

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers*, May 30, 1891 to February 6, 1892)

The Fall of the Bastille

The chief center of the revolutionary movement in 1789 was the Palais Royale, a vast mansion built by Richelieu and afterward the home of Anne of Austria during the minority of Louis XIV. At different times subsequently the original structure was almost entirely rebuilt. For nearly a century before the Revolution it had been the residence of the Duke of Orleans, who received a large sum from the rental of the shops and cafés on the ground floor of the palace. The decree under which the States General was called together had been issued on the first day of the new year.

In a short time the Café de Foy and other similar places of resort present in the Palais Royale were filled with groups of excited men and women engaged in furiously discussing the questions of the day. As soon as the fine weather came in the spring, the forum was transferred to the gardens in the great court yard, where orators, mounted on chairs, harangued the people night after night. The wildest schemes were proposed in entire good faith and with a firm belief in their ability to regenerate mankind by the methods proposed. As these tumultuous crowds assembled inside the walls of the palace of the first Prince of the Blood, the police were constrained to allow a freedom of speech that Frenchmen had never before had. At the Hotel de Ville, a second center of agitation existed, that derived its stimulus from the Palais Royale. A swarm of political agents, mysteriously supplied with money from a seemingly unlimited purse, invaded the Place de Gréve and forced the municipality to assume a hostility to the Government which its members did not feel. It was a body of men to largely dependent on royal favor to give a hearty support to the popular cause.

A Provost of the merchants or mayor, four echevins, or aldermen, a procureur du vin, or registrar, formed the municipality. The seven bourgeois who held these offices unfortunately did not have the confidence of their fellow citizens. As all administrative functions were exercised by the police, these unlucky men had no real power to make themselves respected.

The Provost was nominally at the head of the Châtelet, the great court of civil, police and criminal jurisdiction of the city of Paris, but in fact never appeared, as the three sub-officers named by the King, presided and treated their chief as if he were a "voï fainéant" and they were "maines du Palais." As Mercier called them in the "Tableau de Paris," the aldermen were "fantoms." Yet from the fact that they always appeared at great civic entertainments pompously arrayed in the rich robes, their places were eagerly sought by men who liked to display themselves in public. When the Revolution came the moderate faction at the Hotel de Ville

was ignominiously overwhelmed. The pathway of the storm extended about two miles in a nearly straight line from the Palais, its place of direction in the West, to the "Place de la Sainte Antoine on the East. The Hotel de Ville being situated halfway between these points.

In the winter of 1788-9, the sufferings of the poor were intense. Bad harvests, followed by a gigantic wheat speculation had raised the cost of food to famine prices. The local custom duties, levied on the borders of each province served to delay the transportation of corn and were sometimes used corruptly to entirely cut off supplies. In a short time the whole nation was face to face with starvation. A great riot in the Faubourg de Saint Antoine, which took place on the 27th and 28th of April, had a powerful influence in shaping events. , a wealthy manufacturer of paper hangings, who had begun life as a workman, became a candidate for the State General. He was bitterly opposed by the partisans of the Duke of Orleans. The rage of the people was excited against him by a political trick often used for similar purposes in the United States.

A story was circulated that Reveillen had said that a workman could live on fifteen sous a day and his wages should therefore be reduced to that sum. Reveillen's effigy was, after a mock trial, hung in the Place Royale and his factory and dwelling were pillaged by the mob. In order to save his life he took refuge in the Bastille and remained there during the month of May.

This riot was followed by disastrous consequences. In every quarter of the city the citizens were startled at the sight of men, half savage in appearance who seemed to issue forth from unknown retreats. These brigands had come from every province of France and even from other parts of Europe, urged by the hope of plunder. In the affair of Reveillen they foresaw the opportunities that similar disturbances might offer in a city so rich that it paid a greater sum in taxes than the three Kingdoms of Sweden, Denmark, and Sardinia

The King was weakness itself, and the government by reason of financial embarrassment was on the verge of dissolution. In times past its grants of special rights and privileges had been its best reliance for income in periods of distress. This reserve was no longer available. The exemptions from taxation had been extended, until in the provinces, there were none to pay taxes save the peasants and the poorer classes in the towns. Its army and police were unpaid and insubordinate. The government had in fact become an anarchy, which still preserved in outward appearance of order, that might yet impose on the courtiers at Versailles, but could not long deceive the people in the frightful misery in which they were plunged.

The Court at last determined to dissolve the State General. In the early part of July, thirty-five thousand soldiers had gathered at Versailles and twenty-

thousand more crowded roadways in the provinces on their way to join them. Necker, the idol of the nation, was dismissed on Saturday, 11 July. He received the order while at dinner, which at that period took place at the early hour of three o'clock. In obedience to the King's request that he should keep his dismissal secret and leave French territory without delay, he deliberately finished his meal and without giving any sign to his guests, entered his carriage accompanied by his wife in full dress as if they were about to take their usual afternoon drive.

Before the morning dawned, M. and Madame Necker were far advanced on the road to Belgium. Sunday, the 12th of July, opened without any unusual stir in Paris. The frequenters of the coffeehouses learned the news about nine o'clock and were soon in commotion, while the agitation of the Palais Royale exceeded the usual disturbance that characterized the day.

In the morning the sky had been overcast, but finally the clouds broke and the firing of the cannon in the court-yard at noon by the *san's* rags was taken as a happy augury. At half past two o'clock Camille Desmoulins appeared in costume de visite and advancing from the Rue de Richelieu side of the palace, mounted a table. A young journalist and brilliant writer, the son of a lieutenant general of the Kingdom he had become well known in Paris from the prominent part he took in the debates at the Palais Royale.

