

JOHN ASHTON

THE DAWN OF THE
XIXTH CENTURY IN
ENGLAND

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John Ashton

The Dawn of the XIXth Century in England / A social sketch of the times

PREFACE

THAT Sir Walter Scott, when he called his novel “Waverley; or, ’Tis Sixty Years Since,” thought that the time had come, when the generation, then living, should be presented with a page of history, which would bring to their remembrance the manners and customs of their grandfathers, must be my excuse for this book.

For, never, in the world’s history, has there been such a change in things social, as since the commencement of the Nineteenth Century; it has been a quiet revolution – a good exemplar of which may be found in the Frontispiece, which is a type of things past, never to be recalled. The Watchman has long since given place to the Police; the climbing boy, to chimney-sweeping on a more scientific plan; and no more is “Saloop” vended at street corners; even the drummer-boys are things of the past, only fit for a Museum – and it is of these things that this book treats.

The times, compared with our own, were so very different; Arts, Manufactures, Science, Social Manners, Police, and all that goes to make up the sum of life, were then so widely divergent, as almost to make one disbelieve, whilst reading of them, that such a state of things could exist in this Nineteenth Century of ours. In the first decade, of which I write, Steam was in its very babyhood; locomotives, and steamships, were only just beginning to be heard of; Gas was a novelty, and regarded more as an experiment, than the useful agent we have since found it; whilst Electricity was but a scientific toy, whose principal use was to give galvanic shocks, and cause the limbs of a corpse to move, when applied to its muscles.

Commerce was but just developing, being hampered by a long and cruel war, which, however, was borne with exemplary patience and fortitude by the nation – England, although mistress of the seas, having to hold her own against all Europe in arms. The Manners, Dress, and Food, were all so different to those of our day, that to read of them, especially when the description is taken from undoubtedly contemporary sources, is not only amusing, but instructive.

The Newspapers of the day are veritable mines of information; and, although the work of minutely perusing them is somewhat laborious and irksome, the information exhumed well repays the search. Rich sources, too, to furnish illustrations, are open, and I have availed myself largely of the privilege; and I have endeavoured, as far as in my power lay, to give a faithful record of the Dawn of the Nineteenth Century in England, taken absolutely from original, and authentic, sources.

JOHN ASHTON.

CHAPTER I

1799-1800

Retrospect of Eighteenth Century – Napoleon’s letter to George III. – Lord Grenville’s reply – French prisoners of war in England – Scarcity of provisions – Gloomy financial outlook – Loan from the Bank of England – Settlement of the Union with Ireland.

THE old Eighteenth Century lay a-dying, after a comparatively calm and prosperous life.

In its infancy, William of Orange brought peace to the land, besides delivering it from popery, brass money, and wooden shoes; and, under the Georges, civil war was annihilated, and the prosperity, which we have afterwards enjoyed, was laid down on a broad, and solid basis.

But in its last years, it fell upon comparatively evil days, and, although it was saved from the flood of revolution which swept over France, yet, out of that revolution came a war which embittered its closing days, and was left as a legacy to the young Nineteenth Century, which, as we know, has grappled with and overcome all difficulties, and has shone pre-eminent over all its predecessors.

The poor old century had lost us America, whose chief son, General George Washington, died in 1799. In 1799 we were at war with France truly, but England itself had not been menaced – the war was being fought in Egypt. Napoleon had suddenly deserted his army there, and had returned to France post-haste, for affairs were happening in Paris which needed his presence, if his ambitious schemes were ever to ripen and bear fruit. He arrived, dissolved the Council of Five Hundred, and the Triumvirate consisting of himself, Cambacérès, and Le Brun was formed. Then, whether in sober earnest, or as a bit of political by-play, he wrote on Christmas day, 1799, the following message of goodwill and peace:

“Bonaparte, First Consul of the Republic, to His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland

“Paris, 5 Nivôse, year VIII. of the Republic.

“Called by the wishes of the French nation to occupy the first magistracy of the French Republic, I deem it desirable, in entering on its functions, to make a direct communication to your Majesty.

“Must the war, which for four years has ravaged every part of the world, be eternal? Are there no means of coming to an understanding?

“How can the two most enlightened nations of Europe, more powerful and stronger than is necessary for their safety and independence, sacrifice to the idea of a vain grandeur, the benefits of commerce, of internal prosperity, and domestic happiness? How is it they do not feel that peace is as glorious as necessary?

“These sentiments cannot be strangers to the heart of your Majesty, who rules over a free nation, with no other view than to render them happy.

“Your Majesty will only see in this overture, my sincere desire to effectually contribute to a general pacification, by a prompt step, free and untrammelled by those forms which, necessary perhaps to disguise the apprehensions of feeble states, only prove, in the case of strong ones, the mutual desire to deceive.

“France and England, by abusing their strength, may, for a long time yet, to the misery of all other nations, defer the moment of their absolute exhaustion; but I will venture to say, that the fate of all civilized nations depends on the end of a war which envelopes the whole world.

“(Signed) Bonaparte.”

Fair as this looks to the eye, British statesmen could not even then, in those early days, implicitly trust Napoleon, without some material guarantee. True, all was not *couleur de rose* with the French army and navy. The battle of the Nile, and Acre, still were in sore remembrance. Italy had emancipated itself, and Suwarrow had materially crippled the French army. There were 140,000 Austrians hovering on the Rhine border, and the national purse was somewhat flaccid. No doubt it would have been convenient to Napoleon to have patched up a temporary peace in order to recruit – but that would not suit England.

On Jan. 4, 1800, Lord Grenville replied to Talleyrand, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a long letter, in which he pointed out that England had not been the aggressor, and would always be glad of peace if it could be secured on a sure and solid basis. He showed how France had behaved on the Continent, cited the United Provinces, the Swiss Cantons, and the Netherlands; how Germany had been ravaged, and how Italy, though then free, “had been made the scene of unbounded anarchy and rapine;” and he wound up thus:

“His Majesty looks only to the security of his own dominions and those of his Allies, and to the general safety of Europe. Whenever he shall judge that such security can in any manner be attained, as resulting either from the internal situation of that country from whose internal situation the danger has arisen, or from such other circumstances of whatever nature as may produce the same end, His Majesty will eagerly embrace the opportunity to concert with his Allies the means of immediate and general pacification.

“Unhappily no such security hitherto exists: no sufficient evidence of the principle by which the new Government will be directed; no reasonable ground by which to judge of its stability. In this situation it can for the present only remain for His Majesty to pursue, in conjunction with other Powers, those exertions of just and defensive war, which his regard to the happiness of his subjects will never permit him either to continue beyond the necessity in which they originated, or to terminate on any other grounds than such as may best contribute to the secure enjoyment of their tranquillity, their constitution, and their independence.”¹

So the war was to go on, that ever memorable struggle which cost both nations so much in treasure, and in men. France has never recovered the loss of those hecatombs driven to slaughter. Nor were they always killed. We kept a few of them in durance. On Dec. 21, 1799, the French Government refused to provide any longer for their compatriots, prisoners in our hands, and, from a report then taken, we had in keeping, in different places, as follows, some 25,000 men.²

¹ *Morning Post*, Jan. 7, 1800.

² *Annual Register*, Jan. 25, 1800.

Plymouth	7,477
Portsmouth	10,128
Liverpool	2,298
Stapleton	693
Chatham	1,754
Yarmouth	50
Edinburgh	208
Norman Cross	3,038
	—
	25,646
	—

There is no doubt but these poor fellows fared hard, yet their ingenuity enabled them to supplement their short commons, and I have seen some very pretty baskets made in coloured straw, and little implements carved out of the bones of the meat which was served out to them as rations.

Their captors, however, were in somewhat evil case for food, and gaunt famine began to stare them in the face. There never was a famine, but there was a decided scarcity of provisions, which got worse as time went on. The Government recognized it, and faced the difficulty. In February, 1800, a Bill passed into law which enacted “That it shall not be lawful for any baker, or other person or persons, residing within the cities of London and Westminster, and the Bills of Mortality, and within ten miles of the Royal Exchange, after the 26th day of February, 1800, or residing in any part of Great Britain, after the 4th day of March, 1800, to sell, or offer to expose for sale, any bread, until the same shall have been baked twenty-four hours at the least; and every baker, or other person or persons, who shall act contrary hereto, or offend herein, shall, for every offence, forfeit and pay the sum of £5 for every loaf of bread so sold, offered, or exposed to sale.” By a previous Bill, however, new bread might be lawfully sold to soldiers on the march. Hunger, however, although staring the people in the face, had not yet absolutely touched them, as it did later in the year.

The year, too, at its opening, was gloomy financially. The Civil List was five quarters in arrear; and the King’s servants were in such straits for money, that the grooms and helpers in the mews were obliged to present a petition to the King, praying the payment of their wages. Some portion, undoubtedly, was paid them, but, for several years afterwards, the Civil List was always three or six months in arrears.

The Bank of England came forward, and on the 9th of January agreed to lend the Government three millions without interest, but liable to be called in if the Three per Cent. Consols should get up to eighty, on condition that the Bank Charter be renewed for a further term of twenty-one years, to be computed from the 1st of August, 1812.

The question of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland had been discussed for some time, and on the 11th of February it was carried by a great majority in the Irish House of Lords. On the 2nd of April the King sent the following message to Parliament:

“George R. – It is with most sincere satisfaction that his Majesty finds himself enabled to communicate to this House the joint Address of his Lords and Commons of Ireland, laying before his Majesty certain resolutions, which contain the terms proposed by them for an entire union between the two kingdoms. His Majesty is persuaded that this House will participate in the pleasure with which his Majesty observes the conformity of sentiment manifested in the proceedings of his two parliaments, after long and careful deliberation on this most important subject; and he earnestly recommends to this House, to take all such further steps as may best tend to the speedy and complete execution of a work so happily begun, and so interesting

to the security and happiness of his Majesty's subjects, and to the general strength and prosperity of the British Empire.

“G. R.”³

Lord Grenville presented this message in the Lords, and Mr. Pitt in the Commons. The resolutions mentioned are “Resolutions of the two Houses of Parliament of Ireland, respecting a Union of the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland; and their Address thereon to His Majesty. *Die Mercurii, 26 Martii, 1800.*” They are somewhat voluminous, and settled the basis on which the Union was to take place.

On the 21st of April, both Lords and Commons began to debate on the Union. The Commons continued it on the 22nd, 25th, 28th, 29th, and 30th of April, and May 1st and 2nd – on which date, the question being put “That the said Resolutions be now read a second time,” the House divided. Yeas, 208; Noes, 26. An address was afterwards drawn up, and communicated to the Lords at a Conference.

The Lords began their deliberations also on the 21st of April, and continued them on the 25th, 28th, and 30th, May 7th and 8th, when the House divided. Contents, 55; Proxies, 20; Not Contents, 7. The dissentients were the Earls of Hillsborough, Fitzwilliam, Carnarvon, and Buckinghamshire, and Lords Dundas, Holland, and King – the two latter entering a formal written protest.

