winter, spread it to dry. After breakfast this morning we are all going in a body to gather almonds. Throw off, then, dear friend, your fetters for a while, and come and join us in our retreat. You will find here true friendship and real simplicity of heart."

Madame Roland was thus living at La Platière, in the enjoyment of all that this world can give of peace and happiness, when the first portentious mutterings of the French Revolution fell upon her ears. She eagerly caught the sounds, and, believing them the precursor of blessings, rejoiced in the assurance that the hour was approaching when long-oppressed humanity would reassert its rights and achieve its triumph. Little did she dream of the woes which in surging billows were to roll over her country and which were to engulf her and all whom she loved in their tide. Her faith in human nature was so strong that she could foresee no obstacles and no dangers in the way of immediate disfranchisement from all laws and usages which her judgment disapproved. Her whole soul was aroused and she devoted all her affections and every energy of her mind to the welfare of the human race.

Louis XVI. and Maria Antoinette had but recently inherited the throne of the Bourbons. Louis was benevolent, but destitute of the decision of character requisite to hold the reins of government in a stormy period. Maria Antoinette had neither culture of mind nor knowledge of the world. She was an amiable but spoiled child, with native nobleness of character, but with those defects which are the natural consequence of the frivolous education she had received. She thought never of duty and responsibility; always and only of

pleasure. It was her misfortune rather than her fault that the idea never entered her mind that kings and queens had aught else to do than to indulge in luxury. It would be hardly possible to conceive of two characters less qualified to occupy the throne in stormy times than were Louis and Maria. The people were slowly, but with resistless power, rising against the abuses of the aristocracy and the monarchy. Louis, a man of unblemished kindness, was made the scapegoat for the sins of oppressive, profligate princes, who for centuries had trodden with iron hoofs upon the necks of their subjects. The accumulated hate of ages was poured upon his head.

The National Assembly consisted of the nobility, the higher clergy, and representatives, chosen by the people, from all parts of France.

M. Roland, who was quite an idol with the populace of Lyons and its vicinity, was chosen representative to the Assembly from the city of Lyons. In that busy city the revolutionary movement had begun with great power, and the name of Roland was the rallying point of the people now struggling to escape from oppression. M. Roland spent some time in the city, drawn thither by the intense interest of the times, and in the salon of Madame Roland meetings were every evening held by the most influential men of the revolutionary party. Her ardour stimulated their zeal, and her well-stored mind and fascinating eloquence guided their councils.

In this rising conflict between plebeian and patrician, between democrat and aristocrat, the position in which M. Roland and wife were placed, as most conspicuous and influential members of the revolutionary party, arrayed against them, with daily increasing animosity, the aristo-

cratic community of Lyons. Each day their names were pronounced by the advocates of reform with more enthusiasm and by their opponents with deepening hostility. The applause and the censure alike invigorated Madame Roland, and her whole soul became absorbed in the idea of popular liberty. This object became her passion, and she devoted herself to it with the concentration of every energy of mind and heart.

On the 20th of February, 1791, Madame Roland accompanied her husband to Paris, as he took his seat in the National Assembly. Her persuasive influence was dictating those measures which were driving the ancient nobility of France from their châteaux, and her vigorous mind was guiding those blows before which the throne of the Bourbons trembled. The unblemished and incorruptible integrity of M. Roland, his simplicity of manners and ability, invested him immediately with much authority among his associates. The brilliance of his wife also reflected much lustre upon his name. Madame Roland with her growing zeal, had just written a pamphlet upon the new order of things, in language so powerful and impressive that more than sixty thousand copies had been sold—an enormous number, considering the comparative fewness of readers at that time. She, of course, was received with the most flattering attention, and great deference was paid to her opinions. She attended daily the sittings of the Assembly, and listened with the deepest interest to the debates.

All her tastes were with the ancient nobility and their defenders. All her principles were with the people. And as she contrasted the unrefined exterior and clumsy speech of the democratic leaders with the courtly bearing and elegant diction of those who rallied around the

throne, she was aroused to a more vehement desire for the elevation of those with whom she had cast in her lot. The conflict with the nobles was of short continuance. The energy of rising democracy soon vanquished them.

The most moderate party was called the Girondist. It was so called because their most prominent leaders were from the department of the Gironde. They would deprive the King of many of his prerogatives, but not of his crown. They would take from him his despotic power, but not his life. They would raise the mass of the people to the enjoyment of liberty, but to liberty controlled by vigorous law. Opposed to them were the Jacobins — far more radical in their reform. They would break down all privileged orders, confiscate the property of the nobles and place prince and beggar on the footing of equality. These were the two great parties into which revolutionary France was divided and the conflict between them was the most fierce and implacable earth has ever witnessed.

