measures for covering the frontiers of the canton of Schwitz.

The right wing received orders to maintain its position at Wollrau and Rapperschwyl; and the left, then posted at Brientz and Meyringen, to fall back to the borders of Obwalden.

The centre, occupying Lucerne, retired on the same day, and in great haste, to the territory of Schwitz. On the next day, April the 30th, the French entered Lucerne.

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN, in the time of Themistocles, the Athenians had to sustain a long and bloody war for the liberty of their country, they made a sacrifice of their city and homes in order to fight more securely and with less anxiety. The Waldstaeten did not do so much; and though all had the same end in view, each canton was more particularly concerned for itself and its own safety. All seemed ardent for the cause of the confederacy, and expressed themselves willing to make the fairest sacrifices; but when these were required in earnest, none of them consented to leave their own frontiers naked in order to concentrate the common force, and render it serviceable to the whole. It followed, that being weak at all points, the allies could not expect a long resistance in any, and had to fear what really happened, that they should fall victims to their false measures.

The council of war of Schwitz repaired to Arth, and, by means of the troops still at its disposal, covered the weak side of the canton. Six hundred men under the command of captain Dominic Felkle were posted on the road from Arth to Lucerne. A hundred volunteer chasseurs formed the advanced guard at the village of Kusnacht. Captain Faesler was charged with the defence of the defile of Saint Adrian. Felix Ab-Iberg at the head of his battalion supported Faesler, and occupied the height of Rufiberg, which separates Arth from the lake of Egeri. Where this lake touches the limits of the canton of Schwitz, are the defiles of Schorno, Morgarten, and St. Jost near Rothenthurm. This part was entrusted to the guard of two battalions commanded by Rychenbacher and Joachim Hediger.

But the part of the canton of Schwitz adjacent to that of Zürich was the best defended. There were the troops of Glaris, commanded by an experienced officer, colonel Paravicini; and there were besides, the courageous inhabitants of the farms; the auxiliaries of Sargans, Uznach, Gaster,

and la Marche; a battalion of Schwitz, and another of the valley of Our Lady of the Hermits.

These dispositions were scarcely finished, when the commander in chief of the French army in Helvetia sent a final summons to the allies, conceived nearly in these terms:

SCHAWENBURG, *to the Inhabitants of the Cantons not yet united to the Majority of Helvetia.*

“Arau, 27 April, 1798.

“I might have supposed, citizens, that my friendly and pacific conduct, and my efforts to cure you of the blindness in which you are held by the declared enemies to liberty, would at length have convinced you of the generosity of the French people. How much then must I be affected in learning that a handful of fanatics have dared to oppose the march of the troops of the great nation! But the chastisement due to this temerity has been as swift as lightning: the rebels have bit the dust.

“Some of them have fallen into my hands. I was master of their fate; but

far from me be the desire of vengeance ! The Frenchman is terrible only in battle ; after victory he again becomes the friend of humanity. Their liberty has been restored to these wretched victims of ignorance and superstition. They will return to you, and inform you of the treatment they have experienced from the victor.

“They have been brought before the first authorities of Helvetia : every where they have heard only the words of peace and fraternity : of what further pretexts then can the apostles of fanaticism and revolt avail themselves ?

“The great majority of the Helvetic nation has adopted the constitution : its legislators are incessantly employed in bringing it into an active state. The executive directory is installed—it is surrounded with the general respect and confidence—it enjoys the support of the French government, and powers have been given it to dispose at its pleasure of an army which has conquered Europe. To such mighty preparations, what can be opposed by a small minority, equally factious and powerless ?

Citizens, hear once more the voice of reason. Range yourselves under the standard of the Helvetic constitution. Return to the bosom of a family of brothers who extend their arms and invite you. Your religion and your properties shall be respected: toleration is the first virtue of a people which knows how to be free.

“But if you persist in your error, if you continue to hear the deceitful voice of fanaticism, you will precipitate yourselves into an abyss of misery. Those authors of your seduction, those proud hypocrites, who do not themselves believe in the intervention of the monarchs whose aid they promise you, shall tremble: a severe punishment awaits them.

“I offer you the alternative of peace and happiness, or war and all the calamities accompanying it. Make your choice; it is now in your power; but choose speedily!”

The people received this address of Schawenburg with profound indignation. They might have replied in the same manner as the Scythians formerly did to Alexander, when, in the midst of victory, he appeared in their deserts with an innume-

rable army: but they did better—they kept silence, and prepared for the combat.

On the following day, April 30th, the French made an attack on Wollerau near the lake of Zurich. It was not expected that they would make their first efforts on this quarter. The affair was warm on both sides. The French were at first driven back to Richterswyl; but being reinforced, they rallied in that village, defended themselves for a while, and then making a dexterous manœuvre, took the Swiss in flank, and forced them to fall back to Wollerau. Towards afternoon the French began a second attack, which seemed likely to succeed no better than the first; for they met with a vigorous resistance, which disconcerted and threw them into some disorder. Captain Hauser of Naefels, at the head of some volunteers, had already regained the height of Richterswyl, when fortune suddenly deserted the allies. Hauser fell under two severe wounds, and his men retired, carrying with them their standard, which had thrice passed into different hands, its bearers having been successively killed in the action. This small body, pur-

sued by the French, reached Wollerau; but instead of the reinforcement they expected, they found there nothing but confusion and disorder, owing to the absence of colonel Paravicini, who had received wounds which obliged him to abandon the field of battle. The French took advantage of this circumstance, and their attack became more impetuous in proportion as they met with less resistance. The troops of Glaris and all the auxiliaries took to flight, and the conquerors, on the same evening occupied the villages of Wollerau and Pfaeffikon.

The troops of the canton of Schwitz, who had been ordered by Paravicini to keep the heights which are in the vicinity of Hutten, had no part in the transactions of this day.

We shall not pass over a small anecdote relative to this affair, which does as much honour to the bravery and presence of mind of a Swiss officer, as to the humanity of a French officer. Captain Hauser, whom we have seen dangerously wounded, was after the action left, bathed in his blood, for dead on the field. A

French officer, named Tressinet, who passed near him, thought he discerned in him some signs of life. He approached, raised him up, and, finding that he breathed, cried, "Courage, comrade!" Hauser, as if awaking from sleep, fixed his eyes upon him, and in a faint voice said, "It is not courage but strength that fails me." The Frenchman, delighted and affected with this reply, ordered that the wounded man should be instantly dressed, and treated with all possible attention. He was conveyed to Wadenschwyl, and shortly after was entirely cured of his wounds.

On the evening of the same day, another body of French troops attacked the little village of Immensee near the lake of Zug. The Swiss had but few men to defend this post; but, as the night was very dark, they did not retire till eleven o'clock in the evening, after a brisk fire of musquetry, by which they had some men killed.

But a sharper and better sustained action took place about the same time on the side of Arth, near the village of Kusnacht. The chasseurs of Schwitz, posted advantageously, and firing with much dexterity,

forced the French to retreat after having sustained a considerable loss.

On the next morning the inhabitants of Immisée, wishing to put their cattle in a place of safety, had, for that purpose, for some minutes abandoned the very advantageous post of Kiemen. The French during that time arrived in force, and, finding scarcely any resistance, entered the village, and took possession of the defile of Kusunacht. This place is celebrated in the history of Switzerland, as being that where William Tell, meeting with the tyrant Gesler, pierced him with an arrow.

Here a very brisk engagement ensued. A body of the troops of Schwitz, hearing the noise of firing, ran to the spot, and in an instant decided the victory. The French took to flight, and moved off in disorder towards the village of Rysch in the canton of Zug.

Meantime Kusunacht, protected on this side, was but the more exposed on that of Lucerne: not only a considerable number of French, but a pretty strong body of the people of Lucerne, assembled and armed by order of the chief town of the canton,

threatened to attack and take this place*. The inhabitants of Kusnacht demanded succour from Schwitz, but none could be given them without exposing still more important posts. They were obliged, therefore, on the morning of the 2d of May, to surrender to the French, after having stipulated for security of persons and property.

During all these transactions, the troops of Schwitz, burning with desire to be engaged, were, however, compelled to remain inactive in the posts they occupied on the Rufi and the Rossberg. The precipitate and total retreat of the troops of Glaris and the auxiliaries inspired them with great mistrust: they wished to measure their own strength with that of the enemy, and for that purpose sent deputies to the council of war, to require that the captain of their country, Reding, might be placed at their head, and ordered to lead them forwards.