The Lords and Commons agreed to an address which they presented to the King on the 12th of May, and, on the 2nd of July, the King went in state to the House of Lords, and gave his Royal Assent to the Bill, which thus became law, and was to take effect on the 1st of January, 1801. The Royal Assent was a very commonplace affair – there were but about thirty Peers present, and it was shuffled in with two other Bills – the Pigott Diamond Bill and the Duke of Richmond Bill. There was no enthusiasm in England, at all events, over the Union, no rejoicings, no illuminations, hardly even a caricature. How it has worked, we of these later days of the century know full well.

³ “Parliamentary History,” vol. xxxv. pp. 25, 26

CHAPTER II

Accident at a Review – The King shot at, at Drury Lane Theatre – Behaviour of the Royal Family – Biography of Hadfield – His trial and acquittal – Grand Review of Volunteers on the King’s birthday – The bad weather, and behaviour of the crowd.

ON THE 15th of May, the King, who, while his health was good, was always most active in fulfilling the onerous duties which devolved upon him, attended the field exercises of the Grenadier battalion of the Guards, in Hyde Park, when a gentleman named Ongley, a clerk in the Navy Office, was shot by a musket ball, during the volley firing, whilst standing but twenty-three feet from the King. The wound was not dangerous – through the fleshy part of the thigh – and it was immediately dressed; and it might have passed off as an accident, but for an event which occurred later in the day. The cartouch-boxes of the soldiers were examined, but none but blank cartridges were found. So little indeed was thought of it, that the King, who said it was an accident, stopped on the ground for half an hour afterwards, and four more volleys were fired by the same company before he left.

The King was a great patron of the Drama, and on that evening he visited Drury Lane Theatre, where, “by command of their Majesties,” were to be performed “*She would, and she would not*,”⁴ and “*The Humourist*;”⁵ but scarcely had he entered the box, before he had taken his seat, and whilst he was bowing to the audience, than a man, who had previously taken up a position in the pit close to the royal box, took a good and steady aim with a horse-pistol, with which he was armed, at His Majesty, and fired: luckily missing the King, who with the utmost calmness, and without betraying any emotion, turned round to one of his attendants, and after saying a few words to him, took his seat in apparent tranquillity, and sat out the whole entertainment. He had, however, a narrow escape, for one of the two slugs with which the pistol was loaded, was found but a foot to the left of the royal chair.

Needless to say, the would-be assassin was seized at once – as is so graphically depicted in the illustration – and, by the combined exertions of both pit and orchestra, was pulled over the spikes and hurried across the stage, where he was at once secured and carried before Sir William Addington, who examined him in an adjoining apartment. The audience was furious, and with difficulty could be calmed by the assurance that the villain was in safe custody. Then, to avert attention, the curtain drew up, and the stage was crowded by the whole strength of the house – scene-shifters, carpenters, and all; and “*God save the King*” was given with all the heartiness the occasion warranted.

Then, when that was done, and the royal party was seated, came the reaction. The Princesses Augusta, Sophia, and Mary fainted away, the latter twice. The Princess Elizabeth alone was brave, and administered smelling salts and cold water to her less courageous sisters. The Queen bore it well – she was very pale, but collected – and during the performance kept nodding to the princesses, as if to tell them to keep up their spirits.

The name of the man who fired the shot was James Hadfield. He was originally a working silversmith; afterwards he enlisted in the 15th Light Dragoons, and his commanding officer gave him the highest character as a soldier. He deposed that Hadfield, “while in the regiment, was distinguished for his loyalty, courage, and irreproachable conduct. On all occasions of danger he was first to volunteer. On the memorable affair at Villers en Couche, on the 24th of April, 1794, which procured the 15th Regiment so much honour, and the officers the Order of Merit from his Imperial Majesty, Hadfield behaved with the most heroic bravery. On the 18th of May following, when the Duke of York retreated in consequence of the attack of Pichegru on his rear, Hadfield, in the action at Roubaix,

⁴ By Colley Cibber.

⁵ By James Cobb.

fought with desperation. He volunteered on a skirmishing party, withstood the shock of numbers alone, was often surrounded by the enemy, and called off by his officers, but would not come. At last he fell, having his skull fractured, his cheek separated from his face, his arm broken, and he was otherwise so shockingly mangled, that the British troops, after seeing him, concluded he was dead: and he was returned among the killed in the *Gazette*. The French having obtained possession of the field, Hadfield fell into their hands, and recovered. He remained upwards of a year a prisoner, his regiment all the time supposing him dead; but in August, 1795, he joined it at Croydon, to the great astonishment and joy of his comrades, who esteemed him much. It soon became manifest, however, that his wounds had deranged his intellect. Whenever he drank strong liquors he became insane; and this illness increased so much that it was found necessary to confine him in a straight-waistcoat. In April, 1796, he was discharged for being a lunatic.” His officers gave him the highest character, particularly for his loyalty; adding that they would have expected him to lose his life in defending, rather than attacking, his King, for whom he had always expressed great attachment.

After his discharge he worked at his old trade; but even his shopmates gave testimony before the Privy Council as to his insanity. He was tried on June 26th by Lord Kenyon, in the Court of King’s Bench, and the evidences of his insanity were so overwhelming, that the Judge stopped the case, and the verdict of acquittal, on the ground that he was mad, was recorded. He was then removed to Newgate. He seems to have escaped from confinement more than once – for the *Annual Register* of August 1, 1802, mentions his having escaped from his keepers, and been retaken at Deal; whilst the *Morning Herald* of August 31st of the same year chronicles his escape from Bedlam, and also on the 4th of October, 1802, details his removal to Newgate again.⁶

To pass to a pleasanter subject. The next event in the year of social importance is the Grand Review of Volunteers in Hyde Park, on the occasion of the King’s 63rd birthday.

The Volunteer movement was not a novelty. The Yeomanry were enrolled in 1761, and volunteers had mustered strongly in 1778, on account of the American War. But the fear of France caused the patriotic breast to beat high, and the volunteer rising of 1793 and 1794 may be taken as the first grand gathering of a civic army.

On this day the largest number ever brigaded together, some 12,000 men, were to be reviewed by the King in Hyde Park. The whole city was roused to enthusiasm, and the *Morning Post* of the 5th of June speaks of it thus: “A finer body of men, or of more martial appearance, no country could produce. While they rivalled, in discipline, troops of the line; by the fineness of their clothing, and the great variety of uniform and the richness of appointments, they far exceeded them in splendour. The great number of beautiful standards and colours – the patriotic gifts of the most exalted and distinguished females – and the numerous music, also contributed much to the brilliancy and diversity of the scene. It was with mixed emotions of pride and gratitude that every mind contemplated the martial scene. Viewing such a body of citizen soldiers, forsaking their business and their pleasures, ready and capable to meet all danger in defence of their country – considering, too, that the same spirit pervades it from end to end, the most timid heart is filled with confidence. We look back with contempt on the denunciations of the enemy, ‘which, sown in serpents’ teeth, have arisen for us in armed men,’ and we look with gratitude to our new-created host, which retorted the insult, and changed the invader into the invaded.”

But, alack and well-a-day! to think that all this beautiful writing should be turned in bathos by the context; and that this review should be for ever memorable to those who witnessed it, not on account of the martial ardour which prompted it, but for the pouring rain which accompanied it!

⁶ Silver medals in commemoration of the King’s escape were struck by order of Sheridan. The Obverse represents Providence protecting the King from the attempt upon his life, figuratively displayed by a shield and shivered arrows, portraying the Sovereign’s safety; and encircled are the words “GOD SAVE THE KING.” On the Reverse is the British Crown in the centre of a wreath of laurel, the radiant beams of glory spreading their influence over it, with the words, “*Preserved from Assassination, May 15, 1800;*” and on the knot of the wreath, “*Give God Praise.*” Hadfield died in Bedlam.

No language but that of an eye-witness could properly portray the scene and give us a graphic social picture of the event.

“So early as four o’clock the drums beat to arms in every quarter, and various other music summoned the reviewers and the reviewed to the field. Even then the clouds were surcharged with rain, which soon began to fall; but no unfavourableness of weather could damp the ardour of even the most delicate of the fair. So early as six o’clock, all the avenues were crowded with elegantly dressed women escorted by their beaux; and the assemblage was so great, that when the King entered the Park, it was thought advisable to shut several of the gates to avoid too much pressure. The circumstance of the weather, which, from the personal inconvenience it produced, might be considered the most inauspicious of the day, proved in fact the most favourable for a display of beauty, for a variety of scene, and number of incidents. From the constant rain and the constant motion, the whole Park could be compared only to a newly ploughed field. The gates being locked, there was no possibility of retreating, and there was no shelter but an old tree or an umbrella. In this situation you might behold an elegant woman with a neat yellow slipper, delicate ankle, and white silk stocking, stepping up to her garter in the mire with as little dissatisfaction as she would into her coach – there another making the first *faux pas* perhaps she ever did and seated reluctantly on the moistened clay.

“Here is a whole group assembled under the hospitable roof of an umbrella, whilst the exterior circle, for the advantage of having one shoulder dry, is content to receive its dripping contents on the other. The antiquated virgin laments the hour in which, more fearful of a speckle than a wetting, she preferred the dwarfish parasol to the capacious umbrella. The lover regrets there is no shady bower to which he might lead his mistress, ‘nothing loath.’ Happy she who, following fast, finds in the crowd a pretence for closer pressure. Alas! were there but a few grottos, a few caverns, how many Didos – how many *Æneas*’? Such was the state of the spectators. That of the troops was still worse – to lay exposed to a pelting rain; their arms had changed their mirror-like brilliancy⁷ to a dirty brown; their new clothes lost all their gloss, the smoke of a whole campaign could not have more discoloured them. Where the ground was hard they slipped; where soft, they sunk up to the knee. The water ran out at their cuffs as from a spout, and, filling their half-boots, a squash at every step proclaimed that the Austrian buckets could contain no more.”

⁷ The barrels and locks of the muskets of that date were bright and burnished. Browning the gun-barrels for the army was not introduced till 1808.

CHAPTER III

High price of gold – Scarcity of food – Difference in cost of living 1773-1800
– Forestalling and Regrating – Food riots in the country – Riot in London at the
Corn Market – Forestalling in meat.