M. Roland and wife gathered around them every evening many of the most influential members of the Assembly. They attached themselves with all their zeal and energy to the Girondists. Four evenings of every week the leaders of this party met in the salon of Madame Roland, to deliberate respecting their measures.

The powerful influence which Madame Roland was thus exerting could not be concealed. She appeared to have no ambition for personal renown. She sought only to elevate the position and expand the celebrity of her husband. It was whispered from ear to ear, and now and then openly asserted in the Assembly, that the bold and decisive measures of the Girondists received

their impulse from the lovely wife of M. Roland. She also furnished many very able articles for a widely circulated journal, established by the Girondists for the advocacy of their political views.

The spirit of the revolution was advancing with giant strides, and the throne was reeling beneath the blows of the people. Massacres were rife all over the kingdom. The sky was nightly illumined by conflagrations. Nobles were abandoning their estates and escaping from perils and death to refuge in the little army of emigrants at Coblentz. The King, insulted and a prisoner, reigned but in name. He hoped, by the appointment of a Republican ministry to pacify the democratic spirit.

He yielded to the pressure, dismissed his ministers, and surrendered himself to the Girondists for the appointment of a new ministry. The Girondists called upon M. Roland to take the important post of Minister of the Interior. It was a perilous position to fill, but what danger will not ambition face? In the present posture of affairs the Minister of the Interior was the monarch of France. M. Roland smiled nervously at the power which, thus unsolicited, was passing into his hands. Madame Roland, whose all-absorbing passion it now was to elevate her husband to the highest summits of greatness, was gratified in view of the honour and agitated in view of the peril; but, to her exalted spirit, the greater the danger, the more heroic the act.

"The burden is heavy," she said; "but Roland has a great consciousness of his own powers, and would derive fresh strength from the feeling of being useful to liberty and his country."

In March, 1792, he entered upon his arduous and exalted office. When M. Roland made his first appear-

ance at court instead of arraying himself in the court dress, he affected in his costume the simplicity of his principles. He had not forgotten the impression produced in France by Franklin, as in republican simplicity he moved among the glittering throng at Versailles. He accordingly presented himself at the Tuileries in a plain black coat, with a round hat, and dusty shoes fastened with ribbons instead of buckles. The courtiers were indignant. The king was highly displeased at what he considered an act of disrespect. The master of ceremonies was in consternation, and exclaimed with a look of horror to General Damuriez:

"My dear sir, he has not even buckles on his shoes!"

"Mercy upon us!" exclaimed the old general, with the most laughable expression of affected gravity, "we shall then all go to ruin together!"

M. Roland after his first interview with the monarch assured his wife that the community had formed a totally erroneous estimate of the King; that he was a hearty supporter of the Constitution which had been forced upon him. The prompt reply of Madame Roland displayed even more than her characteristic sagacity:

"If Louis is sincerely a friend of the Constitution, he must be virtuous beyond the common race of mortals. Mistrust your own virtue, M. Roland. You are only an honest countryman wandering amid a crowd of courtiers. They speak our language; we do not know theirs. No! Louis cannot love the chains that fetter him. He may feign to caress them. He thinks only of how he can spurn them. No man likes his humiliation. Trust in human nature, that never deceives. Distrust courts. Your virtue is too elevated to see the **snares** which courtiers spread beneath your feet."

From all the spacious apartments of the mansion alloted as the residence of the Minister of the Interior Madame Roland selected a small and retired parlour, which she had furnished with every attraction as a library and a study. This was her much-loved retreat, and here M. Roland, in the presence of his wife, was accustomed to see his friends in all their confidential intercourse. But the position of the Girondists began to be more and more perilous. The army of emigrant nobles at Coblentz, within the dominions of the King of Prussia, was rapidly increasing in numbers. There were hundreds of thousands in France, the most illustrious in rank and opulence, who would join such an army. The people all believed that Louis wished to escape from Paris and head that army. On the other hand, they saw another party, the Jacobin, noisy, turbulent, sanguinary and threatening with destruction all connected in any way with the execrated throne. M. Roland was urged to present to the throne a most earnest letter of expostulation and advice. Madame Roland sat down at her desk and wrote the letter for her husband. It was expressed in that glowing style so eminently at her command. Its eloquence was inspired by the foresight she had of impending perils. M. Roland, almost trembling in view of its boldness and its truths, presented the letter to the King. Its last sentences will give some idea of its character:

Love, serve the Revolution, and the people will love it and serve it in you. Ratify the measures to extirpate their fanaticism. Paris trembles in view of its danger. Surround its walls with an army of defence. Delay longer, and you will be deemed a conspirator and an accomplice. Just Heaven! hast thou stricken kings with blindness? I know that truth is rarely welcomed at the foot of thrones. I know, too, that the withholding

of truth from kings renders revolutions so often necessary. As a citizen, a minister, I owe truth to the King, and nothing shall prevent me from making it reach his ear.