He was small and of slight figure and embarrassed by a defect of speech that made his oratory painful to his listeners. As he turned his haggard eyes from one part of the crowd to the other he cried: "To arms! To arms! And accompanied the words by frightful grimaces and contortions made in a supreme effort to make himself heard and understood. He told the people that the dismissal of Necker sounded the knell of a Saint Bartholomew's Day for the patriots. The carefully composed harangue which he wrote from memory several months afterward was undoubtedly better considered, but he could not have had a greater effect than the fiery words uttered on this memorable occasion. He asked the excited people to select a color and suggested green, the emblem of hope, and blue, the color chosen by Cincinnatus and the patriots in America. As he spoke he drew two pistols from his pocket and swore he would never fall into the hands of the police alive. He descended to be overwhelmed by the congratulations and embraces of his friends.

The bystanders at once tore branches from the trees to be used as the signal of revolt. A prearranged character was given to the affair by the appearance of a woman with a supply of green ribbon which she gave to all who wished to wear it. Before twenty-four hours had passed some one recalled the fact that Green was the color of the Duke of Artois, the King's brother and red and blue, the colors of the Duke of Orleans, and of the city of Paris, were selected to take its place.

As the afternoon wore away the promenades were filled with the usual groups of loungers and the city preserved its ordinary appearance until four o'clock, when the theaters were closed by a party of rioters while another sacked the gun shops. A general consternation seized the citizens, who hastened to barricade their shops against the enormous crowds that had become masters of the streets. Two well-dressed young man supported by a mob of several hundred ragamuffins, went to the Boulevard du Temple where Kreutz, a German modeler, who had transformed his name into Curtius kept a collection of wax figures. They demanded the busts of Necker and the Duke of Orleans, and carried them along the Boulevard, followed by a motley troope. The mob cried "Long live Necker - Long live the Duke of Orleans" in a threatening manner as they marched along and compelled all that they met to take off their hats.

The young dandy who bore the bust of Necker was conspicuous from the fact that he wore fine silk clothes and was equipped with a sword and two watches, after the fashion of the day. He soon tired of this burden and gave it to Pepin, a Savoy and peddler of pins and needles. At the suggestion of some one the busts were wrapped in crape, and the noisy procession passed along the Rue St. Martin and the Rue St. Denis, streets at that time of much greater importance than they are today when the Boulevard de Sebastopol and has been cut through the blocks between them. It reached the Palais Royale by the Rue St. Honoré, passed into the court yard and thence hurried by the way of the Rue de Richelieu to the Place Vendome, then called the Place le Grand. A great equestrian statue of Louis XIV, by Sirandin cast by the brothers Keller and of larger size than any now existing, then stood in the central portion of the square where the Napoleon Column now stands. In sarcastic triumph, the busts were carried twice around the colossal monument to the monarchy. A detachment of dragoons attacked the men engaged in the demonstration, who replied by assailing the soldiers with stones and other missiles. The crowd still pressed forward until it entered the Place de la Concorde, afterward known as the Place de la Revolution, but at that time called the Place Louis XV.

The large open space was ornamented with an equestrian statue, by Bouchanden, of Louis XV dressed, as if the sculptor had made it in an ironical mode, in classic drapery of antique severity. This effigy, like the one of Louis XIV, was destined to be destroyed in the revolution that began that bright Sunday afternoon. At this point the Royal Allemand regiment commanded by the Prince of Lambese, fell upon the people and dispersed them. During the first attack in the Place Louis le Grande the well-dressed young man was killed by a pistol shot and Pepin, severely wounded both by sword cut and the gunshot, was carried by his friends, covered with blood to the Palais Royale.

The wax busts "borrowed" from Curtius were, by a singular piece of luck, returned to him on injured. In the affray in the Place Louis XV the people were forced to fall back through the turning bridge over the moat into the gardens of

the Tuileries. The natural result of this injudicious attempt to constrain Frenchmen while peacefully promenading and taking their pleasure followed. Stones, backs of garden chairs, fragments of bottles and other missiles were hurled at the soldiers. Chauval, a school-master sixty- four years of age was, as he stated in the judicial inquiry before the Châtelet, lightly wounded by the Prince of Lambese in person but able, however, to walk to a seat.

This case is one of the curiosities of French historical writing. The statement that he was killed sometimes with the highly imaginative addition that he was kneeling for mercy when slain, has been made again and again by writers of eminence to whom his own sworn testimony in the process was accessible. Chauvel likewise was taken to the court yard of the Palais Royale, where the sight of the wounded men stirred the people to frenzy. The next Monday, 13 July, a band of rioters sacked the convent of St. Lazare at 3 o'clock in the morning. At a later hour the Garde Moible, in the Place Louis XV, was broken into and groups of men wearing the superb old armor stored there, paraded the streets. The contents of this great museum, valued at fifty millions of francs, were scattered and lost. One priceless object, the sword of Henry IV, was said, by one account, to have been sold by a street Arab for half a crown. Another and perhaps more imaginative historian relates that the offer was proudly and indignantly declined.

The well to do citizens now began to recall the fate of Réveillen, and the restoration of order became the uppermost thought in the minds of those who have anything to lose. The Electors of Paris were a select body of tax payers who alone have the right to vote. At eight o'clock on Monday morning certain Electors joined with the municipality and formed a permanent committee to protect life and property. As the first overt act of the Revolution, it was worthy of explanation. It is noticeable that no call for a public meeting was made, as would have been required in a similar emergency in the United States.

These Electors, present at the Hotel de Ville probably by design, possibly by chance, simply combined with the municipality to seize the supreme power. M.Grélé, a citizen but not an Elector, happened to be a bystander. He denounced their proceedings as an act of usurpation. In order to silence him, his name was added to the committee, which was made up of thirteen electors, the seven officers of the municipality in one citizen. In the entire list of twenty one names eight bear the aristocratic prefixes "de". The finest edict of the committee was a decree ordering the formation of a militia composed of 48,000 men.