Aloys Reding, at this period chief of the

* Report made to the council of war on the 1st of May by Ignatius Troutmann.

troops of Schwitz, and the soul of the allied army, had studied the art of war in the service of Spain, in which he was a colonel. He had lately retired into the solitude of the valleys of his country, and devoted his leisure to friendship, to the muses, and to the cultivation of his lands. Long before the revolution, he wished for improvements in the federative system, and desired that his country should enjoy an useful and genuine liberty: but his heart revolted at the idea of a revolution effected by a foreign power, and at the still more hateful idea of seeing his country fall under the dominion of France. Such were the motives which induced him to unsheath his sword, and to show himself worthy of the Swiss name, and of his brave ancestors.

His loss of a young and tenderly-beloved spouse had left in his soul a deep melancholy, which perhaps made him still more eager to engage in the hazards of war. Provident, frank, brave, attached to his country, preserving his coolness and self-command both in prosperity and adver-

sity, he became in a short time the favourite and the hope of his people.

He left Arth that very night, and on the 1st of May, towards day-break, arrived at Schorno, at the moment when five hundred men of Uri came and joined the fourth battalion of Schwitz, to take possession of that important defile, and of the heights of Morgarten. He thence went to visit the post of Saint Jost, occupied by the first battalion of Schwitz, and a company of volunteers of Aegeri and Menzingen in the canton of Zug, commanded by captain Traxler. In fine, he passed to that wild valley which ends at the small village of Schindellegi, in which captain Schilter at the head of a battalion arrived at the same time. Here he beheld a spectacle at the same time pleasing and painful.

The inhabitants of the farms of Wolterau and of Baech had united at this spot to engage the French a second time. The unfortunate events of the 30th of April, the loss of several of their number, the burning and pillage of their cottages, the

flight of their wives and children who had concealed themselves in the woods, the defection of the auxiliary troops, were all incapable of diverting these brave men from their resolution of defending themselves to the last drop of blood. The soldiers of Schwitz could not behold this generous self-devotion without being moved; and they gave tokens of sensibility and approbation to these faithful companions in arms.

Reding, still hoping that the troops of Glaris and their auxiliaries might have rallied in some part of the country of la Marche, wrote the following letter to Paravicini:

“ Schindellegi,

1st May, 8 o'clock in the morning.

“ I have been here, my dear colonel, a quarter of an hour. I have heard with grief of your wound, and the retreat of the auxiliaries. The battalion of Schilter is extremely dissatisfied that it was only a spectator of the battle, and longs to fight. I beg and conjure you therefore to come; or, if you are prevented by your wounds, send me as soon as possible another com-

mander and troops. Our people, and the brave men of the farms, will gladly join them. When once united, we wish to repair the fortune of yesterday, and we may do it.

“(Signed) ALOYS REDING.”

The courier dispatched with this letter returned three hours afterwards, with the news, that all the troops of Glaris, Uznach, Gaster, and Sargans had disbanded, and retired to their own homes, and that the French were already at Lachen.

Every hope of succour was therefore now to be renounced; and the canton of Schwitz saw itself abandoned to its own native strength, with the exception of a few soldiers of Uri and Zug. The lower part of the canton of Unterwalden, menaced by that of Lucerne, excused itself from sending its contingent, and demanded from the upper part a supply of three hundred men, which were however refused it, for Obwalden was also threatened with an invasion in three points.

CHAPTER II.

ALL the frontiers of the antient canton of Schwitz, except a small part covered by the Mattathal, were now exposed; and it was necessary with fewer than four thousand men to line an extent of near twenty-five leagues, and to make head against much superior French forces which advanced from all quarters. The last ray of hope of saving the country vanished at this aspect of affairs. "What remains for us now (said the soldiers) but to die the glorious death of our ancestors?"

The effect of so many misfortunes, however, was to augment the general enthusiasm, and carry it to the highest pitch. The old men and children desired to share the glory of falling with their country. Women and girls employed themselves in dragging the cannon taken at Lucerne from Brunnen, and they conveyed them over rocks by frightful roads as far as Rothenthurm. They were almost all armed, and chiefly with clubs. Many of them had adopted as a mark of distinction a knot

of white ribbon round the head. Wherever they met with a coward who sought to withdraw himself by flight from the danger of his country, they stopped him, and forced him to return to the frontier, and take his place in the ranks of the army. Thus the internal police of the country was managed by the weaker sex, while their fathers, their husbands, their sons, their brothers, guarded the summits of the mountains, and faced the foe and death.

On their parts, immovable as the rocks on which they stood, they waited courageously for an occasion to devote themselves for their country. They wished to renew upon the green heights of Morgarten the sacred monument of the antient valour of the Swiss, and to leave to their posterity, if not freedom, at least a memorable example of what a free people can do in its defence*.

Aloys Reding, assured of the disposi-

* The greater part of the inhabitants of Schwitz had an opinion, that in losing the form of government established by their ancestors, they at the same time should lose all liberty, civil and religious, and become the vassals of France.

tion of his soldiers, turned to them, and thus addressed them :

“ Brave comrades, dear fellow citizens, the decisive moment is now at hand! Surrounded with enemies, abandoned by our friends, it remains for us only to know if we can bravely follow the example which our ancestors left us at Morgarten. An almost certain death awaits us. If any one fears it, let him retire: no reproaches on our part shall attend him. Let us not mutually deceive ourselves at this solemn hour. I had rather have a hundred men prepared for every event, and upon whom I can rely, than five hundred who would spread confusion by their flight, and by a perfidious retreat would fruitlessly sacrifice the brave men who still resisted. As to myself, I promise not to forsake you, even in the greatest peril. **DEATH AND NO RETREAT!** If you share my resolution, let two men come forth from your ranks, and swear to me in your name that you will be faithful to your words*.”

* The author of this work vouches for the authenticity of this harangue, as well as for that of another which we shall soon repeat. He avers that both are given simply

The soldiers, resting on their arms, heard in a kind of religious silence the words of their chief, and some of these hardy warriors were seen melted to tears: when he had ceased, a thousand voices were heard; and "We will share your fate! we will never forsake you!" resounded on all sides. Two men then came from the ranks, and extended their hands to Reding, in sign of fidelity for life and death. This treaty between the chief and his soldiers was sworn in the open air, and in the face of heaven, and bears the stamp of patriarchal manners worthy of the golden age.

The night between the 1st and 2d of May meantime approached. From distance to distance were perceived fires kindled for signals. The soldiers slept on the ground near their arms. Aloys Reding repaired to the village of Rothenthurm, the scattered cottages of which border the high road from Schwitz to Einsiedlen. He there found the council of war, which, in order to be nearer the army, had removed thither from Arth. Reding took with him and purely, as they were pronounced on the field of battle, and without the least poetical embellishment.

the dispositions relative to the formation of a second line of defence, in case it should be necessary to abandon the first.

This conference, besides its importance from the objects discussed in it, was also remarkable by the presence of the celebrated rector of Einsiedlen, Marianus Herzog, who acted a principal part in it. This man was to the northern part of the canton of Schwitz, what Paul Styger was to the southern. Not less proud, ambitious, intriguing, and crafty, he even surpassed his rival in hypocrisy and fanaticism. There was no excess to which he had not given way, no crime which he had not committed; and yet the multitude, whose affections he had been able to captivate, regarded him as a model of virtue; and whilst he was digging the tomb of his country and the church, he was proclaimed the saviour and martyr of both. Sure of the favour of the people, he employed it to the forwarding of his perfidious designs, and placed himself at the head of the administration of the small town of Einsiedlen. His power increased to such a degree, that he disposed at his pleasure

of the troops of this part of the canton; while the officers, to avoid being massacred by their own soldiers, rendered complete fanatics, were obliged to submit to his caprices without the least remonstrance. Not content with this, he wished to extend his influence over the rest of the canton; and for this purpose employed emissaries to spread through it disorder and disorganization. All his practices and cares tended to ruin the authority of the men who still preserved some credit with the people. The council of war was especially the body whose power and influence he laboured to undermine.

He had caused, on May the 1st, 600 men of Einsiedlen to occupy the important defiles of Mount Ezel, a formidable bulwark of the canton of Schwitz, washed by the lake of Zurich, and he loudly demanded of colonel Reding an officer to be placed at the head of this troop. But none of those in the battalions of Schwitz chose to divide the command with this imperious monk, well assured that the orders they should have to give would not be executed if they were contrary to the

capricious notions of Marianus. Reding in consequence told the men of Einsiedlen, that since they had made their warlike preparations under the direction of their rector, he could send them no other chief. "I have no confidence (he added) in him whom you have taken for your leader; I consider him as an enthusiast from whom no good is to be expected; but I rely upon the courage and fidelity which distinguish the officers and soldiers of Einsiedlen*."

