

AT LAST TRUE JUSTICE HAD BEEN SERVED

"With citizen Capet in prison
"And king no more, we must decide
"What we shall do." A split had risen:
For some assumed he would be tried;
But others thought a trial not needed.
"The public safety must be heeded,"
Asserted Robespierre, "for he
"Is not the accused, nor can we be
"The judges. Statesmen and defenders
"Of public safety is our role;
"The people's good must be our goal.
"Our sacred duty surely renders
"That revolution be preserved.
"Capet must die; our nation served!"

The Girondins remained insistent
And said a trial should be held.
They got their way; but not consistent
With common justice, which was quelled
By Robespierre's forgone conclusion,
The trial was semblance and illusion.
"Tis better far Capet should die
"Than citizens in thousands lie
"All slain," he said, "by powers trying
"To set Capet upon the throne.
"The people's safety, that alone,
"Must be the rule that we're applying."
The king was killed; and all observed
Expediency had thus been served.

"The people's rights must be protected –
"Now is the time to win or die!
"Let us pursue all those suspected
"Whose actions, words or deeds belie
"Their full support for revolution;
"With firmness and with resolution
"Pursue your sacred task," he urged,
"That France from every taint be purged!"
And so began the Reign of Terror
And 'liberty or death' was heard
And people noted every word
For any hint or trace of error.
The revolution was preserved;
The guillotine was daily served.

"The Girondins are too faint-hearted;
"Such moderates forfeit their life!
"And to the scaffold let be carted
"The widow Capet, Louis' wife.
"Set free our state from false beguilement
"And purge away its old defilement!"
So folk both great and humble too
Perished that France be pure and true.
Ten thousand souls faced execution
That year to make the nation pure;
"Until the revolution's sure
"Purge all with zeal and resolution,"
Said Robespierre. "Remain unswerved!
Our nation's virtue must be served!"

Next year the Terror unabated
Removed as many souls or more.
The purifying zeal unsated
Did neither foe nor friend ignore.
"Hébert and all his fellow Madmen
"Must be removed," he said. "Bad men
"With violent demagogic hate
"Must never overthrow our state.
"Danton and friends are too indulgent;
"They lack the will to eradicate
"Such stains as still infect our state,
"Which *must* be pure, refined, effulgent.
"They'll die the death they have deserved.
"And purity shall thus be served."

Did he not hear the people's crying?
"Enough! Enough! For what the cause
"Of further terror, dread and dying?
"The state is safe; 'tis time to pause.
"If all save he draw breath no longer,
"Will France be pure? Will France be stronger?
"While Robespierre still lives shall we
"From terror and from death be free?"
So he was taken and convicted
By the unjust laws that he had made.
That he this fate would not evade
Danton, his victim, had predicted.
Thus with his death it was observed
At last true justice had been served.