If Necker had not divided the city into sixty election districts, the task would have been well-nigh impossible. The Committee declined to allow the militia to choose their own officers. This fact sufficiently shows that the new power at the Hotel de Ville was not Republican in sentiment. They further decided to send a deputation to Versailles to have their acts confirmed by the King. The entire absence of any revolutionary intent is overwhelmingly established by their proceedings.

The citizens of each district promptly held a meeting to form themselves into a militia. The records of the assembly in the Petit Saint Antoine still exists and constitute the only paper of the kind yet discovered. At eleven o'clock, three hours after the decree was issued, the meeting was called to order. M. Dufour, Avocat, was made President and four Secretaries chosen, among whom were Champion de Villeneuve, afterward Minister of State, and Billart, Avocat au Parlement. It is a noticeable fact that the secretaries were sworn to perform their duties faithfully. It is entirely clear from the tenor of the proceedings that the measures about to be taken were to protect property, not to destroy it.

The chief dread of the assembled citizens was that the prisons might be opened and "les vagabonds" set loose. The signatures, residences and occupations of over one thousand persons appear in the record. The effect of this action at the Hotel de Ville was seen at once. Patrols of armed men appeared in all the public places. The Gardes Francaises, a regiment which had been disbanded for insubordination, offered to act under the orders of the Committee. The bands of ruffians in the streets disappeared as if by magic.

In the presence of this great popular movement every unruly element was awed into submission. Mercy-Argenteau, the Austrian ambassador, in his letters to Prima praised the man who guarded his mansion and expressed his sense of entire safety under their protection. The Duke of Dorset, the English Ambassador, in his dispatch to his government said, in relation to Monday, the 13th, "All shops were shut, all public and private works at a stand and scarcely a person to be seen in the streets except the armed Bourgeois." It was, however, upon this newly formed body that President Boyer exhausted his powers of ridicule. He described the scene in which the advocates and other men of the robe, wearing the square caps of their order, appeared earnestly engaged in drilling the people, irregularly dressed in the varying costumes of their vocations, and armed in similar fashion with weapons of every conceivable shape. But beyond these fantastic features was the impressive spectacle of a great city animated by a single will. An Army had come forth in a day, and the citizens had only to look abroad in the streets to comprehend the strength of their own uprising.

This burgher guard, however, was for the most part without arms. A store of thirty- two thousand muskets was known, however, to be in the Hotel de Invalides. Mathieu Dumas says that he saw Count Sombreuil and his cannoniers early in the morning of July 14th, standing with lighted matches by their guns and it seemed unlikely that the people could capture the building with any force they could bring against it. The vast crowd of excited men made one rush forward and the place was taken without the loss of a single life. Many of the muskets were carried off by boys and irresponsible persons, but the most of them finally reached the hands of the militia. The contents of forty six barrels of gunpowder, found that morning by a barber's boy in a boat moored in the Seine , were distributed in person by the Abbe Lefèvre and the armament of the citizens was

complete. The Barriers had been burnt the night before and Paris, free from octroi duties, became in a few hours a well provisioned city.

The Bastille was a word that had not yet fallen from many lips. Few thought of it except as a remnant of the past could not be gotten rid of, an impregnable fortification that it would be useless to attack. Mercier, in his "Tableau de Paris," says that in 1782 the tearing down of "L'infurnal Bastille" became a question among the citizens. The plans prepared in 1784 by Cerbet the inspecting architect of the municipality of Paris, for rebuilding the entire quarter, are in the museum in the Hotel Carnavalet, the fine old residence of Madame de Sévigné, in the Marais. It was the great melody of the French monarchy, the want of money alone, that prevented the King from carrying out this design.

Attention was again called to the matter by the Cahier of the nobility of Rheims to the States General, in which they begged the king to rid himself of this relic of barbarism. As the instrument of feudal tyranny the Bastille was held in dread. Its battlemented walls chilled the blood of the Parisians. It had, however, ceased to be a dungeon for political prisoners. In January 1788, a decree to suppress lettres de cachet was passed by the Parliament. When Malesherbes in 1775, became one of the Ministers of Louis XVI, he made it a condition of his acceptance of the place that no lettres de cachet should be issued while he was in office. The king, however, was not ready, thirteen years afterward to finally deprive himself of this right. He refused consent and his veto set the act aside, yet he made no arbitrary arrests after that time and the presence of the fortress was thenceforth simply a [menace].

In 1789, its use was common place, it had become a jail for ordinary malefactors. The hatred of the citizens for the Bastille was simply a matter of sentiment entirely unconnected with any sufferings of their own. The old castle had always been an aristocratic prison that at no time had ever held any practical connection with them or their lives. Had the nobility of France ever battled for the right of the people, the frenzy of the populace against the grim old castle would be a more explicable matter. In 1369 Hugues Aubricot, Prevost of Paris, added two towers to two which, with a connecting archway, had previously formed the Porte Saint Antoine. The structure became known as the Bastille, originally a generic name for a fortification. Four other towers were built in the reign of Charles VII outside of the quadrangle first enclosed and, as may be seen from the plan, it took the form of a series of towers connected by a massive wall, rather than of a regularly constructed fortress. The Gateway still served its purpose and the traffic of the Rue St. Antoine was for a long time permitted to pass through the fortress between the towers de la Chapelle and du Tresor.

An immense bastion with walls forty feet in height, that projected beyond the line of the city walls in the shape of a wide angle V, stood in front of the gate for its protection, and the street turned northward around the wing of the bastion to form a connection with the roadway over the marshes which stretched along the banks

of the Seine. In the course of time the passage through the Bastille was, for greater safety closed, and the street was carried around the fosse that surrounded the structure. A new Porte St. Antoine was, in the reign of Charles IX placed at the North East corner of the fortress, adjoining the tower du Paris, and ornamented with sculpture by Gene []. This Gateway was torn down in 1777. Including the projection of the towers, the castle had a length of 240 feet and a width of 140 feet. English measure. Each tower was 33 feet across, enclosing the cells of 18 feet in diameter, of an octagon shape. The walls, 12 feet in thickness, were 78 feet in height above the courtyard on the inside and 108 feet on the outside. The measurement being taken from the bottom of the moat. Owing to the height of the walls, the interior courtyard and the salles in the towers had the temperature of an oven in summer and have an ice house in winter.