THE PEOPLE were uneasy. Gold was scarce – so scarce, indeed, that instead of being the normal £3 17s. 6d. per oz., it had risen to £4 5s., at which price it was a temptation, almost overpowering, to melt guineas. Food, too, was scarce and dear; and, as very few people starve in silence, riots were the natural consequence. The Acts against “Forestalling and Regrating” – or, in other words, anticipating the market, or purchasing before others, in order to raise the price – were put in force. Acts were also passed giving bounties on the importation of oats and rye, and also permitting beer to be made from sugar. The House of Commons had a Committee on the subject of bread, corn, &c., and they reported on the scarcity of corn, but of course could not point out any practical method of remedying the grievance. The cost of living, too, had much increased, as will appear from the following table of expenses of house-keeping between 1773 and 1800, by an inhabitant of Bury St. Edmunds:⁸

	1773.			1793.			1799.			1800.		
	£	s.	d.									
Comb of Mah ⁹	0	12	0	1	3	0	1	3	0	2	0	0
Chaldron of Coals	1	11	6	2	0	6	2	6	0	2	11	0
Comb of Oats	0	5	0	0	13	0	0	16	0	1	1	0
Load of Hay	2	2	0	4	10	0	5	5	0	7	0	0
Meat	0	0	4	0	0	5	0	0	7	0	0	9
Butter	0	0	6	0	0	11	0	0	11	0	1	4
Sugar (loaf)	0	0	8	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	4
Soap	0	0	6	0	0	8	0	0	9½	0	0	10
Window lights, 30 windows	3	10	0	7	10	0	12	12	0	12	12	0
Candles	0	0	6	0	0	8	0	0	9½	0	0	10½
Poor's Rates, per quarter	0	1	0	0	2	6	0	3	0	0	5	0
Income Tax on £200			20	0	0	20	0	0
	8	4	0	16	2	8	42	9	4	45	14	1½

Примечание 1⁹

With everything advancing at this amazing rate of progression, it is not to be wondered at that the price of the staff of life was watched very narrowly, and that if there were any law by which any one who enhanced it, artificially, could be punished, he would get full benefit of it, both from judge and jury. Of this there is an instance given in the *Annual Register*, July 4, 1800:

“This day one Mr. Rusby was tried, in the Court of King’s Bench, on an indictment against him, as an eminent cornfactor, for having purchased, by sample, on the 8th of November last, in the Corn Market, Mark Lane, ninety quarters of oats at 41s. per quarter, and sold thirty of them again in the same market, on the same day, at 44s. The most material testimony on the part of the Crown was given by Thomas Smith, a partner of the defendant’s. After the evidence had been gone through, Lord Kenyon made an address to the jury, who, almost instantly, found the defendant guilty. Lord Kenyon – ‘You have conferred, by your verdict, almost the greatest benefit on your country that was ever conferred by any jury.’ Another indictment against the defendant, for engrossing, stands over.

⁸ *Annual Register*, vol. xlii. p. 94.

⁹ A comb is four bushels, or half a quarter.

“Several other indictments for the same alleged crimes were tried during this year, which we fear tended to aggravate the evils of scarcity they were meant to obviate, and no doubt contributed to excite popular tumults, by rendering a very useful body of men odious in the eyes of the mob.”

As will be seen by the accompanying illustration by Isaac Cruikshank, the mob did occasionally take the punishment of forestallers into their own hands. (A case at Bishop’s Clyst, Devon, August, 1800.)

A forestaller is being dragged along by the willing arms of a crowd of country people; the surrounding mob cheer, and an old woman follows, kicking him, and beating him with the tongs. Some sacks of corn are marked 25s. The mob inquire, “How much now, farmer?” “How much now, you rogue in grain?” The poor wretch, half-strangled, calls out piteously, “Oh, pray let me go, and I’ll let you have it at a guinea. Oh, eighteen shillings! Oh, I’ll let you have it at fourteen shillings!”

In August and September several riots, on account of the scarcity of corn, and the high price of provisions, took place in Birmingham, Oxford, Nottingham, Coventry, Norwich, Stamford, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Worcester, and many other places. The markets were interrupted, and the populace compelled the farmers, &c., to sell their provisions, &c., at a low price.

At last these riots extended to London, beginning in a small way. Late at night on Saturday, September 13th, or early on Sunday, September 14th, two large written placards were pasted on the Monument, the text of which was:

“Bread will be sixpence the Quartern if the People will

assemble at the Corn Market on Monday

Fellow Countrymen,

How long will ye quietly and cowardly suffer yourselves to be imposed upon, and half starved by a set of mercenary slaves and Government hirelings? Can you still suffer them to proceed in their extensive monopolies, while your children are crying for bread? No! let them exist not a day longer. We are the sovereignty; rise then from your lethargy. Be at the Corn Market on Monday.”

Small printed handbills to the same effect were stuck about poor neighbourhoods, and the chance of a cheap loaf, or the love of mischief, caused a mob of over a thousand to assemble in Mark Lane by nine in the morning. An hour later, and their number was doubled, and then they began hissing the mealmen, and cornfactors, who were going into the market. This, however, was too tame, and so they fell to hustling, and pelting them with mud. Whenever a Quaker appeared, he was specially selected for outrage, and rolled in the mud; and, filling up the time with window breaking, the riot became somewhat serious – so much so, that the Lord Mayor went to Mark Lane about 11 a.m. with some of his suite. In vain he assured the maddened crowd that their behaviour could in no way affect the market. They only yelled at him, “Cheap bread! Birmingham and Nottingham for ever! Three loaves for eighteenpence,” &c. They even hissed the Lord Mayor, and smashed the windows close by him. This proved more than his lordship could bear, so he ordered the Riot Act to be read. The constables charged the mob, who of course fled, and the Lord Mayor returned to the Mansion House.

No sooner had he gone, than the riots began again, and he had to return; but, during the daytime, the mob was fairly quiet. It was when the evening fell, that these unruly spirits again broke out; they routed the constables, broke the windows of several bakers’ shops, and, from one of them, procured a quantity of faggots. Here the civic authorities considered that the riot ought to stop, for, if once the fire fiend was awoke, there was no telling where the mischief might end.

So the Lord Mayor invoked the aid of the Tower Ward Volunteers – who had been in readiness all day long, lying *perdu* in Fishmongers' Hall – the East India House Volunteers, and part of the London Militia. The volunteers then blocked both ends of Mark Lane, Fenchurch Street, and Billiter Lane (as it was then called). In vain did the mob hoot and yell at them; they stood firm until orders were given them, and then the mob were charged and dispersed – part down Lombard Street, part down Fish Street Hill, over London Bridge, into the Borough. Then peace was once more restored, and the volunteers went unto their own homes.

True, the City was quiet; but the mob, driven into the Borough, had not yet slaked their thirst for mischief. They broke the windows, not only of a cheesemonger's in the Borough, but of a warehouse near the church. They then went to the house of Mr. Rusby (6, Temple Place, Blackfriars Road) – a gentleman of whom we have heard before, as having been tried, and convicted, for forestalling and regrating – clamouring for him, but he had prudently escaped by the back way into a neighbour's house. However, they burst into his house and entered the room where Mrs. Rusby was. She begged they would spare her children, and do as they pleased with the house and furniture. They assured her they would not hurt the children, but they searched the house from cellar to garret in hopes of getting the speculative Mr. Rusby, with the kindly intention of hanging him in case he was found. They then broke open some drawers, took out, and tore some papers, and took away some money, but did not injure the furniture much. In vain they tried to find out the address of Mrs. Rusby's partner, and then, having no *raison d'être* for more mischief, they dispersed; after which a party of Light Horse, and some of the London Militia, came up, only to find a profound quiet. The next day the riotous population were in a ferment, but were kept in check by the militia and volunteers.

Whether by reason of fear of the rioters, or from the fact that the grain markets were really easier, wheat did fall on that eventful Monday ten and fifteen shillings a quarter; and, if the following resolutions of the Court of Aldermen are worth anything, it ought to have fallen still lower:

“Combe, Mayor

“A Court of Lord Mayor and Aldermen held at the Guildhall of the City of London, on Tuesday, the 16th of September, 1800.

“Resolved unanimously – That it is the opinion of this Court, from the best information it has been able to procure, that, had not the access to the Corn Market been, yesterday, impeded, and the transactions therein interrupted, a fall in the price of Wheat and Flour, much more considerable than that which actually took place, would have ensued; and this Court is further of opinion, that no means can so effectually lead to reduce the present excessive prices of the principal articles of food, as the holding out full security and indemnification to such lawful Dealers as shall bring their Corn or other commodities to market. And this Court does therefore express a determination to suppress, at once, and by force, if it shall unhappily be necessary, every attempt to impede, by acts of violence, the regular business of the markets of the Metropolis.

“*Rix.*”

A butcher was tried and convicted at the Clerkenwell Sessions, September 16th, for “forestalling the market of Smithfield on the 6th of March last, by purchasing of Mr. Eldsworth, a salesman, two cows and an ox, on their way to the market.” His brother was also similarly convicted. The chairman postponed passing sentence, and stated that “he believed there were many persons who did not consider, that, by such a practice, they were offending against the law; but, on the contrary, imagined that, when an alteration in the law was made, by the repeal of the old statutes against forestalling, there was an end of the offence altogether. It had required the authority of a very high

legal character, to declare to the public that the law was not repealed, though the statutes were.” He also intimated that whenever sentence was passed, it would be the lightest possible. Still the populace would insist on pressing these antiquated prosecutions, and an association was formed to supply funds for that purpose.

CHAPTER IV

Continuation of food riots in London – Inefficiency of Police – Riots still continue – Attempts to negotiate a Peace – A political meeting on Kennington Common – Scarcity of corn – Proclamation to restrict its consumption – Census of the people.

THE Lord Mayor in vain promulgated a pacific Proclamation; the Riots still went on.

“Combe, Mayor

“Mansion House, Sept. 17, 1800.

“Whereas the peace of this City has been, within these few days, very much disturbed by numerous and tumultuous assemblies of riotous and disorderly people, the magistrates, determined to preserve the King’s peace, and the persons and property of their fellow-citizens, by every means which the law has intrusted to their hands, particularly request the peaceable and well-disposed inhabitants of this City, upon the appearance of the military, to keep themselves away from the windows; to keep all the individuals of their families, and servants, within doors; and, where such opportunities can be taken, to remain in the back rooms of their houses.

“By order of his Lordship.

“W. J. Newman, Clerk.”

In reading of these Riots we must not forget that the civil authorities for keeping the peace were, and had been, for more than a century previous, utterly inefficient for their purpose, and the laughing-stock of every one; added to which, there was a spirit of lawlessness abroad, among the populace, which could hardly exist nowadays. The male portion of the Royal Family were fearlessly lampooned and caricatured, and good-natured jokes were made even on such august personages as the King and Queen – the plain, homely manner of the one, and the avaricious, and somewhat shrewish temper of the other, were good-humouredly made fun of. The people gave of their lives, and their substance, to save their country from the foot of the invader; but they also showed a sturdy independence of character, undeniably good in itself, but which was sometimes apt to overpass the bounds of discretion, and degenerate into license.

So was it with these food riots. The mob had got an idea in their heads that there was a class who bought food cheap, and held it until they could sell it dear; and nothing could disabuse their minds of this, as the following will show.

On the morning of the 18th of September, not having the fear of the Lord Mayor before their eyes, the mob assembled in Chiswell Street, opposite the house of a Mr. Jones, whose windows they had demolished the previous night, and directed their attentions to a house opposite, at the corner of Grub Street, which was occupied by a Mr. Pizey, a shoemaker, a friend of the said Jones, to accommodate whom, he had allowed his cellars to be filled with barrels of salt pork. These casks were seen by the mob, and they were immediately magnified into an immense magazine of butter and cheese, forestalled from the market, locked up from use, and putrefying in the hands of unfeeling avarice. Groaning and cursing, the mob began to mutter that “it would be a d – d good thing to throw some stuff in and blow up the place.” Poor Pizey, alarmed, sent messengers to the Mansion House, and Worship Street office: a force of constables was sent, and the mob retired.

