

JOURNAL - MOST PERILOUS MOMENT FOR A
BAD GOVERNMENT IS WHEN IT SEEKS
The Last Moments of Marie Antoinette to CORRECT
ITSELF.

We have already seen what changes had been made in the Temple. Marie Antoinette had been separated from her sister, her daughter, and her son, by virtue of a decree which ordered the trial and exile of the

last members of the family of the Bourbons. She had been removed to the Conciergerie, and there, alone in a narrow prison, she was reduced to what was strictly necessary, like the other prisoners. The imprudence of a devoted friend had rendered her situation still more irksome. Michonnis, a member of the municipality, in whom she had excited a warm interest, was desirous of introducing to her a person who, he said, wished to see her out of curiosity. This man, a courageous emigrant, threw to her a carnation, in which was enclosed a slip of very fine paper with these words: "*Your friends are ready,*"—false hope, and equally dangerous for her who received it, and for him who gave it! Michonnis and the emigrant were detected and forthwith apprehended; and the vigilance exercised in regard to the unfortunate prisoner became from that day more rigorous than ever. Gendarmes were to mount guard incessantly at the door of her prison, and they were expressly forbidden to answer anything that she might say to them.

That wretch Hébert, the deputy of Chaumette, and editor of the disgusting paper *Père Duchesne*, a writer of the party of which Vincent, Ronsin, Varlet, and Leclerc were the leaders,—Hébert had made it his particular business to torment the unfortunate remnant of the dethroned family. He asserted that the family of the tyrant ought not to be better treated than any sans-culotte family; and he had caused a resolution to be passed by which the sort of luxury in which the prisoners in the Temple were maintained was to be suppressed. They were no longer to be allowed either poultry or pastry; they were reduced to one sort of aliment for breakfast, and to soup or broth and a single dish for dinner, to two dishes for supper, and half a bottle of wine apiece. Tallow candles were

to be furnished instead of wax, pewter instead of silver plate, and delft ware instead of porcelain. The wood and water carriers alone were permitted to enter their room, and that only accompanied by two commissioners. Their food was to be introduced to them by means of a turning box. The numerous establishment was reduced to a cook and an assistant, two men-servants, and a woman-servant to attend to the linen.

As soon as this resolution was passed, Hébert had repaired to the Temple and inhumanly taken away from the unfortunate prisoners even the most trifling articles to which they attached a high value. Eighty louis which Madame Elisabeth had in reserve, and which she had received from Madame de Lamballe, were also taken away. No one is more dangerous, more cruel, than the man without acquirements, without education, clothed with a recent authority.

Hébert conceived the infamous idea of wringing from this boy revelations to criminate his unhappy mother. Whether this wretch imputed to the child false revelations, or abused his tender age and his condition to extort from him what admissions soever he pleased, he obtained a revolting deposition; and as the youth of the Prince did not admit of his being brought before the tribunal, Hébert appeared and detailed the infamous particulars which he had himself either dictated or invented.

It was on the 14th of October that Marie Antoinette appeared before her judges. Dragged before the sanguinary tribunal by inexorable revolutionary vengeance, she appeared there without any chance of acquittal, for it was not to obtain her acquittal that the Jacobins had brought her before it. It was necessary, however, to make some charges. Fouquier therefore collected the rumours current among the populace ever since the arrival of the Princess in France, and, in the act of accusation, he charged her with having plundered the exchequer, first for her pleasures, and afterwards in order to transmit money to her brother, the Emperor. He insisted on the scenes of the 5th and 6th of October, and on the dinners of the Life Guards, alleging that she had at that period framed a plot, which obliged the people to go to Versailles to frustrate it. He afterwards accused her of having governed her husband, interfered in the choice of ministers, conducted the intrigues with the deputies gained by the Court, prepared the journey to Varennes, provoked the war, and transmitted to the enemy's generals all our plans

of campaign. He further accused her of having prepared a new conspiracy on the 10th of August, of having on that day caused the people to be fired upon, having induced her husband to defend himself by taxing him with cowardice; lastly, of having never ceased to plot and correspond with foreigners since her captivity in the Temple, and of having there treated her young son as King. We here observe how, on the terrible day of long-deferred vengeance, when subjects at length break forth and strike such of their princes as have not deserved the blow, everything is distorted and converted into crime. We see how the profusion and fondness for pleasure, so natural to a young princess, how her attachment to her native country, her influence over her husband, her regrets, always more indiscreet in a woman than a man, nay, even her bolder courage, appeared to their inflamed or malignant imaginations.

Marie Antoinette frequently repeated, with presence of mind and firmness, that there was no precise fact against her; that, besides, though the wife of Louis XVI., she was not answerable for any of the acts of his reign. Fouquier nevertheless declared her to be sufficiently convicted; Chaveau-Lagarde made unavailing efforts to defend her; and the unfortunate Queen was condemned to suffer the same fate as her husband.

Conveyed back to the Conciergerie, she there passed in tolerable composure the night preceding her execution, and on the morning of the following day, the 16th of October, she was conducted, amidst a great concourse of the populace, to the fatal spot where, ten months before, Louis XVI. had perished. She listened with calmness to the exhortations of the ecclesiastic (v) (v) who accompanied her, and cast an indifferent look at the people who had so often applauded her beauty and her grace, and who now as warmly applauded her execution. On reaching the foot of the scaffold she perceived the Tuileries, and appeared to be moved; but she hastened to ascend the fatal ladder, and gave herself up with courage to the executioner. The infamous wretch exhibited her head to the people, as he was accustomed to do when he had sacrificed an illustrious victim. (v)

The Last Separation.—Execution of Madame Elisabeth.—Death of the Dauphin.

The two Princesses left in the Temple were now almost inconsolable; they spent days and nights in tears, whose only alleviation was that they were shed together. "The company of my aunt, whom I loved so tenderly," said Madame Royale, "was a great comfort to me. But alas! all that I loved was perishing around me, and I was soon to lose her also. . . . In the beginning of September I had an illness caused solely by my anxiety about my mother; I never heard a drum beat that I did not expect another 3d of September."

In the course of the month the rigour of their captivity was much increased. The Commune ordered that they should only have one room; that Tison (who had done the heaviest of the household work for them, and since the kindness they showed to his insane wife had occasionally given them tidings of the Dauphin) should be imprisoned in the turret; that they should be supplied with only the barest necessaries; and that no one should enter their room save to carry water and firewood. Their quantity of firing was reduced, and they were not allowed candles. They were also forbidden to go on the leads, and their large sheets were taken away, "lest"—notwithstanding the gratings!—"they should escape from the windows."

- ① WHAT FOOD WAS DISALLOWED IN THE QUEEN'S PRISON CELL?
- ② WHAT OTHER "LUXURIES" WERE DONE AWAY WITH?
- ③ WHEN DID MARIE GET TAKEN BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL?
- ④ NAME '5' OF HER ILLEGAL ACTIONS ACCORDING TO THE PROSECUTOR?