This warrior of a new mould arrived at midnight at the house where the council of war was assembled, and no one ventured to refuse him admittance. When the question of forming a second line of defence was agitated, he said, with warmth, that it was useless to deliberate upon this matter, the very idea of which indicated an improper fear. "We shall be conquerors (he added) if every post be as well defended as I mean to defend that of Schindel-

* The Waldstaeten seemed destined to be the victims of their priests. The people of the canton of Unterwalden, as much blinded as those of Schwitz, had likewise given all their confidence to two capuchins, who during that war took a leading part in their affairs.

legi. I swear to you by all the saints, that the soldiers of Einsiedlen and I will fight at this post to the last drop of our blood." Before he retired he renewed this oath to colonel Reding, and promised to give him immediate information of every thing important that might occur.

On the 2d of May, at ten in the morning, the French, to the number of 2000 men, appeared before the Schindellegi. The chasseurs engaged, and held the enemy in check almost two hours, so as to give time to two battalions of Schwitz to advance with their cannon, and take part in the action. An hour after noon, the fire of the French, which had gradually slackened, ceased entirely.

The Swiss on this morning fought not like unexperienced herdsmen, but as well and bravely as veterans grown gray in the service. All advanced with ardour, and were impatient to come to the bayonet. Several of them, though wounded, would never quit the field. A soldier, among others, having early received a considerable wound in his leg, and at noon a shot in the body, continued to fight with the

same courage, till a third wound in his arm absolutely prevented him from handling his weapon. Then alone he thought it time to retire, and walked eight leagues to his home. Concealed behind rocks and trees as marksmen, there were always two in the same post; and none were heard to lament over their own wounds, or the death of their comrades. Every one envied the lot of him who, on that memorable day, fell in the cause of his country;

CHAPTER III.

MEANTIME an inhabitant of Einsiedlen arrived at the field of battle out of breath, and covered with dust, who informed colonel Reding that the French were passing Mount Ezel. He related that the rector Marianus came to that post at eight in the morning, and said to the people who guarded it, "My dear children, I am of opinion that you will do best to retire to your own homes and lay down your arms: it would be useless to stay and defend

yourselves here, for at the other posts they do not think of making the least resistance." The messenger added, that after this perfidious speech the traitor returned to Einsiedlen, and that the troop instantly dispersed. Schwitz and Einsiedlen were thus laid open to the French. The troops posted at Schindellegi, in order not to be cut off, and to preserve a communication with Einsiedlen and St. Jost, were obliged to fall back. Their retreat was conducted in good order: the chasseurs and grenadiers made the rear-guard, and covered the march of the main body. At three o'clock in the afternoon they reached Rothenthurm, and were there joined by many soldiers of the farms, who came to rally under them. The action that day at Schindellegi cost the Swiss 25 killed and 50 wounded. Among the latter was the brave captain Schilter, who died in consequence of his wounds. Schawenburg profited of these advantages; and caused Mount Ezel to be passed by general Nouvion, at the head of 6000 men, with cannon and cavalry. Captain Hediger, who defended the post of the moun-

tain of St. Jost, was also attacked by a superior force. French troops advancing, to the number of two or three thousand, from Aegeri and Hutten, harassed him severely. Thinking himself unable to maintain his position, he fell back to the village of Rothenthurm. The whole mountain of St. Jost, and the chain of heights which separate it from the plain of Morgarten, were then entirely in the power of the French. Reding ordered captain Hediger with his battalion to attack the heights in the vicinity of Morgarten, while he himself, with 1200 men, remained in a state of observation at the village of Rothenthurm. In the mean time the French descended slowly from the mountain in a formidable number, and formed near the village, presenting a very extended front. The Swiss gave them some cannon shot. Aloys Reding then drew up his force in order of battle, marched to the enemy, caused his men to make a single general discharge in the plains, and then gave the signal, which they impatiently expected, of charging with the bayonet. At the first roll of the drum they sprung forwards with unexam-

pled intrepidity and fury. Two weak battalions disregarded the advantageous position of the enemy, and their extreme superiority in numbers: the desire of coming to blows with the conquerors of Europe was such, that, notwithstanding a brisk and well supported fire of musquetry, they passed in close ranks and good order a plain of 800 paces in length, without being in the least checked by all the efforts of the French. The charging step soon became a run, a general rush: officers and soldiers contended for the honour of being the first to wash away, in the blood of the enemy, the affront offered to the soil of Liberty. This impetuous attack astonished the French, who for a moment were undetermined whether to fly or stand: but when the Swiss, preserving through the whole line their regularity and ardour, were near enough to employ their weapons, the affair was soon decided. They plunged their bayonets into the enemy's ranks, and made a horrible carnage; and in less than a quarter of an hour so completely dispersed them, that scarcely could they discharge a few shot in their flight.

Within half an hour the Swiss were in possession of heights of so steep an ascent, that on other occasions more time would have been required to climb them than was now spent in taking them.

In the midst of the chain of mountains which border the cantons of Zug and Schwitz, and between the lake of Aegeri and mount Sattel, is a pleasant and fertile plain, which, like a fine verdant carpet, admirably contrasts with the nakedness of the rocks on which it is, as it were, suspended: this is the plain of Morgarten.

The French columns coming from Aegeri climbed the rocks, and were advancing towards it. This plain, since the retreat from Schindellegi, had remained without defence. It was extremely important to take possession of it, and prevent the enemy from making a lodgement there.

The troops of Schwitz had fortunately on that very day received a reinforcement, not very considerable, indeed, but to them highly valuable. Three hundred fresh troops arrived from Uri under the command of Schmid, landeshauptman of the canton.

Instantly, fifty chasseurs of this body detached themselves from the rest, and marched in haste to Morgarten. A hundred and fifty of their countrymen, and part of the general levy of Steinen*, followed them with equal speed. A battalion sent by Reding proceeded thither at the same time by the village of Rothenthurm.

But during this interval the French had arrived at the summit of the mountain which commands Morgarten, and were re-descending it, marching towards that part of the plain which touches on mount Sattel. As soon as they perceived the fifty chasseurs, they made a continued fire upon them; which these smartly returned, and were able to retard the march of the enemy, till the battalion coming from Rothenthurm had climbed the eminence which separates it from the plain, and taken them in flank. The fire then becoming more brisk, echoed on all sides.

* Steinen is a parochial village situated two leagues from Schwitz, and remarkable for the beauty of its site. Werner of Stauffach had his house there; and the country preserves the tradition of a saying of Gesler on viewing it, "Can it be endured that a peasant should be so agreeably lodged?"

The hundred and fifty men of Uri, and those of Schwitz, finding the action begun, redoubled their speed to share in the glory and danger of their brethren.

As soon as all had joined, they no longer thought of amusing themselves with shooting. The general charge was beat, and as quick as lightning the Swiss rushed among the French ranks, and were again successful in putting them to the rout. The two battalions of Rothenthurm attacked also on their side, and chased the enemy as far as the opposite heights. Twice they attempted to rally, and twice the children of William Tell obliged them to retire in disorder; and presently the plain of Morgarten, the memorable theatre of Swiss valour*, was entirely cleared. The enemy, whose plan had been to make an attack on two different points, totally failed in their double enterprise.

The French, pursued to the bottom of the village of Aegeri in the canton of Zug, attempted to rally a third time, but in

* It was in this plain that the Swiss, commanded by an old man, the antient landamman Rodolph Reding of Biberegg, obtained a complete victory over a much more numerous army of Austrians, on the 15th of November, 1315.

vain. They would have been driven much further, had not the pursuers apprehended being intercepted if they advanced too far, as mount Ezel was not covered. The Swiss, therefore, satisfied with having chased the foe from the plain of Morgarten and the mountain of St. Jost, reposed at the approach of night from the glorious toils of the day.

The battalion which was stationed at Meyringen in the valley of Hasli, under the command of lieutenant-colonel Aloys Gwerder, having arrived on that day about noon at Schwitz, where they were apprised of the desertion of mount Ezel, immediately resumed their march, and with all speed took the road of Hagggen-Egg, in order to get before the enemy, and secure this important post. The soldiers of this battalion, not allowing themselves either rest or refreshment, pushed on with so much alacrity, that they were on the summit of this lofty mountain before three in the afternoon. In less than twenty-four hours they had crossed above twenty leagues of country, through very fatiguing roads.