At night, however, the same riot began afresh. Meeting in Bishopsgate Street, they went on their victorious career up Sun Street, through Finsbury Square, overthrowing the constables opposed to them, down Barbican into Smithfield, Saffron Hill, Holborn, and Snow Hills, at the latter of which they broke two cheesemongers' windows. Then they visited Fleet Market, breaking and tossing about everything moveable, smashed the windows of another cheesemonger, and then turned up Ludgate Hill, when they began breaking every lamp; thence into Cheapside, back into Newgate Street, St. Martin's-le-Grand, and Barbican to Old Street, where they dispersed for the night. From Ludgate Hill to Barbican, only one lamp was left burning, and of that the glass was broken. Somehow, in this night's escapade the military were ever on their track, but never near them.

On the 18th of September the King arose in his Majesty, and issued a proclamation, with a very long preamble, "strictly commanding and requiring all the Lieutenants of our Counties, and all our Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, and Under-Sheriffs, and all civil officers whatsoever, that they do take the most effectual means for suppressing all riots and tumults, and to that end do effectually put in execution an Act of Parliament made in the first year of the reign of our late royal ancestor, of glorious memory, King George the First, entituled 'An Act for preventing tumults and riotous assemblies, and for the more speedy and effectual punishing the rioters,'" &c.

Still, in spite of this terrible fulmination, the rioters again "made night hideous" on the 19th of September; but they were not so formidable, nor did they do as much mischief, as on former occasions. On the 20th they made Clare Market their *rendezvous*, marched about somewhat, had one or two brushes with the St. Clement Danes Association, and, finally, retired on the advent of the Horse Guards. Another mob met in Monmouth Street, the famous old-clothes repository in St. Giles's, but the Westminster Volunteers, and cavalry, dispersed them; and, the shops shutting very early – much to the discomfiture of the respectable poor, as regarded their Saturday night's marketings – peace once more reigned. London was once more quiet, and only the rioters who had been captured, were left to be dealt with by the law. But the people in the country were not so quickly satisfied; their wages were smaller than those of their London brethren, and they proportionately felt the pinch more acutely. In some instances they were put down by force, in others the price of bread was lowered; but it is impossible at this time to take up a newspaper, and not find some notice of, or allusion to, a food riot.

The century would die at peace with all men if it could, and there was a means of communication open with France, in the person of a M. Otto, resident in this country as a kind of unofficial agent. The first glimpse we get of these negotiations, from the papers which were published on the subject, is in August, 1800; and between that time, and when the *pourparlers* came to an end, on the 9th of November, many were the letters which passed between Lord Grenville and M. Otto. Peace, however, was not to be as yet. Napoleon was personally distrusted, and the French Revolution had been so recent, that the stability of the French Government was more than doubted.

A demonstration (it never attained the dimensions of a riot) – this time political and not born of an empty stomach – took place at Kennington on Sunday, the 9th of November. So-called "inflammatory" handbills had been very generally distributed about town a day or two beforehand, calling a meeting of mechanics, on Kennington Common, to petition His Majesty on a redress of grievances.

This actually caused a meeting of the Privy Council, and orders were sent to all the police offices, and the different volunteer corps, to hold themselves in readiness in case of emergency. The precautions taken, show that the Government evidently over-estimated the magnitude of the demonstration. First of all the Bow Street patrol were sent, early in the morning, to take up a position at "The Horns," Kennington, there to wait until the mob began to assemble, when they were directed to give immediate notice to the military in the environs of London, who were under arms at nine o'clock. Parties of Bow Street officers were stationed at different public-houses, all within easy call.

By and by, about 9 a.m., the conspirators began to make their appearance on the Common, in scattered groups of six or seven each, until their number reached *a hundred*. Then the police

sent round their fiery-cross to summon aid; and before that could reach them, they actually tried the venturesome expedient of dispersing the meeting themselves – with success. But later – or lazier – politicians continued to arrive, and the valiant Bow Street officers, thinking discretion the better part of valour, retired. When, however, they were reinforced by the Surrey Yeomanry, they plucked up heart of grace, and again set out upon their mission of dispersing the meeting – and again were they successful. In another hour, by 10 a.m., these gallant fellows could breathe again, for there arrived to their aid the Southwark Volunteers, and the whole police force from seven offices, together with the river police.

Then appeared on the scene, ministerial authority in the shape of one Mr. Ford, from the Treasury, who came modestly in a hackney coach; and when he arrived, the constables felt the time was come for them to distinguish themselves, and two persons, “one much intoxicated,” were taken into custody, and duly lodged in gaol – and this glorious intelligence was at once forwarded to the Duke of Portland, who then filled the post of Secretary to the Home Department.

The greatest number of people present at any time was about five hundred; and the troops, after having a good dinner at “The Horns,” left for their homes – except a party of horse which paraded the streets of Lambeth. A terrible storm of rain terminated this political campaign, in a manner satisfactory to all; and for this *ridiculus mus* the Guards, the Horse Guards, and all the military, regulars or volunteers, were under arms or in readiness all the forenoon!

I have here given what, perhaps, some may consider undue prominence to a trifling episode; but it is in these things that the contrast lies as to the feeling of the people, and government, in the dawn of the nineteenth century, and in these latter days of ours. The meeting of a few, to discuss grievances, and to petition for redress, in the one case is met with stern, vigorous repression: in our times a blatant mob is allowed, nay encouraged, to perambulate the streets, yelling, they know not what, against the House of Lords, and the railings of the park are removed, by authority, to facilitate the progress of these Her Majesty’s lieges, and firm supporters of constitutional liberty.

The scarcity of corn still continued down to the end of the year. It had been a bad harvest generally throughout the Continent, and, in spite of the bounty held out for its importation, but little arrived. The markets of the world had not then been opened – and among the marvels of our times, is the large quantity of wheat we import from India, and Australia. So great was this scarcity, that the King, in his paternal wisdom, issued a proclamation (December 3rd) exhorting all persons who had the means of procuring other food than corn, to use the strictest economy in the use of every kind of grain, abstaining from pastry, reducing the consumption of bread in their respective families at least one-third, and upon no account to allow it “to exceed one quartern loaf for each person in each week;” and also all persons keeping horses, especially those for pleasure, to restrict their consumption of grain, as far as circumstances would admit.

If this proclamation had been honestly acted up to, doubtless it would have effected some relief; which was sorely needed, when we see that the average prices of corn and bread throughout the country were —

Wheat per qr.	Barley per qr.	Oats per qr.	Quartern loaf
113s.	60s.	41s.	1s. 9d.

And, looking at the difference in value of money then, and now, we must add at least 50 per cent., which would make the average price of the quartern loaf 2s. 7½d.! – and, really, at the end of the year, wheat was 133s. per quarter, bread 1s. 10½d. per quartern.

Three per Cent. Consols were quoted, on January 1, 1800, at 60; on January 1, 1801, they stood at 54.

A fitting close to the century was found in a Census of the people. On the 19th of November Mr. Abbot brought a Bill into Parliament “to ascertain the population of Great Britain.” He pointed out

the extreme ignorance which prevailed on this subject, and stated “that the best opinions of modern times, and each of them highly respectable, estimate our present numbers, according to one statement, at 8,000,000; and according to other statements – formed on more extensive investigation and, as it appears to me, a more correct train of reasoning, showing an increase of one-third in the last forty years – the total number cannot be less than 11,000,000.”

This, the first real census ever taken of the United Kingdom, was not, of course, as exhaustive and trustworthy, as those decennial visitations we now experience. Mr. Abbot’s plan was crude, and the results must of necessity have been merely approximate. He said, “All that will be necessary will be to pass a short Act, requiring the resident clergy and parish officers, in every parish and township, to answer some few plain questions, perhaps four or five, easy to be understood, and easy to be executed, which should be specified in a schedule to the Act, and to return their answers to the clerk of the Parliament, for the inspection of both Houses of Parliament. From such materials it will be easy (following the precedent of 1787) to form an abstract exhibiting the result of the whole.”

When the numbers, crudely gathered as they were, were published, they showed how fallacious was the prediction as to figures.

England and Wales	8,892,536
Scotland	1,608,420
Ireland	5,216,331
	—
Total	15,717,287 ¹⁰
	—

Примечание 1¹⁰

One thing more was necessary before the dying giant expired, and that was to rectify the chronology of the century.¹¹ “From the 1st day of March last there has been a difference of twelve days between the old and new style, instead of eleven as formerly, in consequence of the regulations of the Act passed in 1752, according to which the year 1800 was only to be accounted a common year, and not a leap year; therefore old Lady-day was the 6th of April, old May-day 13th May, old Midsummer-day 6th July, old Lammas 13th August, old Michaelmas-day 11th October, &c., and so to continue for one hundred years.”

¹⁰ G. Fr. Kolb, “The Condition of Nations,” &c.

¹¹ W. Toone, “The Chronological Historian.” – [When the Julian Calendar was introduced, the Vernal Equinox fell on the 25th of March. At the time of the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, it had retrograded to the 21st of March; and when the reformation was made in 1582, to the 11th of March. Pope Gregory XIII., to restore it to its place, directed ten days to be suppressed in the calendar; and as the use of the Julian intercalation was found to be three days in 400 years, he ordered the intercalation to be omitted in all the centenary years except those which were multiples of 400. According to Gregorian rule, therefore, every year of which the number is divisible by four, without a remainder, is a leap year, excepting the centenary years, which are only leap years when divisible by four, on suppressing the units and tens. Thus —16(00) is a leap year. 17(00), 18(00), 19(00), are not leap years. 20(00) is a leap year. The shifting of days caused great disturbance in festivals dependent on Easter. Pope Gregory, in 1582, ordered the 5th of October to be called 15th of October; the Low Countries made 15th of December 25th of December. Spain, Portugal, and part of Italy, accepted the Gregorian change, but the Protestant countries and communities resisted up to 1700. In England the ten days’ difference had increased to eleven days, and the Act of 24 Geo. II. was passed to equalize the style in Great Britain and Ireland to the method now in use in all Christian countries, except Russia. In England, Wednesday, September 2, 1752, was followed by Thursday the 14th of September, and the New Style date of Easter-day came into use in 1753. —*Note by John Westby Gibson, Esq., LL.D.*]

CHAPTER V

1801

The Union with Ireland – Proclamations thereon – Alteration of Great Seal – Irish Member called to order (footnote) – Discovery of the Planet Ceres – Proclamation of General Fast – High price of meat, and prosperity of the farmers – Suffering of the French prisoners – Political dissatisfaction – John Horne Tooke – Feeding the French prisoners – Negotiations for Peace – Signing preliminaries – Illuminations – Methods of making the news known – Ratification of preliminaries – Treatment of General Lauriston by the mob – More Illuminations – Manifestation of joy at Falmouth – Lord Mayor’s banquet.

“LE ROI EST mort. Vive le Roi.” Ring the bells to welcome the baby Nineteenth Century, who is destined to utterly eclipse in renown all his ancestors.

