

were, he said, important to the good of humanity. The brutish idiot, whom the state of the country at that time had placed in the judgment-seat, told him that the republic wanted no scavans. He was dragged to the guillotine, May the 8th, 1794, and beheaded, in the fifty-second year of his age; a melancholy proof that, in periods of political ferocity, innocence and merit, private virtues and public services, amiable manners and the love of friends, literary fame and exalted genius, are all as nothing to protect their possessor from the last extremes of violence and wrong, inflicted under judicial forms.

Sect. 3.—Nomenclature of the Oxygen Theory.

As we have already said, a powerful instrument in establishing and diffusing the new chemical theory, was a Systematic Nomenclature founded upon it, and applicable to all chemical compounds, which was soon constructed and published by the authors of the theory. Such a nomenclature made its way into general use the more easily, in that the want of such a system had already been severely felt; the names in common use being fantastical, arbitrary, and multiplied beyond measure. The number of known substances had become so great, that a list of names with no regulative principle, founded on accident, caprice, and error, was too cumbrous and inconvenient to be tolerated. Even before the currency which Lavoisier's theory obtained, these evils had led to attempts towards a more convenient set of names. Bergman and Black had constructed such lists; and Guyton de Morveau, a clever and accomplished lawyer of Dijon, had formed a system of nomenclature in 1782, before he had become a convert to Lavoisier's theory, in which task he had been exhorted and encouraged by Bergman and Macquer. In this system,¹⁶ we do not find most of the characters of the method which was afterwards adopted. But a few years later, Lavoisier, De Morveau, Berthollet and Fourcroy, associated themselves for the purpose of producing a nomenclature which should correspond to the new theoretical views. This appeared in 1787, and soon made its way into general use. The main features of this system are, a selection of the simplest radical words, by which substances are designated, and a systematic distribution of terminations, to express their relations. Thus, sulphur, combined with oxygen in two different proportions, forms two acids, the

¹⁶ *Journal de Physique*, 1782, p. 370.