CHAPTER IV.

ON the next day, May the 3d, at three o'clock in the morning, the French advanced to the Swiss posts which defended the town of Arth on the side of the canton of Zug. The warmest action took place near the chapel of St. Adrian. The whole line, from the margin of the lake to the highest summits of mount Ruffi, an extent of more than a league, was guarded on both sides by small detached platoons. The French dexterously profited of every advantage offered them by the position of the Swiss, which was not the best for defence. The latter soon began to be thrown into a little disorder: some of their marksmen, deceived by the darkness, which was not yet entirely dispersed, drew too forwards, and found themselves suddenly between two fires, exposed to the balls of their friends and their enemies. The action lasted without intermission near an hour and a half.

The French first gave way. The well-aimed fire of the chasseurs killed them

many men, and spread confusion in their ranks. They retired in haste; but the Swiss were too weak to pursue them. Some volunteers of Walchwyler in the canton of Zug rendered the greatest service in this affair; they lost six of their number; the people of Schwitz, twenty, and as many wounded.

Scarcely had the last shot been fired on this side, when the same post of Arth was attacked on that of Lucerne. A great part of the 18th demi-brigade of the line had advanced towards this town, and were yet at the distance of a short half-league, when the Swiss too soon made a discharge upon them with grape shot. Instantly the French disappeared from the high road and the plain, and wheeled to the left in order to turn the height.

The Swiss, posted on the back of mount Tobel, behind small entrenchments of fascines and stones, could not at first perceive the manœuvre of the French, whose motions were covered by a little interjacent wood; and they did not descry their danger till the enemy was very near them. They then ran to take possession of the

highest eminence, but arrived too late; the French were already masters of it.

Others of the Swiss in the meantime ventured into the obscure passes of the Tobel, in order to gain the opposite side of Arth, and the remainder entrenched themselves on the declivity of the mountain. For this purpose were constructed immediately small parapets, behind which the soldiers posted themselves in order to load and fire in greater security. On this occasion, more than one chasseur, served by children, who loaded his arms and brought them to him, made a well-supported fire by himself. The French, on their parts, fired with great quickness, but with a bad aim. The Swiss, on the contrary, fired seldom, but levelled exactly, and never missed their mark. At length, after a long discharge of musquetry, the French again withdrew, and returned to their camp near Oberimmensee. Their loss was, doubtless, considerable, but it could never be fairly estimated. They themselves threw many of their dead into the lake. Many were found dispersed among the rocks and hidden in the bushes;

but the greater part were carried off the field along with the wounded, according to the usual practice of the French. The Swiss were very fortunate in this combat, having no more than three killed and twelve wounded.

There was an apprehension during the battle that ammunition would fall short, and that the fire could not be supported till the arrival of a supply expected from Schwitz. As soon as the circumstance was known, the inhabitants of all the neighbouring houses ran and brought the soldiers powder and lead, and even their pewter utensils, and that in such quantity, that although much was melted upon the spot into bullets, a considerable part was taken back as superfluous.

The body of troops stationed at Rothen-thurm had in like manner passed the night from the 2d to the 3d of May under arms, in constant expectation of an attack. They had, therefore, during four times twenty-four hours patiently endured almost incredible fatigues, to which they were necessitated through the scarcity of men; which obliged the soldiers at this post to

be constantly in service. On this night every one reflected in silence upon the critical situation in which he stood. The last events were the subject of general meditation. Hitherto they had fought everywhere with success; but each of these advantages had cost about a hundred men a-day killed, besides many wounded. It was easy to calculate, that, in fighting continually at this expense and with equal good fortune, the Swiss, in less than fifteen days, would sink under the weight of their victories. The posts of Rothenthurm, of Schorno, and of Arth, were, indeed, well guarded; but how was it possible to prevent the French, already masters of mount Ezel and Einsiedlen, from passing Hagggen-Iberg and the Holtz-Egg, which, for want of men, were defended only by women; and then from pushing as far as Schwitz, and inundating the whole country?

CHAPTER V.

THESE natural reflexions presented themselves to the mind of every soldier during the darkness of the night. As soon as the morning began to dawn, every one approached his neighbour, and communicated to him his just apprehensions. Presently, the question was agitated, whether, in the present circumstances, it would not be better to try to obtain an honourable capitulation, than to persist in defence without the hope of succeeding.

It is impossible to relate how different opinions were on this head, and how vigorously they were supported. The discussion became extremely warm. Many, indignant that such a thing should be proposed by Swiss, yet feared lest the love of life, and the consideration of a manifest danger, should incline the majority to declare for capitulation, and lest the minority, notwithstanding their heroism, should be forced to submit.

“No! (cried a great number) no capitulation! Let us rather die for our country! Let us all die in defending it with our last breath!” Others, who wished the

same thing, but endeavoured to obtain it by more moderate discourse, cried, "We will not ask to capitulate till two-thirds of us shall have bitten the dust, and lain extended upon the same bed of honour in which our fathers perished. Is this a sacrifice too considerable to their memory and to that of our liberty?" But the fathers of families, thinking of their wives and children, spoke in this manner: "Comrades, consider well what you are going to do! When our ancestors sacrificed themselves on the same field of battle which we now occupy, victory and their country's freedom were the recompense of their death. But, with the same courage and resolution to devote ourselves, what would it avail? Supposing we were to fight to the last man in order to destroy a greater number of our enemies, they who remained unhurt, who would still be numerous, would trample our dead bodies under foot, and then come with redoubled fury to massacre our wives and children, and fill our valleys with blood and slaughter."

Others, who had long been sensible of the necessity of improvements in the government of the state, but regarded them

as hurtful and disgraceful if dictated by a foreign power, now raised their voices more freely, and said, that if a capitulation could secure religion and property, and preserve the country from forced contribution, it would be prudent to consent to it, and to unite with the rest of Switzerland, in order to form with it one and the same family. They who urged this opinion supported it by observing that such a change would not occasion the loss of liberty, but only of the present form of government, which would be exchanged for one equally popular.

After much tumult, and many very warm contests, the majority came over to this latter opinion; and in the present state of general exhaustion, it was agreed to give ear to the proposals of Schawenburg.

When the people had declared themselves, Aloys Reding wrote to the French general Nouvion to demand a suspension of arms, and sent captain Bueler with the letter to the convent of Our Lady of the Hermits, where the general then was. The captain returned in the evening with the following reply:

To the Commander of the Swiss Troops.

“Convent of Notre Dame des Hermites,
14 Floreal, year 6.

“I have received, monsieur le commandant, your letter written in the German tongue, which I have caused to be translated. In order to convince you how much the French are friends to humanity, I send you back your officer, and make you the following proposals:

“1. Half-an hour after the receipt of this, the troops of the canton of Schwitz shall lay down their arms, and resign them to a French officer deputed for this purpose, who shall promise them, in the general's name, that they shall be deposited in a safe place within the canton.

“2. The people of the canton of Schwitz shall accept the Helvetic constitution.

“I have acknowledged to the general in chief the receipt of your letter, and communicated to him my answer. The relative position of the French army and of yours will doubtless engage you to accept without delay the conditions I offer.

“(Signed)

“NOUVION, general of brigade.”

Even before Bueler arrived with this letter, intelligence was received that the troops of Uri had suddenly abandoned their post, and returned to their own canton. Hitherto the post of Schorno had been guarded by them, and it was now defenceless: it was therefore necessary that the Swiss stationed at Rothenthurm should weaken themselves by detaching a large part of their number to cover this important position.

This unexpected retreat greatly contributed to convince the people of the necessity of a capitulation. As soon as the letter of Nouvion had been communicated to the troops, they required that an armistice of twenty-four hours should be immediately demanded of the general in chief, in order that the people might have time to convene in a general assembly; and that it should also be stipulated with him, that besides security for religion, persons, and property, the canton of Schwitz should also obtain an assurance of not being occupied by French troops.

The landeshauptmann Reding then wrote as follows to general Schawenburg:

“ CITIZEN GENERAL,

“ You cannot be ignorant that in these cantons the exercise of supreme power is in the hands of the people, and that, consequently, the object of your letter of this day must be that of the deliberation of our general assembly. But as the delay which you grant us is too short for convoking and holding such an assembly, I request you, in the name of my dear fellow-citizens, to consent to prolong it twenty-four hours, and also that this poor country should be exempt from the quartering of troops.