Was it for good, or was it for evil, that its first act should be that of the Union with Ireland? It was compulsory, for it was a legacy bequeathed it. There were no national rejoicings. The new Standard was hoisted at the Tower, and at St. James’s, the new “Union” being flown from St. Martin’s steeple, and the Horse Guards; and, after the King and Privy Council had concluded the official recognition of the fact, both the Park and Tower guns fired a salute. The ceremonial had the merit, at least, of simplicity.

A long Royal Proclamation was issued, the principal points of which were: “We appoint and declare that our Royal Stile and Titles shall henceforth be accepted, taken, and used, as the same are set forth in manner and form following; that is to say, the same shall be expressed in the Latin tongue by these words, ‘*GEORGIUS TERTIUS, Dei Gratiâ, Britanniarum Rex, Fidei Defensor.*’ And in the English tongue by these words, ‘GEORGE the THIRD, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith.’ And that the Arms or ensigns armorial of the said United Kingdom shall be quarterly – first and fourth, England; second, Scotland; third, Ireland; and it is our will and pleasure, that there shall be borne therewith, on an escocheon of pretence, the Arms of our dominions in Germany, ensigned with the Electoral bonnet. And it is our will and pleasure that the Standard of the said United Kingdom shall be the same quartering as are herein before declared to be the arms or ensigns armorial of the said United Kingdom, with the escocheon of pretence thereon, herein before described: and that the Union flag shall be azure, the Crosses-saltires of St. Andrew and St. Patrick quarterly per saltire countercharged argent and gules; the latter fimbriated of the second; surmounted by the Cross of St. George of the third, fimbriated as the saltire.” There is a curious memorial of these arms to be seen in a stained-glass window in the church of St. Edmund, King and Martyr, Lombard Street, which window was put up as a memento of the Union. In the above arms it is to be noticed that the *fleur de lys*, so long used as being typical of our former rule in France, is omitted. A new Great Seal was also made – the old one being defaced.¹²

¹² The Great Seal in use in 1800, was the fifth made during the reign of George III. Its Obverse was the King, in Roman costume, with flying mantle, on horseback, facing left hand. In his right hand he holds a marshal’s baton. Legend – both Obv. and Rev. “Georgius III. D.G. BRIT. FR. REX. F.D. BRVNS. ET. LVN. DVX. S.R.I.A.T. ET. PR. ELECT. ETC.” The Reverse has the King royally robed and crowned, seated on a throne, on the back of which is emblazoned the Royal arms. He holds the sceptre in his right, the orb in his left hand. He is surrounded by allegorical figures. On his right (heraldically) stand Hercules, typical of Power, Minerva, of Wisdom, and Justice with sword and scales; on his left are Britannia with spear, shield, and palm branch, and a female, figurative of piety, carrying the model of a church. The Seal of 1801 is identical, except that Britannianum is substituted for Brit., and Fr. is left out. Also in the Royal arms on the throne, the French *fleur de lys* is omitted, and the harp of Ireland is introduced. It is worthy of note, that the medallist has omitted the Cross of St. Patrick in Britannia’s shield, although proclaimed.

On January 1, 1801, the King issued a proclamation for holding the first Parliament under the Union, declaring that it should “on the said twenty-second day of January, one thousand, eight hundred and one, be holden, and sit for the dispatch of divers weighty and important affairs.”

On the 1st of January, also, was a proclamation issued, altering the Prayer-book to suit the change, and, as some readers would like to know these alterations, I give them.

“In the Book of Common Prayer, Title Page, instead of ‘The Church of England,’ put ‘of the United Church of England and Ireland.’

“Prayer for the High Court of Parliament, instead of Our Sovereign, and his Kingdoms,’ read ‘and his Dominions.’

“The first Prayer to be used at sea, instead of ‘His Kingdoms,’ read ‘His Dominions.’

“In the form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, instead of the order ‘of the Church of England,’ read ‘of the United Church of England and Ireland.’

“In the preface of the said form, in two places, instead of ‘Church of England,’ read ‘in the United Church of England and Ireland.’

“In the first question in the Ordination of Priests, instead of ‘Church of England,’ read ‘of this United Church of England and Ireland.’

“In the Occasional Offices, 25th of October, the King’s accession, instead of ‘these realms,’ read ‘this realm.’

“In the Collect, before the Epistle, instead of ‘these Kingdoms,’ read ‘this United Kingdom.’

“For the Preachers, instead of ‘King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland,’ say, ‘King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.’”

The Union gave seats in the Imperial Parliament to one hundred commoners, twenty-eight temporal peers, who were elected for life, and four bishops representing the clergy, taking their places in rotation.¹³

The heavens marked the advent of the New Century by the discovery, by the Italian astronomer Piazzini, of the Planet Ceres on the 1st of January; and, to begin the year in a proper and pious manner, a proclamation was issued that a general fast was to be observed in England and Ireland, on the 13th, and in Scotland, on the 12th of February.

The cry of scarcity of food still continued; wheat was mounting higher and higher in price. In January it was 137s. a quarter, and it rose still higher. The farmers must have had a good time of it, as the Earl of Warwick declared in Parliament (November 14, 1800), they were making 200 per cent. profit. “Those who demanded upwards of 20s. a bushel for their corn, candidly owned that they would be contented with 10s. provided other farmers would bring down their prices to that standard.” And again (17th of November) he said: “He should still contend that the gains of the farmer were enormous, and must repeat his wish, that some measure might be adopted to compel him to bring his corn to market, and to be contented with a moderate profit. He wondered not at the extravagant style of living of some of the farmers, who could afford to play guinea whist, and were not contented with drinking wine only, but even mixed brandy with it; on farms from which they derived so much profit, they could afford to leave one-third of the lands they rented wholly uncultivated, the other two-thirds yielding them sufficient gain to support all their lavish expenditure.”

Still the prosperity of the farmer must have been poor consolation to those who were paying at the rate of our half-crown for a quarter loaf, so that it is no wonder that the authorities were obliged to step in, and decree that from January 31, 1801, the sale of fine wheaten bread should

¹³ There is verily “nothing new under the sun.” On January 22nd, the first Parliament of the United Kingdom met. Addington was chosen Speaker, and members were sworn in. On the 2nd of February the King opened the Session with a speech, and on the very next day, 3rd of February, *an Irish member was twice called to order by the Speaker*. He was a Mr. Martin of Galway, a gentleman who afterwards complained of his speech being reported in italics, and plaintively asked, “Mr. Speaker, did I speak in italics?”

be forbidden, and none used but that which contained the bran, or, as we should term it, brown, or whole meal, bread.

The poor French prisoners, of course, suffered, and were in a most deplorable condition, more especially because the French Government refused to supply them with clothes. They had not even the excuse that they clothed their English prisoners, for our Government looked well after them in that matter, however much they may have suffered in other ways.

On the 18th of February Pitt opened his budget, and as an increase was needed of over a million and three quarters, owing to the war, and interest of loan, new taxes were proposed as follows:

		£
Ten per cent. on all Teas over 2s. 6d. per lb., which would	probably produce	30,000
Doubling the tax on Paper except Paper-hangings and glazed Paper	"	130,000
Drawback on the export of Calicoes to be taken off, and extra duty of one penny imposed	"	155,000
Increase of one-third on the tax on Timber, Staves, and Deals	"	95,000
Sixpence per lb. export duty, and threepence per lb. on home consumption to be levied on Pepper	"	119,000
Twenty pence per cwt. extra on Sugar	"	166,000
A duty on Raisins	"	10,000
— do. — on Lead	"	120,000
Ten shillings per pleasure Horse if only one were kept, and an additional ten for each horse so kept	"	170,000
Horses used in agriculture 4s. each	"	136,000
Increase of stamp duty on Bills and Notes	"	112,000
Double stamp on Marine Insurance Policies	"	145,000
An additional duty on deeds of Conveyance	"	93,000
Modified Postal arrangements	"	80,000
The Penny Post to be Twopence	"	17,000
Other modifications of the Post-office	"	53,000

There had been political dissatisfactions for some time past, which was dignified with the name of sedition, but the malcontents were lightly dealt with. On the 2nd of March those who had been confined in the Tower and Tothill Fields were liberated on their own recognizances except four – Colonel Despard, Le Maitre, Galloway, and Hodgson, who, being refused an unconditional discharge, preferred to pose as martyrs, and were committed to Tothill Fields. Of Colonel Despard we shall have more to say further on. Vinegar Hill had not been forgotten in Ireland, and sedition, although smothered, was still alight, so that an Act had to be introduced, prolonging the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in that kingdom.

In this year, too, was brought in a Bill which became law, preventing clergymen in holy orders from sitting in the House of Commons. This was brought about by the election (this sessions) of the Rev. John Horne Tooke for Old Sarum, a rotten borough, which in 1832 was disfranchised, as it returned two members, and did not have very many more voters. Tooke had been a partizan of Wilkes, and belonged, as we should now term it, to the Radical party, a fact which may probably have had something to do with the introduction of the Bill, as there undoubtedly existed an undercurrent of dissatisfaction, which was called sedition. Doubtless societies of the disaffected existed, and a secret commission, which sat for the purpose of exposing them, reported, on the 27th of April, that an association for seditious purposes had been formed under the title of United Britons, the members whereof were to be admitted by a test.

The question of feeding the French prisoners of war again turned up, and as it was not well understood, the *Morning Post*, 1st of September, 1801, thus explains matters: “Much abuse is thrown out against the French Government for not providing for the French prisoners in this country. We do not mean to justify its conduct; but the public should be informed how the question really stands. It is the practice of all civilized nations to feed the prisoners they take. Of course the French prisoners were kept at the expense of the English Government till, a few years ago, reports were circulated

of their being starved and ill-treated. The French Government, in hopes of stigmatizing the English Ministry as guilty of such an enormous offence, offered to feed the French prisoners here at its own expense; a proposal, which was readily accepted, as it saved much money to this country; but the French Government has since discontinued its supplies, and thus paid a compliment to our humanity at the expense of our purse. In doing this, however, France has only reverted to the established practice of war, and all the abuse of the Treasury journals for withholding the supplies to the French prisoners, only betrays a gross ignorance of the subject.”

Of their number, the *Morning Post*, 16th of October, 1801, says, “The French prisoners in this country at present amount to upwards of 20,000, and they are all effective men, the sick having been sent home from time to time as they fell ill. Of these 20,000 men, nine out of ten are able-bodied seamen; they are the best sailors of France, the most daring and enterprising, who have been mostly employed in privateers and small cruisers.” Some of them had been confined at Portsmouth for eight years!

M. Otto, in spite of the rebuff he had experienced, the former negotiations for peace having been broken off, was still in London, where he acted as Commissary for exchange of prisoners. Napoleon was making treaties of peace all round, and, if it were to be gained in an honourable manner, it would be good also for England. So Lord Hawkesbury, who was then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, entered into communication with M. Otto, on the 21st of March, signifying the King’s desire to enter into negotiations for peace, and they went on all the summer. Of course all did not go smoothly, especially with regard to the liberty of the English press, which Napoleon cordially hated, and wished to see repressed and fettered; but this, Lord Hawkesbury either would not, or dared not, agree to. The public pulse was kept in a flutter by the exchange of couriers between England and France, and many were the false rumours which caused the Stocks to fluctuate. Even a few days before the Preliminaries were signed, a most authentic report was afloat that all negotiations were broken off; so we may imagine the universal joy when it was proclaimed as an authentic fact.