In certain cells the single opening which served as a window was covered with glass, but in the ordinary ones the inmates were wholly unprotected from the weather. The entire place was infested with rats and other vermin, and the lower cells dripped with foul damps and were constantly humid with fetid exhalations. In the space to the eastward, enclosed in the extended arms of the great bastion was a pleasant garden covering about two thirds of an acre. The privilege of walking in this garden at certain times, to free their lungs from the pestilential air of the cells, was a favor greatly prized by the prisoners. In 1789 the Governor of the Bastille was the Marquis de Launey, a man forty nine years of age, who had held the place from the time of his appointment in 1776. He was without military education or experience and his position was simply that of a jailer. His salary was 60,000 livres a year yet he stinted the supply of food for the prisoners, furnished out of a liberal allowance from the royal treasury, and ranged from three to fifty livres a day. The last named sum being for Princes of the Blood. As neither day laborers nor Princes of the Blood were confined in the fortress during his administration de Launey undoubtedly drew 10 livres a day for each prisoner; an ample sum in the Eighteenth Century. As Governor he had the right to pass one hundred hogs heads of wine free of octroi duty, through the Barriers, but each year sold the privilege to Joli, a publican, for 6000 livres, in exchange for an equal quantity of wine of an inferior quality, furnished by the innkeeper. He filled the measure of his inhumanity by leasing the miserable little garden of the fortress to add to his gains.

The gardener who rented it required its exclusive possession and de Launey had sufficient interest with the Minister to have an order issued forbidding the prisoners to use it. The eastern part of Paris is not an attractive spot to the wandering American. If he is found in the Place de la Bastille gazing at the Column of July, his presence is usually due to a sense of duty as a sightseer. Even after a protracted stay, he sometimes goes back to his native land, without having seen any part of the Marais, a quarter inhabited by great noble men and grave counsellors, when the Parc Monceau was yet a dust heap and the Avenue de la Armée a mere country road running out to Neuilly. In the Sixteenth Century

a man of substance chose the Marais for a place of residence, because he considered his household better protected under the guns of the Bastille than elsewhere in Paris.

When the Faubourg Saint Germain became the fashion the Marais fell back to the second place. In the reign of Louis XVI the great mansion of Cardinal de Rohan still stood to the northward of the Rue Saint Antoine and the Hotel de Beauvais and other great hotels of the nobility were scattered throughout the district. The Place de la Bastille differs greatly in its outlines from the open space that surrounded the fortress at the time of the Revolution. On the north its towers were not much more than one hundred feet distant from the houses of the rue Saint Antoine. In 1789 Street architecture was not so ambitious as it is today and it could hardly be said that the Bastille was commanded by the neighboring house tops. No hostile force had appeared before its walls since the days of the Fronde. No shot had been fired in anger from its battlements since July 2nd, 1652, when la Grande Mademoiselle so effectively directed its guns against the Army of [] and Mazarin, at the combat of the Porte St. Antoine.

De Launey spent the days that preceded the attack in stopping up the windows and loopholes, and in covering the parapets with paving stones to be hurled at the assailants. By the account usually accepted as the correct statement, he had 82 Invalides and 32 Swiss to defend the fortress. The fifteen cannon (by some relations of the affair claimed to be twenty) were mounted on naval carriages and consequently could not be sufficiently depressed to bear upon the streets below.

Twelve colossal muskets (called the “amusettes” of Marshal Saxe) each carrying a ball of a pound and a half in weight formed a part of the equipment but in fact dangerous only to him who sought to fire them. Four hundred Biscayien muskets, in good condition however, furnished all the small arms required by the garrison for its defense.

De Launey caused an ample supply of ammunition to be carried in from the Arsenal which adjoined the Bastille on the south, but with a hesitation in dispersing money entirely characteristic of the man, neglected to buy provisions. The entrance to the fortress was through a passage in the shape of a U. One arm reached northward to the south side of the Rue Saint Antoine and connected with it at a point where an angle is formed by the street and the wall around the fosse, while the other in shorter arm was a stone causeway which extended northward to the South wall of the castle, as shown on the plan.

A comprehension of the divisions of this passage must be had to properly understand the various incidents of the day.

First an outer courtyard in the shape of an L, beginning at the Rue St. Antoine and known as the Cour de Passage; a row of barracks stood on the right and a number of small shops for the supply of the Garrison on the left. On the south of the Cour de Passage was the little court connecting the dependencies of the Bastille with Arsenal, called the Cour de L'Orme.

A second — a fosse running north and south, crossed by the culture drawbridge and closed by a portcullis that blocked all passage when drawn; on the left was a narrow drawbridge for foot passengers. The whole was surmounted by a gateway, overhung by a pediment. These bridges were called the Ponts de L'avance. Third — The second outer court, or the Cour de Gouvernement with the Governor's house on the south and a little garden or terrace on the East, which extended to a wall which overhung the great moat.

Fourth — A moat about 75 feet in width on the left intervened between the Cour de Gouvernement and the South wall of the Bastille. The moat was crossed by a stone bridge or causeway of three arches, with the kitchens and administrative offices on the right. At the north end of this causeway was the second or inner drawbridge, which extended to the sill of the entrance gate in the South wall, that led directly into the great court of the Bastille. This main entrance was also provided with a narrow drawbridge on the left for foot passengers, that could be lowered to connect with the causeway. These last named drawbridges when raised were drawn up against the wall of the castle.