“ ALOYS REDING.

“ 3d May, 1798.”

Captain Bueler, charged with this dispatch, and with verbal instructions, returned a second time to Our Lady of the Hermits, whither the general in chief, Schawenburg, was in the mean time arrived. A capitulation was discussed and agreed upon as follows:

“ At the head-quarters of Notre Dame des Hermites, 14 Floreal, year 6 of the French Republic.

“ The general in chief of the French

army in Helvetia declares by these presents to M. Aloys Reding commanding the troops of the canton of Schwitz, that no infringement shall be made upon the catholic religion professed by this canton, since the Helvetic constitution, accepted by the major part of Switzerland, expressly secures liberty of worship.

“On its part, the canton of Schwitz engages to adopt the constitution within the space of twenty-four hours. In consequence of this engagement, the general in chief promises to suspend all hostilities, and to leave to that part of the canton not yet occupied by the French troops, the arms at present in their possession.

“The commander of the troops of the canton of Schwitz also obliges himself to retire to the interior part, and to commit no hostility, until the body of the people shall have passed their vote on the constitution. The result shall be immediately communicated to the general in chief.

“The present convention, of which a duplicate is made, shall be signed on one part by the general in chief, and on the other by M. Bueler, who is furnished to

this effect with full powers from the commander of the troops of Schwitz.

“SCHAWENBÜRG.

“BUELER, captain.”

These articles were communicated in the night from the 3d to the 4th of May to the troops under arms at Rothenthurm, and afterwards published with all speed to the country, with the injunction to all and each to appear at eleven o'clock in the morning at the general assembly of Schwitz.

The people, in consequence, assembled. About the hour of noon, the soldiers of Morgarten, of Rothenthurm, and of Schorno arrived at Schwitz: There were only those of Arth, who, guarding the two banks of the lake on the side of Zug and of Lucerne, would not abandon their post: indeed, they could not have appeared at the general assembly at the appointed time.

CHAPTER VI.

THE spectacle afforded by this assembly was solemn and awful. All the people were armed, as they came from the field of battle; some with musquets, some with carabines, many with stakes, clubs, and halberds. Every face wore the impression of the grief and consternation which reigned in every heart.

After a short harangue, suited to the circumstances, pronounced by the antient landamman Schueller, who was president for the time, the prayer usual on such an occasion was recited, and all the people fervently implored the divine Being to be gracious to them, and to enlighten them as to their conduct. What a spectacle, that of a body of citizen-soldiers raising their hearts to the Deity, and addressing to him their vows for the safety of their country!

The capitulation was then read. Captain Bueler added, that general Schawenburg had given him a verbal assurance, that no requisitions of men or money

should be made in the canton of Schwitz. Aloys Reding then spoke. He gave an account of the recent events; of the position of the French and the Swiss; of the retreat of the troops of Uri, and of four hundred men of Unterwalden, who, having arrived that morning at Brünnen to act as auxiliaries to the canton of Schwitz, had marched back the instant they learned that a capitulation was in treaty. He concluded his discourse with advising to adopt the capitulation.

When he had finished speaking, a letter was presented to the assembly, addressed to it by the dean Tanner, one of its most venerable pastors. This respectable old man expressed himself in the following terms :

“Dear and faithful fellow-citizens,
 “In the painful and dangerous circumstances attending our beloved country, I have thought myself obliged in conscience to address you by letter, since my age and infirmities have rendered me unable to come and speak to you in person. Listen then to the words of a poor priest, who has indeed little merit, but who, du-

ring the fifty-two years complete of his officiating among you, has always done all that lay in his power for religion and his country. My dear brethren, hear in the name of God the voice of reason, and learn to endure what you cannot avoid. Would you then, now that we are forsaken by all our allies, by prolonging a disastrous resistance, sacrifice with yourselves, your wives, your children, and consequently your country? Ah! my dear brethren, when a choice is to be made between two inevitable evils, let us prefer the least. If security is given you for your religion, your persons, and your properties, conclude speedily. Hope and trust in your God. Be united, and endeavour soon to procure to yourselves peace and tranquillity.

“ANTONY TANNER, dean and rector,
“Muttathal, 4th May, 1798.”

Hitherto the people had been sufficiently calm ; but when it was necessary to come to a final decision, a murmur arose on all sides, which soon became a general tumult. - Opinions appeared more at va-

riance than ever. It was the last combat between inclination and necessity, the last convulsions of expiring democracy.

Comparisons were made between what had been done by their ancestors in the cause of liberty, and what remained for them to do; estimates were formed of the loss to be undergone by the sacrifice of a constitution sanctioned by ages of peace and happiness: the new one, of which the advantages could not be known, was opposed to it: in fine, a parallel was drawn between the past and the future, the certain and the uncertain. Some beheld in the new order of things the destruction of all religion: others recollected the oath they had taken to die rather than submit to it; and the greater part said that the promises of the French were not to be relied on.

The clashing of these different opinions augmented the heat of discussion. The declarations for and against became extremely noisy; and it was in vain that the most moderate attempted to restore tranquillity. Many retired from the assembly, in order to give a free vent to their grief.

This confusion, or rather storm, had

already lasted more than an hour. Menaces were heard; drawn sabres and charged muskets were prepared to shed the blood of an assembly of brothers. The people, surrounded with foreign enemies, seemed to spare them the trouble of their destruction, and determined to be their own executioners.

At length, the canon Schueller, a man esteemed by the people on account of his virtuous and irreproachable conduct, ascended the tribune. Every one immediately uncovered, according to the custom of the country when an ecclesiastic speaks in the assembly. By insensible degrees silence was restored, and Schueller took advantage of it to utter with dignity, but with a broken and sorrowful voice, the following sentences:

“ My dear fellow-citizens! if ever fraternal concord and sober recollection were necessary, they are certainly so at the present moment. The question now to be discussed is not which of two constitutions is the best, but whether we are to choose peace or war? You know your situation; you know that courage and

bravery can no longer do any thing towards saving our constitution: we want hands, and consequently a longer defence is become impossible. These were the reasons which yesterday induced you of your own accord to speak of a capitulation. The general in chief of the French army gives you one which is honourable to yourselves, and secures your religion and property.

“You say that you have sworn to die rather than accept the constitution. Far be it from me to exhort you to perjury! but when you took this oath, you were of opinion that your religion would be endangered by it: if then the capitulation makes you secure on this head, the motive of your oath no longer existing, the oath itself ought to be regarded as null and unbinding. You may then accept the constitution without remorse of conscience.

“You further assert that no faith ought to be given to the promises of the French. Are you consistent in holding this language? Do you not at this very moment give them the greatest proof of confidence,

since upon the faith of their word of honour you are assembled here to deliberate on the fate of your country, whilst your frontiers on all sides are defenceless, and your cannon and ammunition, under the feeble guard of a few men, might be taken from you in an instant if the French were desirous of doing so? If you grant them so much confidence at a time when they are still your enemies, and are at your gates, why should you withhold it from them when they shall be at a distance, and become your friends?

“ We have but a few hours of suspension of arms remaining : let us not employ them in idle quarrels and useless discussions. Let us be wise and moderate. If you prefer war, lose no time, fly to your posts and defend your country : but if, on the contrary, you wish to put a stop to the effusion of blood ; if you mean to consent to a capitulation which protects your religion, persons, and properties ; do not delay to make known this intention to the French general, that hostilities may continue suspended, and that fathers may be restored to their children, children to their

fathers, and husbands to their despairing wives. May God Almighty illuminate you, and send his blessing on your resolutions !”

Whilst Schueller was speaking, he was thrice interrupted by the murmurs of the people, and thrice desired to go on with his discourse. At length the storm subsided, and silence was restored. His proposals were listened to with attention: the vote was put upon the essential object, and the capitulation was adopted by a very great majority. About a hundred men only opposed the measure.

They then proceeded to the nomination of four deputies to be sent on the next day to general Schawenburg. A committee was appointed to regulate the other interests.

On the evening of the same day, the following letter was written to Schawenburg:

“CITIZEN GENERAL,

“By the letter which you have addressed to our fellow citizen Aloys Reding, and which has been communicated to us in

our general assembly, we have seen with satisfaction that you promise us the free exercise of our religion, the security of our persons, and the preservation of our arms and properties.