It fairly took the Ministry by surprise when, on Wednesday, the 30th of September, an answer was received from Napoleon, accepting the English proposals. Previously, the situation had been very graphically, if not very politely, described in a caricature by Roberts, called “Negotiation See-saw,” where Napoleon and John Bull were represented as playing at that game, seated on a plank labelled, “Peace or War.” Napoleon expatiates on the fortunes of the game: “There, Johnny, now I’m down, and you are up; then I go up, and you go down, Johnny; so we go on.” John Bull’s appreciation of the humour of the sport is not so keen; he growls, “I wish you would settle it one way or other, for if you keep bumping me up and down in this manner, I shall be ruined in Diachilem Plaster.”

But when the notification of acceptance did arrive, very little time was lost in clinching the agreement. A Cabinet Council was held, and an express sent off to the King, whose sanction returned next afternoon. The silver box, which had never been used since the signature of peace with America, was sent to the Lord Chancellor at 5 p.m. for the Great Seal, and his signature; and, the consent of the other Cabinet Ministers being obtained, at 7 p.m. Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto signed the Preliminaries of Peace in Downing Street, and his lordship at once despatched the following letter, which must have gladdened the hearts of the citizens, to the Lord Mayor.

“TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR

“Downing Street, Oct. 1, 1801, at night.

“My Lord,

“I have great satisfaction in informing your Lordship that Preliminaries of Peace between Great Britain and France have been signed this evening by myself, on the part of His Majesty, and by M. Otto, on the part of the French Government. I

request your Lordship will have the goodness to make this intelligence immediately public in the City.

"I have the honour to be, &c.,

"(Signed) Hawkesbury."

The Lord Mayor was not at the Mansion House, and the messenger had to proceed to his private house at Clapham. His lordship returned to town, and by nine o'clock the good news was known all over London. The Lord Mayor read the letter at the Stock Exchange, and also at Lloyd's Coffee House, at the bar of which it was afterwards posted; for Lloyd's was then a great power in the City, from which all public acts, subscriptions, &c., emanated, as was indeed but right, as it was the assembly which embraced all the rich and influential merchants.

Among this class all was joy, and smiles, and shaking of hands. The Three per Cents., which only the previous day were at 59½ rose to 66, and Omnium, which had been at 8, rose to 18.

The news came so suddenly, that the illuminations on the night of the 2nd of October were but very partial. We, who are accustomed to brilliant devices in gas, with coruscating crystal stars, and transparencies, would smile at the illuminations of those days. They generally took the shape of a wooden triangle in each window-pane, on which were stuck tallow candles, perpetually requiring snuffing, and guttering with every draught; or, otherwise, a black-painted board with a few coloured oil-lamps arranged in the form of a crown, with G. R. on either side.

As is observed in the *Morning Post* of the 3rd October, 1884: "The sensation produced yesterday among the populace was nothing equal to what might have been expected. The capture of half a dozen men-of-war, or the conquest of a colony, would have been marked with a stronger demonstration of joy. The illumination, so far from being general, was principally confined to a few streets – the Strand, the Haymarket, Pall Mall, and Fleet Street. In the last the Globe Tavern was lighted up at an early hour, with the word *Peace* in coloured lamps. This attracted a considerable mob, which filled the street before the door. It was apprehended that they would immediately set out on their tour through the whole town, and enforce an universal illumination. This induced a few of the bye-streets to follow the example, but nothing more. There were several groups of people, but no crowd, in the neighbourhood of Temple Bar. The other streets, even those that were illuminated, were not more frequented than usual. St. James's Street, Bond Street, and the west part of the town; east of St. Paul's, together with Holborn, and the north part, did not illuminate. Several flags were hoisted in the course of the day, and the bells of all the churches were set a-ringing."

To us, who are accustomed to have our news reeled out on paper tapes hot and hot from the telegraph, or to converse with each other, by means of the telephone, many miles apart, the method used to disseminate the news of the peace throughout the country, seems to be very primitive, and yet no better, nor quicker mode, could have been devised in those days. The mail coaches were placarded PEACE WITH FRANCE in large capitals, and the drivers all wore a sprig of laurel, as an emblem of peace, in their hats.

The Preliminaries of Peace were ratified in Paris on the 5th of October, but General Lauriston, who was to be the bearer of this important document, did not set out from Paris until the evening of the 7th, having been kept waiting until a magnificent gold box, as a fitting shrine for so precious a relic, was finished; and he did not land at Dover until Friday evening, the 9th of October, about 9 p.m. He stayed a brief time at the City of London Inn, Dover, to rest and refresh himself, sending forward a courier, magnificently attired in scarlet and gold, to order horses on the road, and to apprise M. Otto of his arrival. He soon followed in a carriage, with the horses and driver bedecked with blue ribands, on which was the word PEACE. Of course the mob surrounded him, and cheered and yelled as if mad – indeed they must have been, for they actually shouted "Long live Bonaparte!" At M. Otto's house, the general was joined by that gentleman, who was to accompany him to Reddish's Hotel, in Bond Street. In Oxford Street, however, the mob took the horses out of his carriage, and drew him to the hotel, rending the air with shouts of joy; some amongst them even mounting a tricoloured

cockade. From the hotel window General Lauriston scattered a handful of guineas among his friends, the mob, who afterwards, when he went to Lord Hawkesbury's office, once more took out the horses, and dragged him from St. James's Square to Downing Street.

At half-past two the Park guns boomed forth the welcome news, and at three the Tower guns proclaimed the fact to the dwellers in the City, and the East end of London.

It was in vain that the general's carriage was taken round to a back entrance; the populace were not to be balked of their amusement, and, on his coming out, the horses were once more detached, men took their places, and he was dragged as far as the Admiralty. Here he remained some time, and was escorted to his carriage by Earl St. Vincent. Said he to the mob, "Gentlemen! gentlemen!" (three huzzas for Earl St. Vincent) "I request of you to be careful, and not overturn the carriage." The populace assured his lordship they would be careful of, and respectful to, the strangers; and away they dragged the carriage, with shouts, through St. James's Park, round the Palace, by the Stable-yard, making the old place ring with their yells, finally landing the general uninjured at his hotel.

At night the illuminations were very fine, and there were many transparencies, one or two of which were, to say the least, peculiar. One in Pall Mall had a flying Cupid holding a miniature of Napoleon, with a scroll underneath, "Peace and Happiness to Great Britain." Another opposite M. Otto's house, in Hereford Street, Oxford Street, had a transparency of Bonaparte, with the legend, "Saviour of the Universe." Guildhall displayed in front, a crown and G. R., with a small transparency representing a dove, surrounded with olive. The Post Office had over 6,000 lamps. The India House was brilliant with some 1,700 lamps, besides G. R. and a large PEACE. The Mansion House looked very gloomy. G. R. was in the centre, but one half of the R was broken. The pillars were wreathed with lamps. The Bank only had a double row of candles in front.

Squibs, rockets, and pistols were let off in the streets, and the noise would probably have continued all night, had not a terrible thunder-storm cleared the streets about 11 p.m.

On the 12th, the illuminations were repeated with even more brilliancy, and all went off well. One effect of the peace, which could not fail to be gratifying to all, was the fact, that wheat fell, next marketday, some 10s. to 14s. per quarter.

The popular demonstrations of joy occasionally took odd forms, for it is recorded that at Falmouth, not only the horses, but the cows, calves, and asses were decorated with ribands, in celebration of the peace; and a publican at Lambeth, who had made a vow that whenever peace was made, he would give away all the beer in his cellar, actually did so on the 13th of October.

As was but natural, the Lord Mayor's installation, on the 9th of November, had a peculiar significance. The Show was not out of the way, at least nothing singular about it is recorded, except the appearance of a knight in armour with his page at the corner of Bride Lane, Bridge Street, had anything to do with it; probably he was only an amateur, as he does not seem to have joined the procession. In the Guildhall was a transparency of Peace surrounded by four figures, typical of the four quarters of the globe returning their acknowledgments for the blessings showered upon them. There were other emblematic transparencies, but the contemporary art critic does not speak very favourably of them. M. Otto and his wife, an American born at Philadelphia, were *the* guests of the evening, even more than the Lord Chancellor, and the usual ministerial following.

Bread varied in this year from 1s. 9¼d. on the 1st of January to 1s. 10½d. on the 5th of March, 10¼d. on the 12th of November, and 1s. 0¼d. on the 31st of December. Anent the scarcity of wheat at the commencement of the year, there is a singular item to be found in the "Account of Moneys advanced for Public Services from the Civil List (not being part of the ordinary expenditure of the Civil List)," of a "grant of £500 to Thomas Toden, Esq., towards enabling him to prosecute a discovery made by him, of a paste as a substitute for wheat flour."

Wheat was on January 1st, 137s. per quarter; it reached 153s. in March; and left off on the 31st of December at 68s.

The Three per Cents. varied from 54 on the 1st of January, to 68 on the 31st of December.

CHAPTER VI

1802

Disarmament and retrenchment – Cheaper provisions – King applied to Parliament to pay his debts – The Prince of Wales claimed the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall – Parliament pays the King's debts – Abolition of the Income Tax – Signature of the Treaty of Amiens – Conditions of the Treaty – Rush of the English to France – Visit of C. J. Fox to Napoleon – Liberation of the French prisoners of war.

THE year 1802 opened somewhat dully, or, rather, with a want of sensational news. Disarmament, and retrenchment, were being carried out with a swiftness that seemed somewhat incautious, and premature. But the people had been sorely taxed, and it was but fitting that the burden should be removed at the earliest opportunity.

Provisions fell to something like a normal price, directly the Preliminaries of Peace were signed, and a large trade in all sorts of eatables was soon organized with France, where prices ruled much lower than at home. All kinds of poultry and pigs, although neither were in prime condition, could be imported at a much lower rate than they could be obtained from the country.

Woodward gives an amusing sketch of John Bull enjoying the good things of this life, on a scale, and at a cost, to which he had long been a stranger.

On the 10th of February the Right Hon. Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester, was elected Speaker to the House of Commons, in the room of the Right Hon. John Nutford, who had accepted the position of Chancellor of Ireland; and, on the 15th of February, Mr. Chancellor Addington presented the following message from the King:

“George R

“His Majesty feels great concern in acquainting the House of Commons that the provision made by Parliament for defraying the expenses of his household, and civil government, has been found inadequate to their support. A considerable debt has, in consequence, been unavoidably incurred, an account of which he has ordered to be laid before this House. His Majesty relies with confidence on the zeal and affection of his faithful Commons, that they will take the same into their early consideration, and adopt such measures as the circumstances may appear to them to require.

“G. R.”