This celebrated letter was presented to the King on the 11th of June, 1792. On the same day M. Roland received a letter from the King informing him that he was dismissed from office.

"Here am I, dismissed from office," was M. Roland's exclamation to his wife on his return home.

"Present your letter to the Assembly, that the nation may see for what counsel you have been dismissed," replied the undaunted wife.

M. Roland did so. He was received as a martyr to patriotism. The letter was read amid the loudest applause. It was ordered to be printed and circulated by tens of thousands through the kingdom; and there came rolling back upon the metropolis the echo of the most tumultuous indignation and applause. The famous letter was read by all France—nay, more, by all Europe. Roland was a hero. Upon this wave of enthusiastic popularity Madame Roland and her husband retired from the magnificent palace where they had dwelt for so short a time and selected for their retreat very humble apartments in an apparently obscure street.

But M. Roland and wife were more powerful now than ever before. The letter had placed them in the front ranks of the friends of reform, and enshrined them in the hearts of the ever fickle populace. Even the Jacobins were compelled to swell the universal voice of commendation. M. Roland's apartments were ever thronged. All important plans were discussed and shaped by him and his wife before they were presented to the Assembly.

The outcry against M. Roland's dismissal was falling in thunder tones on the ear of the King. This act had fanned those flames of revolutionary frenzy which were now glaring in every part of France. The people, intoxicated and maddened by the discovery of their power, were now arrayed, with irresistible thirstings for destruction and blood, against the King, the court, and the nobility. There was no hope for Louis but in the recall of M. Roland. The Jacobins were upon him in locust legions. M. Roland alone could bring the Girondists, as a shield, between the throne and the mob. He was recalled, and again moved in calm triumph from his obscure chambers to the palace of the minister. If Madame Roland's letter dismissed him from office, her letter also restored him again with an enormous accumulation of power.

Madame Roland was far more conscious of the peril than her husband. With intense emotion, but calmly and firmly, she looked upon the gathering storm. The peculiarity of her character, and her great moral courage, was illustrated by the mode of life she vigorously adopted. She was entirely undaz¬zled, and resolved that, consecrating all her energies to the demands of the tempestuous times, she would waste no time in fashionable parties and heartless visits. Selecting for her own use one of the small¬est parlours, she furnished it as her library. Here she lived engrossed in study, busy with her pen, and taking an unseen but most active part in all those measures which were literally agitating the whole civilised world. Her little library was the sanctuary for all confidential conversation upon mat-ters of state. Here her husband met his political friends

to mature their measures. She wrote many of his proclamations, his letters, his state papers, and with all the glowing fervour of an enthusiastic woman.

She writes:

> Without me my husband would have been quite as good a minister, for his knowledge, his activity, his integrity were all his own; but with me he attracted more attention, because I infused into his writings that mixture of spirit and gentleness, of authoritative reason and seducing sentiment, which is, perhaps, only *to* be found in the language of a woman who has a clear head and a feeling heart.

Anarchy now reigned throughout France. The King and the royal family were imprisoned in the Temple. The Girondists in the National Convention, and M. Roland at the head of the ministry, were struggling to restore the dominion of law, and, if possible, to save the life of the King. The Jacobins, who, unable to resist the popularity of M. Roland, had, for a time, cooperated with the Girondists, now began to separate themselves again more widely from them. They flattered the mob. They encouraged every possible demonstration of lawless violence. In tones daily increasing in boldness and efficiency, they declared the Girondists to be the friends of the monarch, and the enemies of popular liberty.

Madame Roland, in the name of her husband, drew up for the Convention the plan of a republic as a substitute for the throne. From childhood she had yearned for a republic. Now the throne and hereditary rank were virtually abolished, and all France clamoured for a republic. Her husband was nominally Minister of the Interior, but his power was gone. The mob of Paris had usurped the place of King, and Constitution