

MES VŒUX SONT REMPLIS,

OU

LE DON PATRIOTIQUE.

Par Madame DE GOUGES,

DÉDIÉE AUX ÉTATS-GÉNÉRAUX.

My Wishes Are Fulfilled, or The Patriotic Gift. Dedicated to the Estates-General.¹

GENTLEMEN,

Is it within my power to make known to you, with eloquence and energy, the satisfaction I feel at your union?

No: pleasure is sweet and the heart, at times like this, expresses its feelings without artistry. Friendship is pure, you are responsible for it and will receive its homage with enthusiasm despite the occasional shortcomings that joy creates.

This solemn day must be for ever dear and precious in the minds of the French.

The most distant Peoples will constantly admire it; the enemy, pale and concerned, will be forced to cry out: are the French the only people capable of grandeur and generosity?

The Historian wishing to preserve only the simplicity of such an august revolution...will be immortalised by painting the facts such as they were, without embellishment: this historic moment will be seen as exemplary and quoted for all time by our descendants.

No moment more splendid! No story more touching than this! When it will be said that the French suddenly became arch enemies, one to the other, desperate and ready to make of the most populous State an arid desert; that no one was in agreement any more; that, with a sense of justification, everyone defended their sacred rights in so agitated a fashion that all good citizens trembled; that a despairing Queen, finally so touched by the plight of her subjects, takes her only remaining son and brings him, herself, into the midst of the Nobility and the Clergy, and makes a most moving speech to these two Orders in favour of the third, and paints with such sorrow and sensibility the public despair that all eyes fill with tears; that the Nobility and Clergy, deeply moved by this touching spectacle, are ready to give way!²

Though a Queen who abandons the rights of the heir in waiting to the Crown to the wisdom of honest Officers, obliges them, without meaning to, to become themselves the intrepid soldiers who will defend him.

Twenty-four hours pass in a gloomy silence and an alarming state of indecision; the Keeper of the Seals, overwhelmed by the loss of an irreplaceable son, suppressing a naturally deep pain, sees merely the danger that threatens the Motherland, goes to the Monarch and reads in his eyes his true intention. His Majesty decides, in that very moment, along with his Keeper of the Seals, to write to the Nobility. August moment! The

¹ *Mes vœux sont remplis, ou le don patriotique* was written in June 1789; the pamphlet both acknowledges events that have taken place, imagines a role for the queen and projects de Gouges's hopes for the future i.e. that her patriotic tax will be implemented and that an exhausted populace will be helped out of penury.

² The Dauphin, Louis Joseph François Xavier, died, on 4 June 1789, aged 7 and a half of probable tuberculosis: his younger, and only, brother Louis-Charles became Dauphin in his place dying, aged ten, after three years incarceration in the Temple prison on 8 June 1795.

law is silenced, authority fades away and all make way for humanity and the love of the Motherland.

Fears are transformed into fraternal feelings; the Nobility no longer clings to its rights; the wishes of the Monarch are fulfilled, his intentions are seconded and his faithful Nobility flies into the bosom of the third Order; despair, alarms, all fade away and give place to Public joy.

The joy of all good citizens is beyond expression, the exhilaration of the People is touching and the Queen's sensibility has penetrated all hearts; by her side, the Monarch feels a sense of pure satisfaction for the first time and rejoices.

When he ascended the Throne he found it full of brambles and thorns; he was ignorant of the abuses that had existed under his predecessors, but the abuses that have slipped in since have given him an understanding of the true financial situation. The Estates-General will restore order, and the Court of France, soon regaining its former lustre, will always remain the premier Court in Europe: the French will not be happy unless they restore their Prince as the greatest Potentate on earth.

Yes, Gentlemen, you have rendered unto your Sovereign what you owe him, what he is due; he will bestow eternal happiness on his People, this revolution will be for us the source of all his goodness: endlessly attentive to the good of his State, the happiness of his faithful Subjects, he will make them once again redoubtable to their enemies and proud of their true French character.

No doubt, Gentlemen, the first Session of the Third-Order will be marked by a memorable action; you will reveal yourselves and manifest your union by the most august of all good intentions.

You will open a patriotic Purse across the whole of France; the Sovereigns of fortune will make it their duty to contribute; following this example all wealthy Citizens will bring offerings; even the avaricious will lighten their pockets; and the pennies that accumulate from this tax will be used to pay the extraordinary expenditure necessitated by the famine in the Kingdom's Villages.

The countryside is deserted: the unhappy Peasant cannot survive in his humble shelter; today pigswill is his only nourishment; what was once lavished on swine is now shared between man and beast.

The People ask only for bread; they are even willing to pay for it with the sweat of their brows: at least let them eat it without watering it with tears!

This patriotic tax, as I named it in my *Letter to the People*, now imposed by the Nation for its benefit, will engage all Citizens and procure immense sums sufficient to make bread available at six *liards* and two *sol/s* per pound.

Yes, Gentlemen, I merely express, in a limited way, the sentiments that inspire you, it is my only merit: the criticism of certain ill-intentioned Citizens was unable to deflect me; intrepid for the good of my Motherland, always persevering to unite the Three-Orders, not allowing my impotence to stop me, consulting neither the law, nor the art of our famous Authors, I sought to paint for you, in a naturalistic fashion, the misery of all Citizens, and the imminent fall of France, I read only what was in your hearts: discord, keeping its powder dry, was preparing its lightning bolts wreathed in clouds; the lightning has disappeared; the clouds have lifted and my wishes are fulfilled.