This message was referred to a Committee of Supply, and, at the same time, the Prince of Wales, not to be behind his father, made a claim for the amount of the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall received during his minority, and applied to the use of the Civil List. The King had “overrun the constable” at an alarming rate. He only wanted about a million sterling, and this state of indebtedness was attributed to many causes. The dearness of provisions, &c., during the last three years; the extra expenses caused by the younger princes and princesses growing up, which ran the Queen into debt; the marriage of the Prince of Wales, the support of the Princess Charlotte, pensions to late ministers to foreign courts, &c. In the long run John Bull put his hands in his pockets, and paid the bill, £990,053 – all which had been contracted since the passing of Burke's Bill on the subject,

and exclusive of the sums paid in 1784 and 1786. The Prince of Wales was not so lucky with his application at this time. The Chancellor of the Exchequer could not stand two heavy pulls upon his purse.

Well, as a sop, John got rid of the Income Tax. Like the “Old Man of the Sea,” which we have to carry on our shoulders, it was originally proposed as a war tax; but, unlike ours, faith was kept with the people, and, with the cessation of the war, the tax died. A very amusing satirical print, given here, is by Woodward, and shows the departure of the Income Tax, who is flying away, saying, “Farewell, Johnny – remember me!” John Bull, relieved of his presence, growls out: “Yes, d – n thee; I have reason to remember thee; but good-bye. So thou’rt off; I don’t care; go where thou wilt, thou’lt be a plague in the land thou lightest on.”

The negotiations for peace hung fire for a long time. Preliminaries were ratified, as we have seen, in October, but the old year died, and the new year was born, and still no sign to the public that the peace was a real fact; they could only see that a large French armament had been sent to the West Indies; nor was it until the 29th of March, that the citizens of London heard the joyful news, from the following letter to the Lord Mayor:

“Downing Street, March 29, 1802.

“My Lord,

“Mr. Moore, assistant secretary to Marquis Cornwallis, has just arrived with the definite treaty of peace, which was signed at Amiens, on the 27th of this month, by His Majesty’s plenipotentiary, and the plenipotentiaries of France, Spain, and the Batavian Republic.¹⁴

“I have the honour, &c.,

“Hawkesbury.”

It must have been a great relief to the public mind, as the armistice was a somewhat expensive arrangement, costing, it is said, a million sterling per week! One of the causes, said to be the principal, of the delay in coming to an understanding, was the question respecting the payment of the expenses, incurred by our Government, for the maintenance of the French prisoners of war. They amounted to upwards of two millions sterling, and a proposal was made by England, but rejected on the part of the French, to accept the island of Tobago as an equivalent. It was afterwards left to be paid as quickly as convenient. There were no regular illuminations on the arrival of this news, but of course many patriotic individuals vented their feelings in oil lamps, candles, and transparencies.

But what were the conditions of this Peace? The English restored “to the French Republic and its Allies, viz., His Catholic Majesty, and the Batavian Republic, all the possessions, and colonies, which respectively belonged to them, and which have been either occupied, or conquered, by the British forces during the course of the present war, with the exception of the island of Trinidad, and of the Dutch possessions in the island of Ceylon.”

“The Port of the Cape of Good Hope remains to the Batavian Republic in full sovereignty, in the same manner as it did previous to the war. The ships of every kind belonging to the other contracting parties, shall be allowed to enter the said port, and there to purchase what provisions they may stand in need of, as heretofore, without being liable to pay any other imports than such as the Batavian Republic compels the ships of its own nation to pay.”

A portion of Portuguese Guiana was ceded to the French in order to rectify the boundaries; the territories, possessions, and rights of the Sublime Porte were to be maintained as formerly.

The islands of Malta, Goza, and Comino were to be restored to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and the forces of His Britannic Majesty were to evacuate Malta, and its dependencies,

¹⁴ Signed by the Marquis Cornwallis for England, Joseph Bonaparte for France, Azara for Spain, and Schimmelpenninck for Holland.

within three months of the exchange of the ratifications, or sooner, if possible. Half the garrison should be Maltese, and the other half (2,000 men) should be furnished, for a time, by the King of Naples; and France, Great Britain, Austria, Spain, Russia, and Prussia were the guarantors of its independence.

The French troops were to evacuate the kingdom of Naples, and the Roman States, and the English troops were to evacuate Porto Ferrajo, and all the ports, and islands they occupied in the Mediterranean, and the Adriatic.

The Prince of Orange was to have adequate compensation for the losses suffered by him in Holland, in consequence of the revolution; and persons accused of murder, forgery, or fraudulent bankruptcy, were to be given up to their respective Powers, on demand, accompanied by proof.

This, then, was the Treaty of Amiens, in which France certainly came best off; and so the popular voice seemed to think, although thankful for any cessation of the constant drain of men and treasure, combined with privations at home, and loss of trade.

A satirical print by Ansell, clearly shows this feeling.

Peace greets John Bull with – “Here I am, Johnny, arrived at last! Like to have been lost at sea; poles of the chaise broke at Dover, springs of the next chaise gave way at Canterbury, and one of the horses fell, and overturned the other chaise at Dartford. Ah, Johnny! I wonder we have ever arrived at all.” John Bull replies, “Odds niggins!!! Why, is that you? have I been waiting all this time to be blessed with such a poor ugly crippled *piece*? and all you have with you is a quid of tobacco and some allspice.” Mrs. Bull asks her husband, “Why, John, be this she you have been talking so much about?”

There was a wild rush of English over to France, and the French returned the compliment, but not in the same ratio; the Continental stomach having then, the same antipathy to the passage of the Channel, as now. Still there was an attempt at an *entente cordiale*, which was well exemplified by a contemporary artist (unknown), in a picture called “A Peaceable Pipe, or a Consular Visit to John Bull.” Napoleon is having a pleasant chat with his old foe, smoking, and drinking beer with him. John Bull toasts his guest. “Here’s to you, Master Boney Party. Come, take another whiff, my hearty.” Napoleon accepts the invitation with, “Je vous remercie, John Bull; I think I’ll take another pull.” Whilst the gentlemen are thus pleasantly engaged, Mrs. Bull works hard mending John’s too well-worn breeches; and as she works, she says, “Now we are at peace, if my husband does take a drop extraordinary, I don’t much mind; but when he was at war, he was always grumbling. Bless me, how tiresome these old breeches are to mend; no wonder he wore them out, for he had always his hands in his pockets for something or other.”

Among the other Englishmen who took advantage of the peace to go over to France, was Charles James Fox, who, immediately after his election for Westminster, on July 15, 1802, started off for Paris, professedly to search the archives there, for material for his introductory chapter to “A History of the Early Part of the Reign of James the Second.” A history of this trip was afterwards written by his private secretary, Mr. Trotter.¹⁵ He and Mrs. Fox, who was now first publicly acknowledged as his wife, were introduced to Napoleon; a subject most humorously treated by Gillray, in his “Introduction of Citizen Volpone and his Suite at Paris.” Napoleon, in full Court costume, and wearing an enormous cocked hat and feathers, is seated on a chair, which is emblematical of his sovereignty of the world, and is surrounded by a Mameluke guard. Fox and his wife, both enormously fat, yet bowing and curtsying respectively, with infinite grace, are being introduced by O’Connor, who had, aforesaid, been in treaty with the French Government for the invasion of Ireland. Erskine, in full forensic costume, bows, with his hand on his heart; and Lord and Lady Holland help to fill the picture. But the real account of his reception was very different (*teste* Mr. Trotter). “We reached the interior apartment, where Bonaparte, First Consul, surrounded by his generals, ministers, senators,

¹⁵ “Memoirs of the Later Years of the Right Hon. Charles James Fox.” By John Bernard Trotter, Esq., late private secretary to Mr. Fox. London. 1811.

and officers, stood between the second and third Consuls, Le Brun and Cambacérès, in the centre of a semicircle, at the head of the room! The numerous assemblage from the *Salle des Ambassadeurs*, formed into another semicircle, joined themselves to that, at the head of which stood the First Consul... The moment the circle was formed, Bonaparte began with the Spanish Ambassador, then went to the American, with whom he spoke some time, and so on, performing his part with ease, and very agreeably, until he came to the English Ambassador, who, after the presentation of some English noblemen, announced to him Mr. Fox. He was a great deal flurried, and, after indicating considerable emotion, very rapidly said, ‘Ah, Mr. Fox! I have heard with pleasure of your arrival, I have desired much to see you; I have long admired in you the orator and friend of his country, who, in constantly raising his voice for peace, consulted that country’s best interests, those of Europe, and of the human race. The two great nations of Europe require peace; they have nothing to fear; they ought to understand and value one another. In you, Mr. Fox, I see, with much satisfaction, that great statesman who recommended peace, because there was no just object of war; who saw Europe desolated to no purpose, and who struggled for its relief.’ Mr. Fox said little, or rather nothing, in reply – to a complimentary address to himself, he always found invincible repugnance to answer – nor did he bestow one word of admiration or applause upon the extraordinary and elevated character who addressed him. A few questions and answers relative to Mr. Fox’s tour, terminated the interview.”

According to Article II. of the Treaty of Amiens, “All the prisoners made on one side and the other, as well by land as by sea, and the hostages carried off, or delivered up, during the war, and up to the present day, shall be restored, without ransom, in six weeks at the latest, to be reckoned from the day on which the ratifications of the present treaty are exchanged, and on paying the debts which they shall have contracted during their captivity.”

The invaluable M. Otto wrote the *detenus* a letter, in which, whilst congratulating them, he exhorted them to subdue all spirit of party, if, indeed, it had not already been effected by their years of suffering, and captivity, and cautioned them as to their behaviour on their return, telling them of the change for the better which they would not fail to observe. Glad, indeed, must these poor captives have been at the prospect of once more setting foot on *La belle France*; and that the English Government made no unnecessary delay in helping them to the consummation of their wishes, is evident, for, on the 10th of April, upwards of 1,000 of them were liberated from the depôt at Norman Cross, preparatory to their being conveyed to Dunkirk. The others – at least, all those who were willing and able to go – soon left England.

“Several of the French prisoners who embarked at Plymouth on Thursday, on board the coasters and trawl boats, having liberty to come on shore until morning, thought the indulgence so sweet, that they stayed up the whole night. This morning, at three o’clock, they sung in very good style through the different streets, the ‘Marseillais Hymn,’ the ‘Austrian Retreat,’ with several other popular French songs, and concluded with the popular British song of ‘God save the King,’ in very good English.”
—*Morning Herald*, April 19, 1802.

CHAPTER VII

Proclamation of Peace – Manner of the procession, &c. – Illuminations – Day of General Thanksgiving – General Election – A dishonoured Government bill – Cloth riots in Wiltshire – Plot to assassinate the King – Arrest of Colonel Despard – Trial and sentence of the conspirators – Their fate.

ON THE 21st of April, a proclamation was issued, ordering a public thanksgiving for Peace, to be solemnized on 1st of June. On the 26th of April, the King proclaimed Peace, in the following terms:

“By the KING. A Proclamation

“G. R.,

“Whereas a definitive treaty of peace, and friendship, between us, the French Republic, His Catholic Majesty, and the Batavian Republic, hath been concluded at Amiens on the 27th day of March last, and the ratifications thereof have been duly exchanged; in conformity thereunto, We have thought fit, hereby, to command that the same be published throughout all our dominions; and we do declare to all our loving subjects our will and pleasure, that the said treaty of peace, and friendship, be observed inviolably, as well by sea as by land, and in all places whatsoever; strictly charging, and commanding, all our loving subjects to take notice hereof, and to conform themselves thereunto, accordingly.