“ Convinced and persuaded of your good faith, and of that of the French nation, we have resolved, on these conditions, to accept the new Helvetic constitution. The citizens Aloys Reding, Jacob Kastell, major Bueler, and secretary Antony Ulrich, chosen from among us, will to-morrow wait upon you, citizen-general, in order to give you verbal assurance of this resolution, and to settle with you the further dispositions. According to your desire, we have communicated your intentions to the canton of Uri; and we now request of you to give orders for the termination of hostilities, and to withdraw your troops, as we have done ours. We flatter ourselves that you will give a favourable reception to our deputies, and we present to you the assurance of our distinguished consideration.

“ Schwitz, 4th of May, 1798.

“In the name of the people of the canton of Schwitz,

(Signed) “BUELER, statthalter.

“ULRICH, secretary.”

The letter of general Schawenburg on the subject of the canton of Uri, which is alluded to in the preceding, arrived during the holding of the assembly, and was as follows:

“Head-quarters of Notre Dame des Hermites,
15 Floreal, year 6 of the French Republic.

“*The General in Chief of the Helvetic Army
to M. Aloys Reding.*

“SIR,

“I am certain that the troops of the canton of Uri, united with yours, acted together with them against the French troops; and as I treat with you, I am to suppose that what shall be agreed on for the canton of Schwitz shall be applicable to all. I cannot imagine that the canton of Uri means to treat separately, and bring upon itself disagreeable consequences. I therefore request you, sir, to communicate to it my intentions; and at

the same time I apprise you, that should it happen (which, however, I cannot believe) that the canton of Uri should refuse to accede to the capitulation you have accepted, I shall be compelled to pass through the canton of Schwitz with the troops under my command.

“ This measure, however, need not disquiet you : I promise you, sir, to respect persons and property, and this promise shall not be violated. I beg you to acquaint me as speedily as possible with your determination in this respect ; and for the sake of humanity, as well as for the happiness of the Swiss nation, it is my wish that this war may soon be terminated.

“ I am, sir, with entire consideration,

“ Yours, &c.

(Signed) “ SCHAWENBURG.”

CHAPTER VII. AND LAST.

By virtue of the capitulation, the French withdrew from the limits of the canton of Schwitz; and, far from indulging sentiments of rancour and hatred against the inhabitants, took pleasure in paying homage to their valour. Schawenburg himself, who, at the commencement of the war, had never mentioned them but with contempt, and had rendered their chiefs responsible with their lives and fortunes for the consequences of their resistance, was in the end obliged to grant them all his esteem. He rendered them due justice in several letters published at that time, and became the friend of Aloys Reding, the general of an army of herdsmen, whom Schawenburg could never conquer*.

* M. Posselt, in his gazette of Tubingen, asserted at the time that Schawenburg and Reding, while they made war against each other, mutually employed gross abuse, and threatened each other in case one should make prisoner of the other. This anecdote is totally destitute of foundation.

The losses undergone by the French in their different actions with the small cantons were very considerable, in comparison with those of their adversaries: they may be estimated in the proportion of ten to one. An exact computation made at Lucerne states their killed at 2754. The number of their wounded was never certainly known, but it was very probably still greater. The troops of the Waldstæten, according to the parish registers, very exactly taken, lost 236 men killed, and only 195 wounded. This evident disproportion between the killed and wounded can only be explained by the obstinacy with which the confederates fought. During the action they paid no regard to their wounds, but remained in their posts, suffering themselves to be cut in pieces, without ever asking quarter, as they never gave it. They feared, more than death, being prisoners to the French: born free, they resolved to die free. They thought it sweet to sprinkle with their blood their natal soil, and to find the bed of death on the fields rendered illustrious by their ancestors.

No monument has been raised to perpetuate the memory of their valour, and bear their names to posterity; but as long as the sterile rocks of Schindellegi shall endure, as long as the plains of Morgarten shall be carpeted with verdure, the remembrance of their deeds shall not perish. They will be recorded in the annals of history after the heroic actions of the age of William Tell, and will add new lustre to the Swiss name.

The inhabitants of the small cantons were not insensible to the testimonies of esteem and consideration given them by the French general. The provisional government of Schwitz, composed of seven members, regarded it as one of its first duties to express its acknowledgments to Schawenburg. But after having discharged this debt, it hastened to acquit itself of another, which was that of taking care of the wounded, and giving relief to the widows and orphans of the defenders of their country. Through the whole canton a voluntary collection was ordered, the produce of which was applied to these works of beneficence.

The fate of the canton of Schwitz was decided when the inhabitants of Pfaeffikon and Wollerau gave another affecting proof of their attachment to their antient masters, from whom they had no longer any thing to hope or fear. They warmly solicited general Schawenburg to suffer them to be united to the canton of Schwitz. They repeated the same solicitations to the magistrates of the cantons, who, sensible of their generous affection, used all their influence, as well with the Helvetic directory as with the general in chief, to obtain this union. Schawenburg thought the demand just, but it was not in his power to grant it; and the Helvetic government, having already completed the territorial division of the republic, found the change impracticable.

The canton of Schwitz further experienced in the last moments of its independence a satisfaction of which, perhaps, no other state in the confederacy could boast; that of having seen the countries which were its subjects rallying round it in the hour of danger, and exerting all their strength in its defence. Kusnacht,

for example, had resisted the French arms as long as it could preserve the hope of being succoured by the canton of Schwitz. The country of la Marche had protected with 800 men that part of the frontiers which borders on the canton of Zurich. The brave inhabitants of the farms had carried their generous devotion to the cause much further: they had abandoned their dwellings and properties to partake the fate of their antient masters, while the French were in possession of their houses. The people of Einsiedlen, perhaps the most courageous and resolute of all, would also have made the greatest sacrifices for the canton, had they not been unworthily seduced by the priest who counselled them to desert the guard at mount Ezel.

Such is the history of the struggle and the destruction of the small cantons of Switzerland. One of them, that of Schwitz, fell like the rest, but not till it had displayed all the energy of a truly republican people. Faithful to its duties as a confederate state, proud of its liberty, and of the honour of the country, it was formerly the first to take up arms against the

house of Austria in asserting its independence, and was the last to lay them down in the resistance to French domination.

Europe, a witness of the valour of the Swiss mountaineers, admired their efforts, and now laments their fate.

SUPPLEMENT,

BY

THE TRANSLATOR.

THE conclusion of the preceding narrative exhibits the reluctant submission of a brave and free people to the dictates of a power which they were wholly incapable of resisting. But submissions extorted by force are likely to last no longer than while the immediate impression of that force continues; and the people of the democratical cantons had already sufficiently shown that they were not formed to bow patiently under the yoke of despotism. No one will therefore wonder that the struggle was not yet entirely ended; and that a very short period elapsed before the bloody contest was partially renewed.

It is affirmed that the French directory was highly displeased with the moderation of Schawenburg in his treaty with the democratical cantons, and urged him to find

some pretext for breaking it. The imposition, by the Helvetic assembly at Arau, of a civic oath of allegiance to the new constitution gave the desired occasion: for its terms were so repugnant to the feelings of many members of the antient confederacy, that they refused to take it.

Menaces were immediately employed by the French general against the refractory, by which the greater part were terrified into acquiescence. But the canton of Unterwalden, now taking the lead in resistance, steadily refused to comply; and, in consequence, measures were taken to compel it. On September 8th, 1798, Schawenburg with a great force entered the canton. The rustic inhabitants assembled to oppose him, and by their determined valour, though half-armed and undisciplined, on the first day arrested his progress. Fresh battalions of the French poured in, and the second day's fight ended in the total overthrow of the unhappy natives. Animated by the rage of despair, both sexes and all ages rushed to the combat, and fell in an indiscriminate massacre. The conquerors, roused to venge-

ance by their losses, pursued their victims into the houses and churches, and made unsparing havock. Stantz, the capital of the district, was stormed, and, with the villages of its beautiful valley, was committed to the flames. The work of devastation was completed, and even the cattle were slaughtered.

In the midst of this horrid scene, two hundred men of Schwitz, who came to succour their allies, finding they arrived only to be spectators of their ruin, rushed upon the ranks of the French, and were cut off to a man.

This dreadful example put an end to all further resistance. It is probable, indeed, that the conduct of Unterwalden was considered by the other Swiss as proceeding only from popular violence and inconsideration; yet the assembly at Arau might have spared themselves the infamy of congratulating Schawenburg on the massacre of their countrymen, and expressing their regret that they had not been personally engaged in the suppression of this *rebellion*.