Early in the morning of Tuesday, the 14th of July, two companies of the Gardes Francaises passed the Bastille in returning from special duty at the Barrier du []. Three or four hundred persons who had gathered at the gate of the fortress on the Rue St. Antoine desired to detain them and called the attention of the men to the Cannon on the towers, pointed toward the city. The sergeants in charge of the detachment refused to render any assistance without the orders of the Permanent Committee, to whose headquarters they were then going to report the affair of the Barrier. The information brought to the Hotel de Ville by the soldiers induced the Permanent Committee to send Bélon, an officer of the Archehisiers, Billefod, a sergeant major of artillery and Chaton, formerly a sergeant in the Gardes Francaises to confer with the Governor in regard to the threatening appearance of the Bastille. They were admitted and hostages given for their safety.

The Marquis de Launey received them courteously and invited them to breakfast. He promised not to fire upon the citizens unless first fired upon and directed his men in their presence to withdraw cannon from the embrasures. While this interchange of courtesies was going on inside the castle Elié an ex-officer in of the Queen's regiment happened to pass by the gate and at the request of the people gave his opinion as to the means to be taken to capture the fortress.

He afterward went home to put on his uniform, but promised to return and lead them to the attack. The committee from the Hotel de Ville finally took leave of de Launey, on very friendly terms at 10 o'clock. They, however, had more trouble in getting out and getting in; for on gaining the street M. Belon was assailed under the idea that he was a spy, the first example on that day of the murderous

capacity for invention which characterizes the imagination of the people during times of great excitement.

While the municipal delegation were making their way out of the fortress, M. Thuriot de la Rosiré, an advocate in Parliament and President Elector of the neighboring district of Saint Louis de la Culture appeared at the inner drawbridge escorted by two armed bourgeois and accompanied by other citizens. He demanded in a loud voice, in the name of the people, that the cannon should be brought down from the battlements.

The Governor replied that the guns could not be dismounted without an order from the King, but as had been agreed upon with the first committee, they had been withdrawn from the embrasures. The speech of M. Thuriot, delivered in a very impressive manner, had a great effect upon the Invalides but not upon the Swiss who did not understand the French language. De Launey at first refused to admit Thuriot into the fortress, but at last he was permitted to enter when he proceeded to swear the Garrison not to fire upon the citizens unless they were first attacked the Governor himself taking the oath. The Bastille might at that time be said to be half captured. After some hesitation Thuriot was allowed to ascend the towers, where he became indignant when he found the pieces drawn back only 4 feet, out of sight, but still pointed toward Paris, and ready for use.

Meanwhile the shouting of the people outside showed they had become apprehensive in regard to his safety. He advanced to the edge of parapet holding De Launey by the hand, and waved his hat to satisfy the people. This dumb show was followed by shouts of applause. The scene that met the eyes of the Governor was well calculated to fill him with dread. He trembled when he saw the force with which he had to contend.

A mighty concourse, seemingly composed of all of Paris, filled the neighboring streets and covered the surrounding housetops. The hum of agitation that came up from the moving crowds in the Place de la Saint Antoine was like the roar of an angry sea. Thuriot descended, and as he passed through the inner courtyard told the garrison he was content. When he took leave of the Governor he said he did not doubt the municipality would furnish a guard of armed citizens to maintain a joint occupation of the castle with the King's troops. This statement gave great dissatisfaction to the people. They were disinclined to listen to any other terms than the absolute surrender of the fortress. This was their demand from the beginning. The well-to-do bourgeois at the Hotel de Ville were slow to take any action that might imperil their interest and were also naturally conservative from being in office.

They either did not in their hearts desire to capture the Bastille, or wished to gain it by diplomacy instead of force. As Thuriot passed out he likewise was

threatened with violence and had to be protected by an armed guard for some distance from the castle. It happened, however, that he reached the Place de Gréve before the members of the first allegation, who were delayed by the enormous crowds in the streets. Both delegations were forced to wait nearly two hours before they could get an opportunity to report to the Permanent Committee.

The Governor had stationed the Invalides on the battlements and in the towers, and the Swiss in the interior courts. He practically abandoned the Cour du Passage from the beginning; it would have been difficult to defend it, separated from the street by a simple door and also connected through the Cour de L'Orne, with the Arsenal which had been left without a guard to protect it and was, furthermore, easily accessible through extensive gardens on the East and South. A few Invalides had been left in the Cour du Passage. Three of these old soldiers went out to breakfast in a neighboring wine shop, and on their return were captured at the entrance of the fortress by the people, who would have murdered them if it had not been suggested it would be wiser to first obtain from them all the information they possessed in regard to the condition of matters within the castle.

The citizens soon discovered the defenseless condition of the fortress on the side toward the Arsenal, and the Cour du Passage became filled with a tumultuous crowd clamoring for arms and ammunition. Their cries let the Governor know that his greatest crime was that he had removed the ammunition from the Arsenal. The outer drawbridge now became the dividing line between the Garrison and the assailants of the fortress. In the course of half an hour after Thuriot left the castle the scene changed; the people became more riotous every moment, but no shot had been fired on either side. Two versions of the affair which followed are given; by one it is asserted that the Governor agreed to admit a certain number of citizens within the Cour du Gouvernement, and even to give them all the arms and ammunition that he did not absolutely need. In compliance with this agreement the outer drawbridge was lowered. Instead of a small number stipulated, a large crowd, armed with guns, sabres and hatchets, rushed into the courtyard.

This statement is set forth very clearly in the relation of Pitra. Marmontel says that the forecourts of the Bastille were abandoned; whether he speaks of the Cour du Passage only, or intends to include the Cour du Gouvernement, is a matter of doubt. A second and varying account is to the effect that Louis Fournay, an old soldier of the Dauphin Regiment climbed with a [] from the roof of the perfumer's shop into the guard house at the outer drawbridge and knocked off the bolts that held the chains of the bridge with an axe, so quietly that they were not detected at the work by the garrison. The bridge fell, a citizen was crushed but the crowd pushed forward the drawbridge, and the ease with which they accomplished their object made the people imagine that the bridge was lowered

by De Launey to entice them into the Cour du Gouvernement in order that they could be more easily destroyed. This explanation is given by Louis Blanc, who acquits the Governor of the enormity with which he is been charged. A radical of radicals, his opinion was certainly arrived at, in spite of his prejudices. Under the theory of those who hold to the first account, the incident of which Louis Fournay is the hero occurred at a later time, after the drawbridge had again been placed in a raised position by the Governor. The various relations are conflicting and the exact sequence of some of the events of the day is not easily arrived at.

