"Let the Assembly dismiss us, and appoint other men to fill our places," said they; "we will obey, as good citizens ought to do. The dismissal will be an order. But our voluntary retirement at such a moment as the present would be a disgrace!"

At ten o'clock, the Assembly, in a permanent sitting, conferred the whole civil authority on General Cavaignac, whom only on the preceding day the civil authority itself had invested with full military power. Lamartine, on the part of his colleagues and himself, wrote the following letter to the Assembly:

"Citizen representatives,—

"The commission of the executive authority would have been wanting at once in duty and honour, had it retired in the face of sedition and public danger. It retires only in obedience to the vote of the Assembly. Restoring to you the authority with which you invested it, the commission returns into the ranks of the National Assembly, there to unite with you in efforts to avert the common danger, and promote the welfare of the republic."

Such is the narrative of the principal events in which I took part during the two first periods of the revolution of 1848, and of the foundation of republican institutions in France. The destinies of the republic have since then passed into other hands. Great services have been performed; some faults have been committed. I pray that God, my contemporaries, and posterity may pardon mine. May Providence make amends for human error and human weakness. Republics seem to be more directly under the control of Providence than any other forms of government; because in a republic there is no intermediate hand between the people and their destiny. May the invisible hand protect France! May it defend her at once against impatience and inertness, those two quicksands on which the best impulses of human nature are frequently wrecked. May the hand of Providence also ward off two other dangers—war and demagoguism; and in a conservative and progressive republic, the only one that is lasting and possible, may the seed implanted in that form of government, germinate and bloom in the morality of the people, and the reign of God.
by several other friends, among whom may be mentioned a
national guard of the 10th legion, an old soldier named Blanc,
whom he found at his side in all perilous junctures, and the
adventurous Château-Renaud. They all ranged themselves in
the first platoons of the mobile guard, and proceeded to the
Place de la Concorde and the Rue de la Paix, their numbers
increasing as they moved along. General Cavaignac, with
the main body of the column, joined them at the entrance to
the boulevards. The Breton representative, M. de Trévenenuc,
who was on horseback and armed, requested leave to join
Lamartine and his friends. M. de Trévenenuc, then unknown
to Lamartine, was a man distinguished for patriotism and
courage. A summer storm was at that moment breaking over
Paris. General Cavaignac, surrounded by his staff, with
Lamartine, Duclerc, and Pierre Bonaparte, and followed by
about two thousand men, advanced amidst flashes of lightning
and peals of thunder, mingled with the applauding shouts of
the well-disposed citizens, as far as the Château d'Eau. Whilst
the minister of war sent for cannon, and formed his column,
which was consigned to General Foucher (the commandant of
Paris), Lamartine proceeded to review the artillery of the
national guard at the Temple. These brave citizens, merely
a handful of men, were overwhelmed amidst an excited popu-
lation, wavering between sedition and republicanism. The
name of Lamartine, his presence and his gestures, with diffi-
culty restrained the impetuosity of this multitude. He was
surrounded by crowds, who followed him raising shouts, as far
as the boulevard. At length the column was formed, and it
received orders to charge.

Lamartine and his friends rode forward with the battalions
of the mobile guard and troops of the line, amidst cries of
"Vive la République!" These young soldiers seemed to be
inspired by the spirit of Austerlitz. After repeated assaults,
kept up for the space of three quarters of an hour, and amidst
an incessant shower of balls and bullets, decimating both
officers and men, the barricades were carried. Lamartine
felt as though he could have wished for death to release him
from the odious responsibility of bloodshed which pressed
upon him so unjustly, but yet so unavoidably. Thrice he
dismounted from his horse and stationed himself at the foot
of one of the barricades, where he might have a chance of
falling in the foremost rank of the brave combatants; and
thrice did the guards of the Assembly gather round him and draw him back by force. The horse ridden by Pierre Bonaparte was killed by his side, and the one he himself rode was wounded. Guns of the largest calibre, sent by General Cavaignac, demolished the remaining fortifications of the insurgents on that point. Four hundred brave men lay killed or wounded in different parts of the faubourg. Lamartine returned to the Château d’Eau to rejoin General Cavaignac.

Accompanied only by Duclerc, and a national guard named Lassaut, who had been his companion the whole of that day, Lamartine passed the line of the advanced posts, to reconnoitre the disposition of the people on the boulevard of the Bastille. The immense crowd, which fell back to make way for him as he proceeded along, still continued to shout his name, with enthusiasm and even amidst tears. He conversed long with the people, pacing slowly and pressing his way through the crowd by the breast of his horse. This confidence amidst the insurgent masses preserved him from any manifestation of popular violence. The men, who, by their pale countenances, their excited tone, and even their tears, bore evidence of deep emotion, told him their complaints against the National Assembly, and expressed their regret at seeing the revolution stained with blood. They declared their readiness to obey him (Lamartine), whom they had known as their counsellor and friend, and not as their flatterer, amidst the misery they had suffered, and the destitution of their wives and children. “We are not bad citizens, Lamartine,” they exclaimed; “we are not assassins; we are not factious agitators! We are unfortunate men, honest workmen, and we only want the government to help us in our misery, and to provide us with work! Govern us yourself! Save us! Command us! We love you! We know you! We will prevail on our companions to lay down their arms!”

Whilst giving utterance to these and similar exclamations, the men, who were worn out by four months of privation and excitement, touched the clothes and the hands of Lamartine. A party of the crowd ran to the stalls of some flower-dealers, and, seizing the flowers, strewed them over his horse’s mane. It was only at intervals that the sinister figure of a conspirator was observed gliding along the pavement and uttering the war-cry, which was, however, speedily drowned amidst shouts of “Vive Lamartine!”
ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS

Such was the disposition of the people in districts which had that night been well nigh thrown into a state of complete insurrection, merely through the want of a sufficient number of troops to occupy those parts of the capital.

Lamartine, without having been either attacked or insulted, returned to rejoin General Cavaignac on the boulevard. He described to the general the condition and the feeling of the people, and they arranged together the orders requisite to be despatched to the troops out of Paris, to summon them to march without delay on the different roads adjacent to the capital. Lamartine left the general at the Porte Saint Martin, to make arrangements for its defence, and he proceeded to communicate to the war department and the council the orders they had conjointly determined.

Night had now set in, and the firing had everywhere ceased. During Lamartine's absence, his colleagues, Arago, Garnier Pagès, Marie, and Pagnarre, had visited the Mairies, and animated the national guards by their example and their exhortations. Ledru Rollin remained at the presidency, to despatch urgent orders, and to watch any danger to which the Assembly might be exposed.

At midnight the regiments nearest to the capital and the national guards of the adjacent towns, entered Paris in a mass, marching through all the barriers. Victory might still be tardy, yet it was now certain.

But the confidence which was restored in the mind of the government was not restored in the National Assembly. A suspicious party resolved to profit by this crisis to overthrow the executive commission, which still continued to be regarded with unfounded distrust. Next morning, at eight o'clock, a certain number of representatives forced open the door of the council-room, and requested the members of the government to tender their resignation. It had long been the unanimous wish of those individuals to retire from a situation in which feelings of devotedness to the public welfare had caused them to continue, very much to their own discomfort, and against their own interest. Nevertheless they determined not to resign amidst a storm, or to retire from the field like cowards deserting during the battle. Lamartine, Garnier Pagès, and Pagnarre, energetically protested against such a proceeding.