Switzerland soon experienced the fate

of a country pacified by foreign conquerors, and mocked with a nominal independence held under their good pleasure. The new constitution which made it a republic, one and indivisible, gave it a directory and legislature exactly upon the French plan; and when they proceeded to the exercise of sovereignty, they were told that, notwithstanding their independence, they were to act under the direction of France in every thing which, however remotely, affected her interests. They were, in short, like all the other republics constituted by French influence, entirely subservient to the *great nation*. As a legitimate consequence of this state of tutelage, the French commissary-general seized upon all the stores and treasures belonging to the public throughout Switzerland; and although some spirited remonstrances against this rapine were made by the legislative body, no redress could be obtained.

In the year 1799 the small cantons were the theatre of a most bloody campaign between the Austrians and Russians on one side, and the French on the other,

and torrents of blood were shed in an uninterrupted series of actions, which at length terminated in putting the French again in possession of these unhappy countries, from which they had first been expelled. A Swiss general, Hotze, who headed a body of his countrymen, disaffected to the new order of things, distinguished himself at the beginning of the campaign on the side of the Austrians; but, in general, the Swiss seem to have been passive spectators of the fierce encounters which took place in their presence, between armies, none of which they could view in any other light than as the ravagers of their violated country. It was certainly a most extraordinary circumstance, that the barbarians of the north and the tyrants of the south should meet to decide their quarrels in the retired and supposed inaccessible valleys of the Swiss Alps.

The treaty of peace signed at Luneville in February 1801 between the French and Austrian governments, contained an article expressly guaranteeing the independence of the Helvetic republic, together with that of others, with the right of the

people inhabiting them *to adopt what form of government they please**. As the new constitution, though acquiesced in through necessity, had been found productive of many disorders, and seemed insuperably repugnant to the small cantons in particular, this solemn permission to change it according to their pleasure, was seized upon with avidity by the people of Switzerland.

A general diet assembled at Berne in September 1801, and after a successful contest on the part of the democratical cantons, who claimed their antient liberty, a new government was organized in October, upon the plan of the original confederacy, which, provisionally appointed a senate and executive council, and placed at the head of the latter that Aloys Reding whom we have seen acting as the hero of the last noble but unsuccessful struggle. At the same time, the former magistrates, who had been displaced by the French directory, resumed their seats.

Dissensions still prevailing between the parties, Reding went to Paris to confer

* Article XI. of the treaty of Luneville.

with Bonaparte; and it was at length agreed that a coalition should take place by the readmission of six members of the revolutionary or French party, in the room of six of the old magistrates who were to go out. After things had continued in this state during three months, which were spent in labours to frame a new constitution, the president, Reding, adjourned the senate for the Easter holidays. But he had scarcely returned to his family, when the new members, assembling in the night of April 17th 1802, displaced Reding and all his party, tore the plan of the constitution which had been formed, appointed persons to draw up a new one, and were the next day congratulated on their measures by Verninac, the consular minister in Switzerland.

The new code of government, which was the result of this change, had for its basis the unity of the whole states, and was on that account rejected with strong marks of displeasure by the democratical cantons. On the other hand, a majority in the aristocratical cantons declared in favour of it; though it is probable that most

of the acceptants were chiefly influenced by the expectation that this step would free them from the French troops, which hitherto had continued in Switzerland under pretext of maintaining tranquillity.

This circumstance immediately took place. The executive council of Helvetia, in a proclamation dated from Berne, July 20th, announced to the citizens, that "the French government approved of the use they had made of their independence, and, as the first pledge of its esteem, declared its readiness to withdraw its troops from Helvetia;" which offer the council had accepted.

It soon appeared, however, that it was the presence of these troops which alone had produced the decision in favour of the new constitution; for their recall was the signal of an open opposition to it, which shortly grew to a general insurrection. The cantons of Schwitz, Uri, and Unterwalden, which had never received the constitution, and which confided in the promise given by the chief consul to Reding, "that the democratic cantons should be left to enjoy their antient laws,"

formed a resolution of separating from the Helvetic republic, and renewing between themselves the antient confederacy of the Waldstaeten. Of this they apprised the new government, which in return issued a proclamation to deter them from their purpose. It asserted its determined resolution to introduce in all parts of the republic the constitution adapted by the Helvetic people, and to carry it into effect against every species of opposition whatever; and declared all *landesgemein* or assemblies of the people held in the cantons to be illegal.

The small cantons, however, persisted in their determination. They formed magazines, organized troops, and at the same time addressed a manifesto to the rest of Switzerland, in which they disclaimed any intention to interfere in the internal government of others, but asserted their right of legislating for themselves. The spirit soon spread: Zug, Glaris, Appenzell, Baden, and the Rheinthal adopted the same cause, declared themselves in a state of insurrection, and sent deputies to Schwitz. The peasants at Baden had an

engagement with the troops of the Helvetic government, and defeated them, and the militia of Unterwalden cut in pieces the vanguard of the same army as soon as it set foot on their territory. It was singular that the partisans of oligarchy united with those of democracy in efforts to destroy the new constitution—a sufficient proof that it was the product of foreign influence, not of the national will. Zurich, in which that constitution had been accepted by the greatest number of suffrages, shut its gates against a detachment of the Helvetic or government troops, commanded by general Andermatt, and underwent a bombardment—the first ever known in Switzerland. This was afterwards renewed; but the barbarity of it excited a still more general hatred to the authority which had directed it. A large force of insurgents assembled under d'Erlach and other commanders, and marched to Berne. After a bloody action under the walls of that city, the Helvetic troops within it agreed to a capitulation, and retreated to the Pays de Vaud. Andermatt, meantime, raised the blockade of Zurich, and left

behind him his cannon. Other towns submitted to the insurgents, and by the 20th of September all the German part of Switzerland was withdrawn from the Helvetic government.

The democratical cantons, after the action in Unterwalden, had concluded an armistice with the Helvetic general, and took no part in the subsequent transactions, till the intelligence of the march of the people against Berne. Aloys Rending, the president of this confederacy, then detached his lieutenant-general after the retiring troops of the government; and in the name of the deputies of the five cantons sent a letter to Andermatt, declaring him and his officers personally responsible for any further hostilities they should commit in the support of a government which they now regarded as dissolved. At the same time, these cantons issued a proclamation addressed to the other inhabitants of Switzerland, in which they gave their reasons for interfering in the general concerns of the country, and called upon them to send deputies to a diet to be holden at Schwitz. This diet met on the

27th of September, and declared Reding its president.

Very soon after the insurrection had begun to assume a formidable aspect, the Helvetic government, sensible of its danger, had sent to invoke the mediation and good offices of France. Such an application could not fail of being readily listened to by the chief consul, whose policy, as well as that of the other rulers of France, has ever been to seize every pretext of interfering in the concerns of the surrounding nations, in order to reduce them to a state of dependence. Although this application was made public, the Swiss appear to have indulged a confident hope that they should have been suffered to settle their own affairs by themselves; especially as the overthrow of the government imposed upon them had been effected with extraordinary unanimity; and a return to their former federal system, with certain improvements and modifications, was likely to be generally acquiesced in.

Great therefore were their surprise and consternation on learning the approach of

a French army, which was preceded by a proclamation from the chief consul to the people of Switzerland, than which a more insolent and domineering mandate never emanated from despotic power, to a foreign and nominally independent community. It was dated from St. Cloud, September 30th, 1802, and contained; among others, the following expressions: "You have been disputing these three years without coming to any understanding. If you are left longer to yourselves, you will kill one another for three years more, without coming to any better understanding than before. It is true that I had determined not to interfere in any respect in your affairs. But I neither can nor ought to remain insensible of the evils to which you expose yourselves. I retract my determination. I will be the mediator of your differences; but my mediation shall be efficacious, such as befits the great nation in whose name I speak."

He then goes on to command, that within five days from the publishing of this proclamation the senate shall assem-

ble at Berne; the prefects shall repair to their posts; all authorities which may have been constituted since the commencement of the troubles shall cease to act; all armed assemblies shall disperse; all individuals shall deposit their arms at their municipalities; the senate shall send three deputies to Paris, and each canton may send deputies thither; &c. &c. "On my part (says he), I have a right to expect that no city, no community, no body, will do any thing contrary to the dispositions which I make known to you."