By whatever means and in whatever way the bridge was lowered it made the irruption of the citizens into the courtyard a possibility. Once within the Cour du Gouvernement, they threatened to burn the Governor's house. The collision which followed was inevitable. According to some of the historical relations the people fired first – in others the Invalides are stated to be the aggressors.

One can readily believe, however, that the Governor would, when he found his private property in danger, order his men to fire. In whatever way the affray began, it is certain that the fire of the soldiers cleared the courtyard, killed two citizens and injured a dozen more. Two of the wounded men were at once carried on stretchers to the Hotel de Ville. An exaggerated account of the affair, in which the Governor was charged with drawing the citizens into a trap, spread through the city like wildfire and excited the most intense indignation. It happened that Thuriot and the municipal delegation closed their conference with the Permanent Committee a moment before the hostilities began. The reports received by the Committee agreed as to the pacific intentions of the Governor, and it was determined to announce the fact to quiet the vast crowd collected in front of the building.

A herald commanded attention and the Procureur was about to make the proclamation from the steps of the Hotel de Ville when the sound of firing was heard in the direction of the Bastille. An angry shout went up from the Place de Gréve with loud cries of treachery. The Permanent Committee determined to send a second delegation with M. Delavigne, the President of the entire body of the Electors, at its head.

When the party arrived at the Place de la Saint Antoine the attack on the fortress was being briskly carried on in a regular fashion but without a leader, as Elié had not returned. The garrison had vigorously replied to the musket shots directed against the fortress and had killed and wounded a few only of the persons engaged in the assaults. Delavegene and his associates entered the Cour de L'Orine and endeavored to put a stop to the conflict displaying a white handkerchief on a cane, as a flag of truce. A number of the assailants standing near the delegates obeyed, but the besieged paid no attention to the signal.

Several citizens who had suspended their fire, fell by the side of the delegates

from the Hotel de Ville who, in a short time withdrew from a position of considerable danger in which their presence failed to have any good effect. A romantic episode in the siege occurred, probably at this time. Mademoiselle de Monsigny, the daughter of one of the Invalides, entered the courtyard in the vain hope of reaching her father. She was seized and so roughly treated that fright caused her to faint, and she was laid upon a mattress to recover.

Here the imagination of the assailants again asserted itself and some one cried out that she was the daughter of de Launey. A ruffian suggested that the straw of the mattress should be lighted so that her father would be forced to surrender the fortress. The poor girl was rescued from the burning straw by Aubin Bonnemère at the risk of his life. This story has been doubted, and placed among the legendary matters related of the siege. But Bonnemère's contemporaries have faith in the man, for it is indisputable that, Feb. 13, 1790 he received a civic crown from the municipality for his heroic act, by the hand of Bailly, the Mayor, who gave it to Mademoiselle de Monsigny to place it on the head of defender.

At one o'clock the Permanent Committee had not yet received any intelligence in regard to the fate of the second delegation. As it was remembered that it bore no distinctive signs by which it could be recognized, M. Ethis de Cerny, the Procureur du Roi, was sent at the head of a third delegation equipped with a flag and a drum, to request the citizens to retire to their respective districts, and to demand of the Governor the privilege of introducing an armed guard of citizens to jointly occupy the fortress with the garrison.

The flag was carried by the Count de Pignod de Sainte Honorine. When it was displayed in the Cour de l'Orne, a white signal was waived in return by the Invalides de L'Orne, while the greater number passed through the Cour du Passage, into the Cour du Gouvernement loudly proclaiming the order of the Permanent Committee, that all good citizens should withdraw from the conflict. The combatants began to comply, and naturally took their line of retreat through the Cour de L'Orne .

After remaining a few minutes in the farther courts the main body of the delegation withdrew to the Cour de L'Orne for deliberation. The Invalides had, however, displayed the white flag without the knowledge of the authority of the Governor. In addition to the white flag, their sub-officers had taken it upon themselves to shout down from the walls that the delegation might advance to confer with deLauney – that the inner drawbridge should be lowered and that six hostages should be given to assure their safety.

This invitation, however, was not heard by the delegates. The evidence in the process verbal showed that when the Governor saw the delegation he told the soldiers that it was easy to see that the deputies who bore the flag were not from

the municipality, that the flag was undoubtedly one that the citizens had possessed themselves of with the intention of deceiving the Garrison, that if they were really deputies from the Hotel de Ville, as they claimed to be, they would not hesitate to come forward. However it is certain that he took no time, or pains to assure himself whether his supposition was true, as a volley of musket shots from the battlements immediately followed, aimed at the Cour de L'Orne. Three citizens standing by the side of the municipal delegates were killed and others were wounded. M. Ethie's de Cerney himself had a narrow escape. As may be imagined, the fury of the populace now knew no bounds.

The assailants in the cour de L'Orne, who had suspended their fire at the request of the delegates at once charged them with being traitors. One delegate suffered personal injury, and the flag-bearer and his sword taken from him. As the deputation returned to the Place de Gréve, they met opposite the church of Saint Gervais, a body of armed citizens and Guardes Francaises advancing rapidly through the narrow streets.

The citizens were commanded by Pierre Aguste Hulin, a Swiss by birth who had spent his school days in France. It was said that he began life as a boy by selling lemonade in the streets of Geneva and was afterward a clock maker. By some accounts it is asserted that he was born in Paris and had had some experience as a soldier. Little, however, is positively known in regard to his early life. In July, 1789, he was the manager of a laundry at La Briche, near St. Denis. He was thirty one years of age, of noble stature and fine symmetry of figure with a handsome, animated countenance and a voice of prodigious depth and compass.

On Sunday, as the personal friend and enthusiastic admirer of Necker, he attempted to make a speech at the Palais Royale, but found the bystanders not inclined to listen. He returned thoroughly discouraged to La Briche, where he saw Madame de Stael whose grief and agitation, due to her inability to learn where her father had gone, filled him with rage, that she, in vain, sought to moderate. Her efforts to keep him from going to Paris were unavailing, and on Monday afternoon he took leave of her in words full of sympathy but more forcible than polished.

He went to the Hotel de Ville on Tuesday, the 14th of July. The wounded men from the Bastille were at that moment being carried into the Place de Gréve. He found himself surrounded by a multitude of excited citizens crying loudly for vengeance, with shouts of "à la Bastille." This voice soon made him a marked man, and enabled him to make himself heard above the turmoil. Four hundred armed Bourgeois were in the open space, ready to march. Sixty three Gardes Francaises, under Sergeants Wargenier and La Barthe, also awaited orders. Impressed by his earnestness and his fine appearance the sergeants asked him to lead them to the Bastille. In most of the accounts Hulin is said to have been

the leader of the armed citizens and Eliè of the Gardes Françaises.

Pitna's relation, discovered by Augustus Craven in 1880, in a manuscript copy of Grimm's correspondence of 1791, is a narrative, specially devoted to biographical details in regard to Hulin. In this account it is distinctly said that he accepted the command of the Gardes Françaises at the request of the sergeants. The statement that Elie was chosen as the commander of the soldiers, however, has the greater probability.

On this day of confusion the leadership may not have been precisely determined, nor explicitly understood, and Hulin with his form of a gladiator may by popular consent have been recognized as the commander of both detachments. The force started amidst great enthusiasm at two o'clock. As the Place de Grève resounded at the moment with the cry of "Vive le Roi," sent up by the applauding crowd, it may be concluded that personal disaffection to the king did not then exist among the people. As they marched along, the soldiers had time to reflect that they had chosen a leader about whom they knew nothing. Hulin heard them say that he would be killed if he hesitated, "Willingly," said he, "if I flinch." They went forward at a great pace, running rather than marching, impeded however by five pieces of artillery drawn by half starved hackney coach horses.

After passing along the bank of the Seine the dependencies of the Bastille were reached through the Rue de la Ceriserie and the series of county guards in the Arsenal lying south of the Cour de L'Orne. Ducastel, a wine merchant, was sent with one hundred men and two pieces of artillery through the Arsenal to take a position on an avenue bordered with trees that led northward in front of the tower de la Conté.

Another detachment with one gun was ordered to the high ground on the Rue de la Cerisarie, to the South West, while 350 soldiers and citizens made the main attack, under Hulin and Elie, through the Cour du Passage and the Cour du Gouvernement. Up to this time the siege had been carried on altogether by musketry firing. It was apparent that the cannon brought by Hulin and Elie could not be of any great service if directed from the Cour de L'Orne or the Cour du Passage. According to several narratives of the events of the day, the drawbridges leading to the Cour du Gouvernement had at that been raised. Dulaure, a cotemporary, writing however at the time of the Restoration, says they were down, but the passage of artillery across the larger drawbridge yet remained barred by the portcullis, which had fallen from above.

In a wild endeavor to get the cannon over into the farther court, the citizens set to work to tear down the shops on the left of the Cour du Passage, to fill the fosse with the stone from the walls. Dulaure says the gun carriages were taken apart and the cannon carried over the smaller drawbridge. Pitna merely speaks of the

use of hand spikes and levers to get the pieces over the bridge.

They were at last placed in position in the Cour du Gouvernement. In a moment, however, the guns were deserted by men who began to suffer from thirst. They asked an Invalide captured in the Cour du Passage to get them something to drink. He led the way to the cellars adjoining the court yard, from which they soon emerged loaded with the Governor's wine. Hulin and Elie saw the peril, broke the bottles and implored the man to refrain from drink at that critical moment. Three carts filled with straw had been brought from the street by Santerre, the brewer, one statement being that it was with the object of concealing the assailants from the soldiers on the tower de la Basinsère with the dense smoke of burning straw, and another to the effect that the vehicles were intended to be placed in front of the artillerymen as a protection.

The straw either took fire by accident or was purposely fired, and for a time the battlements were obscured from view by the smoke. The flames spread to the Governor's house and necessarily had to be extinguished. Hulin then advanced the cannon to the edge of the fosse and planted them in front of the stone causeway that led directly northward to the gate of the castle.

It was now four o'clock. The Governor determined to involve himself and his assailants in one common ruin. He seized an artillery man's match and started to set off the magazine. A sub officer drove him back. Baffled in his attempt he endeavored to do so in another way. Bequard, a turnkey, threatened to run his bayonet through him, if he advanced. Forced to return he found the Swiss officers in the courtyard firmly set against a surrender. Among the besieged one life only had been lost, and three of the soldiers injured, by the fire directed against the castle, while the attacking party had suffered considerable loss. The fortress had not yet received the slightest damage from the cannon directed against the walls.

However the garrison were without food to prolong the contest, which with the entire city against them, could only be considered a hopeless effort. It was further certain that if the citizens have the courage to fire the artillery, then planted in the Cour du Gouvernement, they could soon break down the gates.