The officer, adjutant-general Rapp, who was the bearer of this mandate, arrived at Lausanne on the day after the Helvetic troops had sustained a defeat in the Pays de Vaud from the insurgents, whose success caused such an alarm, that the members of the expelled government were preparing to depart for Savoy. They naturally considered this interposition as a deliverance, and issued a decree expressing the most lively gratitude to the chief consul. The officer proceeded to Berne, to communicate the consular will to the lead-

ers of that canton. Notwithstanding his efforts to obtain an answer from them, they referred him to the diet at Schwitz, as the legitimate representative of the Swiss nation. An armistice was in the mean time declared between the troops of the two opposite Swiss parties, yet commotions continued for some time longer in several of the towns and districts.

The diet of Schwitz seem to have resolved upon the part it was to act, which was one equally prudent and dignified. This was, to remain firm at its post, continuing to assert the right of the people whom it represented, to choose their own form of government; and to render it manifest to all the world, that when compelled at length to yield, it was only in consequence of superior force. In their answer, transmitted to Rapp on October 8th, they say, with respect to Bonaparte's offer of mediation, "We pledge ourselves, citizen first consul, that the nation, which you yourself were willing to make free, and which has been injured and irritated contrary to your intentions, will not abuse the liberty it claims. We are convinced we shall at-

tain that essential object of all social order, the moment our will and our efforts shall be no longer shackled."

In an address to their constituents, they made known their intention to wait the arrival of the French troops before they submitted, but without any idea of resistance. The address concluded: "The diet, therefore, have no doubt that their countrymen will expect the French troops in a firm posture; yet without resisting them in any way; but with patience and resignation recommending to God and to posterity the rights of the nation."

A further reason which induced the diet of Schwitz to refuse separating at the command of the first consul, was the desire of waiting the effect of certain applications it had made to foreign powers for a friendly interposition in behalf of Swiss independence. It does not appear that these applications were attended to at any other court than that of Great Britain. In this, they produced a note from lord Hawkesbury to Mr. Otto, dated from Downing-street, October 10th, 1802, which has been printed with the other state pa-

pers communicated to parliament on the late renewal of hostilities between the French and English nations. This note expressed the sentiments of deep regret excited in his majesty's breast by the address of the first consul to the Helvetic people; and explicitly declares that his majesty "sees the late exertions of the
 "Swiss cantons in no other light, than as
 "the lawful efforts of a brave and gene-
 "rous people to recover their antient laws
 "and government, and to procure the re-
 "establishment of a system which expe-
 "rience has demonstrated not only to be
 "favourable to the maintenance of their
 "domestic happiness, but to be perfectly
 "consistent with the tranquillity and secu-
 "rity of other powers." Nor was this re-
 monstrance the sole measure adopted by the English ministry; for Mr. Moore was confidentially sent to reside in Switzerland in order to be an observer of the passing events, and the temper of the people; and he was directed, that if he found them actually determined to resist the entrance of a French army into their country, he should, in his majesty's name, accede to

the application made by their representatives for pecuniary succours.

Mr. Moore, however, did not arrive till two or three days before the submission of the diet; and though he took up his residence for some time at Constance, to the great jealousy and displeasure of the French government, yet his mission was entirely fruitless.

The near approach of the French army caused at length the diet to dissolve itself on the 28th of October. Its last act was to publish a proclamation of the following tenor:

“The members of the diet return their powers to the hands of their constituents, having been impeded in their proceedings by a foreign armed force, and by the influence of extraordinary circumstances: they do not renounce the right guaranteed to the different cantons by the treaty of Luneville, of giving to Switzerland a suitable constitution, and they protest before hand against all that other inhabitants of Switzerland are about to do to renounce that right.” This last clause alludes to the Helvetic consulta then assembling at Pa-

ris for the purpose of framing a new constitution under the eyes of the first consul.

It is not intended in this supplement to take a larger view of the affairs of Switzerland since the period with which the original work concludes, than that work has done of the antecedent period. We shall therefore only pursue the fate of the democratical cantons, and their patriotic chief, Aloys Reding. This distinguished person, on the advance of the French to Schwitz, and their arrest of M. Hirzel, an antient magistrate of Zurich, was urged by his friends to withdraw from the country, and provide for his safety. Some even of the French officers, through a generous admiration of his character, are said to have sent him a passport. This, however, Reding returned to the officer who was employed to arrest him, with the following speech: "Having unfortunately failed to restore independence to Switzerland, this in my opinion is an additional inducement for me to take upon myself the whole responsibility. I have obeyed the voice of conscience and of my country. Do you obey the orders of your master."

He was then conveyed under a strong escort to the castle of Arburg, where, with several of his colleagues, who resolved to share his fate, he was imprisoned for nearly four months. This severity was justified in the Paris papers by the assertion that they had voted in the diet for giving battle to the French troops; but as it appears, from the journals of that assembly, that the resolutions of non-resistance passed unanimously, this must be regarded as a false charge. If, indeed, foreign support could have been obtained, it is possible that the zealous friends of Helvetian independence might have been encouraged again to try the chance of arms in so just a cause; and it is probable that their application for such support was their real offence.

Meantime the opinions of the first consul respecting the settlement of Switzerland seem, from some cause, to have undergone a change; for, instead of maintaining the principle of unity in their government, he spoke to the members of the consulta the following language: "The more I have become acquainted

with your country, the more I am convinced that it is not calculated to have only one single government. There must be a diversity in your particular forms of government: you must approximate to your antient constitution. Federalism weakens large states by dividing their strength; it augments that of the small, because every part preserves its natural energy unimpaired."

In consequence of these ideas, and perhaps through a dread of again irritating that desperate valour the effects of which had been so severely felt, the democratical cantons were treated, in the new order of things, with peculiar indulgence. They were allowed to retain their popular institutions, their *landesgemeinden*, or general assemblies, and their convents, together with the name of *Swiss*, much more grateful to them than the more classical appellation of *Helvetians*.

It would have been highly inconsistent, after these concessions, to have retained in captivity those leaders whose resistance to the power of France had been founded on the defence of these very privileges.

The mode of their liberation, however, occasioned some embarrassment, as no specific charge had been brought against them, nor had they ever been subjected to examination. It was thought, upon the whole, most advisable to throw the veil of oblivion over the transaction by a general amnesty, which was made one of the articles of the act of mediation; and soon after the doors of the prison were thrown open, and they were set free without any stipulations. The manner in which they were received by their grateful countrymen will give pleasure to every friend of public virtue. It is recorded in the following article of intelligence published upon the spot:

“The landesgemeinden of Glaris, Appenzell, Schwitz, and Uri, were held on the 27th of March. In each the assemblies were very numerous, and every thing was conducted with the utmost good order. At Schwitz, after the meeting had offered up to heaven a devout prayer, which, according to their ancient usage, was repeated five times, the learned Dr. Zay opened the business of the day by a

speech, in which he addressed himself distinctly to the inhabitants of every district, reminding them of the glorious achievements of their forefathers, and in the name of their country hailed them as freemen restored to their rights. They then proceeded to the elections. Seven speakers successively enlarged on the important services Aloys Reding had rendered to his fellow citizens. Reding, who had in vain attempted to interrupt the course of these commendations, at length obtained a hearing: he represented that he had no claim to the praises which had been heaped upon him; no other merit than that of having done his utmost for restoring the antient liberties of his country. He twice with the utmost eloquence enforced his wish to decline the office of landamman, and recommended for that dignity the former landamman Schuler, who had so much distinguished himself by his patriotism: but the assembly was not to be diverted from its purpose; Reding was elected by the acclamations of his free countrymen, who, all extending their hands to heaven,

implored its benediction. When this effusion of enthusiasm had subsided, the sword of justice and the seal of the state were solemnly delivered to Mr. Reding; and then the people, after a preparatory discourse by doctor Zay, eagerly took the oath of obedience between the hands of the landamman. Auf-der-Maur was then chosen captain-general of the canton.

“ In Appenzell, the resistance of Zellweger to his nomination as landamman of that canton, was in like manner overruled.

“ In the landesgemeinde of Unterwalden, on April the 3d, Wursh was chosen landamman. The other elections have all been in favour of those who had taken part in the insurrection of last August; and a decree has been passed for the repayment out of the treasury of the fines which have been imposed on those who were engaged in it.” Thus far this article,

Although it is impossible not to acknowledge that Switzerland, as a country, is now laid open to France, and must act in political subserviency to her, yet its in-

ternal state, especially in the small cantons, by the restoration of its antient institutions, seems likely to resume its former tranquillity and humble happiness. In that case, THE BLOOD OF ITS PATRIOTS WILL NOT HAVE BEEN SHED IN VAIN!

THE END.

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