The governor decided to surrender, and in a few minutes the firing from the battlements ceased. A verbal demand for a parly was shouted across the fosse, and two officers were sent to the battlements, where they paraded around the circuit of the walls, beating a drum and waving a white handkerchief as a signal of submission. The attack in front of the entrance ceased, but the people outside, in the Place de la Saint Antoine, failed to understand the situation and continued to fire. After a delay of several minutes, the hand of a Swiss officer was projected through an opening in the door, in front of the minor drawbridge, holding a piece

of paper. A citizen tried to reach it by means of a plank thrown across, but fell into the moat and was killed. Réole, by one account and Maillard, according to another, next attempted to get the letter and succeeded. It was written by de Launey, and said to be unsigned. Nothing could be more brief or explicit: "We have 20,000 pounds of gunpowder. We will blow the Garrison and the whole faubourge into the air if you fail to accept a capitulation." The paper was handed to Elie, who read it to Hulin and those standing by, who all agreed to its terms.

The more distant crowd, however, cried out against it. Hulin and Elie gave no heed to the remonstrants, but advanced to the edge of the fosse and pledged their words that the lives of the Governor and the Garrison should be spared. Elie used the words "For'd officier." as he wore the uniform of an officer of the Gardes Francaises, his statement undoubtedly carried great weight in the mind of De Launey. Another delay of several minutes followed, and still the besieged gave no sign of rendering the fortress. The citizens became impatient. They advanced the cannon along the causeway and planted them opposite the minor drawbridges. As they were about to fire, the smaller bridge was, after some hesitation, lowered. The moment of triumph had come. A singular fact is to be noted the color and device of the flag carried by the victors has never been ascertained.

The time of the capitulation has been variously stated from four o'clock, fifteen minutes to five o'clock, forty five minutes. Whatever the precise time that may have been, it was sufficiently coincident to give Linguet's "Memoires de la Bastille," published six years before, in 1783, a prophetic significance.

The frontispiece represents the Bastille crumbling to the earth under thunderbolts from Heaven, and the hands of the famous clock face, flanked by figures of slaves in irons, market the hour and a quarter before five o'clock. A considerable variation appears in the numerous personal relations as to the time at which the various incidents of the day took place. In the case of each event, the time at which it occurred can only be approximately arrived at, after an estimate is made of the interval by which it must necessarily have been separated from the occurrences which preceded it. The Gardes Francaises and the citizens maintained their positions in the courtyards with a show of military discipline, but a disorderly rabble, too cowardly to risk their lives in the assault, pressed forward into the fortress. The Invalides were drawn up on the right around the court, dressed in their uniforms with their muskets placed against the wall behind them, while the Swiss in canvas frocks, were ranged on the left.

A ribbon sewed on the lapel of the Governor's plane greatcoat was his only decoration, a sword cane with a gold head was his sole weapon. Cholate, a wine merchant, who knew him, pointed him out to the citizens. Among those who claimed to be the first to seize de Launey, Arné was supposed to have the best

right. On the battlements, and in the salles, were a few soldiers who, by some strange fatality, were unaware of the surrender.

To add to the mistakes of a day of blunders, they opened fire upon the people below. One man was killed and several wounded. A scene of confusion ensued, and an attack was made upon the prisoners ———

Bequard, the turnkey who had prevented De Launey from firing the magazine and destroying the Quartier Saint Antoine, was slain. This was followed by another fatal mischance. The attacking party beyond the dependencies of the Bastille seemed yet unable to comprehend that it had been captured, and a lad who had ascended the towers lost his life by a shot from the Place de la Saint Antoine. The ruffians who had been allowed to enter the fortress made an attack upon the Governor. In despair he attempted to kill himself with the blade of his sword cane. It was wrested from him by Hulin who cut his hand in the struggle. Meanwhile the danger was increasing each moment.

Hulin fully understood the peril and started with his prisoner to the Hotel de Ville under the escort of a strong guard. Instead of passing out through the Arsenal, he entered the Rue Saint Antoine, still filled with an enormous mass of people. He had scarcely left the fortress when he found that only seven or eight of the guard were left, the others having been separated from his party by the pressure of the crowd.

At the Church of Saint Louis de la Culture, about halfway between the Bastille and the Hotel de Ville, only four grenadier's remains. De Launey marched along proudly and defiantly, in spite of the imprecations from a thousand tongues, and the missiles hurled at him from every side. Hulin had to fight every foot of the way. His difficulties increased as he neared the Hotel de Ville. He found that he needed all his herculean strength to protect his prisoner. Three times the unfortunate man was dragged away and regained only at the cost of a terrible personal battle with the mob. As the frightened Governor clung to him, he said bitterly: "Why did they not let me blow myself into the air and bury these miserable wretches under the ruins of the Bastille?" Hulin noticed that De Launey was the only person without a hat, a circumstance which enabled his assailants to direct their blows at his head, now covered with blood.

In a spirit of sublime devotion Hulin took off his own hat and placed it on the Governor. At the church of Saint Gervais, L'epine was felled to the earth. Hulin was now failing in strength. He had almost reached the end and would, in a few minutes have had the satisfaction of delivering his prisoner, bruised, but still alive. But the surging crowd were determined that their prey should not escape, and made one fierce effort, directed against Hulin.

When near the steps of the Hotel de Ville, Hulin was seized by the hair and

thrown bleeding upon a pile of stones, senseless, and nearly lifeless. Some citizens living on the Place de Gréve recognized him as the leader of the force that left the space of a few hours before. They tenderly carried him into the grocer's shop, famous in the Revolutionary annals as the Coin du Roi, where he was restored by cordials. In a moment after Hulin was overthrown, the mob had beaten the Governor to death in brutal fashion. A quarter of an hour of frenzied triumph over a dead man followed, when a cook named Desnot was forced to cut the head from the corps. The first object which met the eyes of Hulin when he recovered consciousness, was a band of savages parading the head on a pike. The body was treated with great are barbarity, trailed through the gutters, but what finally became of it was never known.

The first great atrocity of the Revolution was complete, – the precedent for many a foul assassination in the streets. Hulin was too exhausted to enter the Hotel de Ville to make his report of the capture of the Bastille. He was led to his lodgings, filled with mortification at his failure to protect the prisoner, he had sworn to save.

George McLaughlin

Jan 23d 1892