“Given at our Court at Windsor, the 26th day of April,

1802, in the forty-second year of our reign

“God save the King.”

On the 29th of April, a public proclamation of the same was made, and it must have been a far more imposing spectacle than the very shabby scene displayed in 1856. All mustered in the Stable-yard, St. James’s. The Heralds and Pursuivants were in their proper habits, and, preceded by the Sergeant Trumpeter with his trumpets, the Drum Major with his drums, and escorted on either side by Horse Guards, they sallied forth, and read aloud the Proclamation in front of the Palace. We can picture the roar of shouting, and the waving of hats, after the Deputy Garter’s sonorous “God save the King!” A procession was then formed, and moved solemnly towards Charing Cross, where another halt was made, and the Proclamation was read, the Herald looking towards Whitehall. The following is the order of the procession:

Two Dragoons.
 Two Pioneers, with axes in their hands.
 Two Trumpeters.
 Horse Guards, six abreast.
 Beades of Westminster, two and two, with staves.
 Constables of Westminster.
 High Constable, with his staff, on horseback.
 Officers of the High Bailiff of Westminster, with white wands,
 on horseback.
 Clerk of the High Bailiff.
 High Bailiff and Deputy Steward.
 Horse Guards.
 Horse Knight Marshal's men, two and two. Horse
 Knight Marshal. Guards
 Drums. Guards
 Drum Major. flanked
 Trumpets. flanked
 Sergeant Trumpeters.
 Pursuivants. the
 the
 Procession. Sergeants- } Heralds. } Sergeants- Procession.
 at-Arms. } King-at- } at-Arms.
 Arms. }
 Horse Guards.

Thence to Temple Bar, which, according to precedent, was shut – with the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and civic officials on the other side. The minor Officer of Arms stepped out of the procession between two trumpeters, and, preceded by two Horse Guards, rode up to the gates, and after the trumpeters had sounded thrice, he knocked thereat with a cane. From the other side the City Marshal asked, “Who comes there?” and the Herald replied: “The Officers of Arms, who demand entrance into the City, to publish His Majesty’s Proclamation of Peace.” The gates being opened, he was admitted alone, and the gates were shut behind him. The City Marshal, preceded by his officers, conducted him to the Lord Mayor, to whom he showed His Majesty’s Warrant, which his lordship having read, returned, and gave directions to the City Marshal to open the gates, who duly performed his mission, and notified the same to the Herald in the words – “Sir, the gates are opened.” The Herald returned to his place, the procession entered the Bar, and, having halted, the Proclamation was again read.

The Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, &c., then joined the procession in the following order:

The Volunteer Corps of the City.
 The King’s Procession, as before stated.
 Four Constables together.
 Six Marshal’s men, three and three, on foot.
 Six Trumpeters, three and three.
 Band of Music.
 Two Marshals on
 horseback.
 Sheriff’s } Two Sheriffs on horseback. } Sheriff’s
 Officers } Sword and Mace on } Officers
 on foot. } horseback. } on foot.
 Porter in a } LORD MAYOR, mounted on } Beadle.
 black } a }
 gown and } beautiful bay horse. }
 staff. }
 Household on foot.
 Six Footmen in rich liveries, three and three.
 State Coach with six horses, with ribands, &c.
 Aldermen in seniority, in their coaches.
 Carriages of the two Sheriffs.
 Officers of the City, in carriages, in seniority.
 Horse Guards.

The line of procession was kept by different Volunteer Corps.

The Proclamation having been read a fourth time, at Wood Street, they went on to the Exchange, read it there, and yet once again, at Aldgate pump, after which they returned, and, halting at the Mansion House, broke up, the Heralds going to their College, at Doctor’s Commons, the various troops to their proper destinations; and so ended a very beautiful sight, which was witnessed by crowds of people, both in the streets, and in the houses, along the route.

The illuminations, at night, eclipsed all previous occasions, Smirk, the Royal Academician, painting a transparency for the Bank of England, very large, and very allegorical. M. Otto’s house, in Portman Square, was particularly beautiful, and kept the square full of gazers all the night through. There were several accidents during the day, one of which was somewhat singular. One of the outside ornaments of St. Mary le Strand, then called the New Church, fell down, killing one man on the spot, and seriously damaging three others.

The day of General Thanksgiving was very sober, comparatively. Both Houses of Parliament attended Divine service, as did the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, who went in state to St. Paul's. Most of the churches were well filled, and flags flew, and bells rung, all day.

In July came a General Election, which evoked a lawless saturnalia throughout the length and breadth of the land. An election in our own times – before the ballot brought peace – was bad enough, but then the duration of the polling was nothing like it was in the days of which I write. The County polling lasted fourteen days; Boroughs, seven days.

The *Morning Herald*, July 14, 1802, thus speaks of the Middlesex election: “During the business of polling, the populace amused themselves in varieties of whimsicalities, one of which was the exhibition of a man on the shoulders of another, handcuffed and heavily ironed, while a third was employed in flogging him with a tremendous cat-o'-nine-tails, and the man who received the punishment, by his contortions of countenance, seemed to experience all the misery which such a mode of punishment inflicts. The shops were all shut in Brentford, and the road leading to London was lined on each side with crowds of idle spectators. It is impossible for any but those who have witnessed a Middlesex election to conceive the picture it exhibits; it is one continual scene of riot, disorder, and tumult.”

And, whilst on the subject of Politics, although they have no proper place in this history, as it deals more especially with the social aspect of this portion of the Century, yet it is interesting to be acquainted with the living aspect of some of the politicians of the time, and, thanks to Gillray, they are forthcoming in two of his pictures I have here given.

This is founded on a serio-comic incident which occurred in a debate on Supply, on March 4, 1802.¹⁶ “The report of the Committee of Supply, to whom the Army estimates were referred, being brought up, Mr. Robson proceeded to point out various heads of expenditure, which, he said, were highly improper, such as the barracks, the expenses of corn and hay for the horses of the cavalry, the coals and candles for the men, the expenses of which he contended to be enormous. The sum charged for beer to the troops at the Isle of Wight, he said, was also beyond his comprehension. He maintained that this mode of voting expenditure, by months, was dangerous; the sum, coming thus by dribblets, did not strike the imagination in the same manner as they would do, if the whole service of the year came before the public at once, and that the more particularly, as money was raised by Exchequer bills, to be hereafter provided for, instead of bringing out at once the budget of taxes for the year. He alleged that those things were most alarming, and the country was beginning to feel the effects of them. Gentlemen might fence themselves round with majorities; but the time would come when there must be an account given of the public money. The finances of the country were in so desperate a situation, that Government was unable to discharge its bills; for a fact had come within his knowledge, of a bill, accepted by Government, having been dishonoured. (A general exclamation of hear! hear!)

“Mr. Robson, however, stuck to it as a fact, saying that ‘it was true that a banker, a member of that House, did take an acceptance to a public office – the sum was small. The answer at that public office was “that they had not money to pay it.”’ On being pressed to name the office, he said it was the Sick and Hurt Office.

“Later on in the evening Addington said, ‘I find that the amount of the bill accepted by Government, and non-payment of which was to denote the insolvency of Government, is – £19 7s. Whether or not the bill was paid, remains to be proved; but my information comes from the same source as the hon. member derives his accusation. At all events, the instance of the hon. member of the insolvency of the Government is a bill of £19 7s.’

“Mr. Robson said that was so much the worse, as the bill was in the hands of a poor man who wanted the money.”

¹⁶ “Parliamentary History,” vol. xxxvi. p. 346, &c.

In August some riots occurred in Wiltshire, caused by the introduction of machinery into cloth-working. What Hargreaves, Arkwright, and Crompton, had done for the cotton trade, was bound, sooner or later, to be followed by other textile industries. In this case a shearing machine had been introduced into a large factory, some three years back, and, like the silversmiths at Ephesus, the cloth-workers thought that “thus our craft is in danger of being set at nought;” and they did what most poor ignorant men have done under like circumstances, they thought they could retard the march of intellect, by breaking the objectionable machines. Not only so, but, in their senseless folly, they cut, and destroyed, much valuable property in the cloth-racks – altogether the damage done was computed at over £100,000. For this, one man was tried at Gloucester Assizes, and hanged – a fate which seems to have acted as a warning to his brother craftsmen, for there was no repetition of the outrage. In this case, the machinery, being very expensive, could only be introduced into large mills, the owners of which did not discharge a man on its account, and the smaller masters were left to plod on in the old way, in which their soul delighted, and to go quietly to decay, whilst their more go-ahead neighbours were laying the foundation of a business which, in time, supplied the markets of the world. But there was the same opposition to the *Spinning Jenny*, and we have seen, in our time, the stolid resistance offered by agricultural labourers to every kind of novel machine used in farming, so that we can more pity, than blame, these deluded, and ignorant, cloth-workers, because they were not so far-seeing as the manufacturers.

It was mysteriously whispered about on the evening of the 18th of November, that a plot had been discovered, having for its object the assassination of the King; and next day the news was confirmed – Colonel Despard, of whom I have before spoken (see p. 37), was at the head of this plot. He was an Irishman, and had seen military service in the West Indies, on the Spanish Main, and in the Bay of Honduras, where he acted as Superintendent of the English Colony; but, owing to their complaints, he was recalled, and an inquiry into his conduct was refused. This, no doubt, soured him, and made him disaffected, causing him to espouse the doctrines of the French Revolution. On account of his seditious behaviour, he was arrested under the “Suspension of the Habeas Corpus” Act (1794), and passed some years in prison; and, as we have seen, preferred continuing there, to having a conditional pardon. On his liberation, this misguided man could not keep quiet, but must needs plot, in a most insane manner, not for any good to be done to his country, to redress no grievances, but simply to assassinate the King, forgetting that another was ready to take the place of the slaughtered monarch.

Of course, among a concourse of petty rogues, one was traitor, a discharged sergeant of the Guards; and, in consequence of his revelations to Sir Richard Ford, the chief magistrate at Bow Street, a raid, at night, was made upon the Oakley Arms, Oakley Street, Lambeth (still in existence at No. 72), and there they found Colonel Despard and thirty-two labouring men and soldiers – English, Irish, and Scotch – all of whom they took into custody, and, after being examined for eight hours, the Colonel was committed to the County Gaol, twelve of his companions (six being soldiers) to Tothill Fields Bridewell, and twenty others to the New Prison, Clerkenwell.

Next day he was brought up, heavily ironed, before the Privy Council, and committed to Newgate for trial, the charge against him being, that he administered a secret oath to divers persons, binding them to an active cooperation in the performance of certain treasonable, and murderous, practices. As a matter of history, his fate belongs to the next year, but 1803 was so full of incident that it is better to finish off this pitiful rogue (for he was no patriot) at once.

On the 20th of January, 1803, the Grand Jury brought in a true bill against him and twelve others, on the charge of high treason; and on the 5th of February their trial, by Special Commission, commenced, at the Sessions House, Clerkenwell, before four judges. They were tried on eight counts, the fifth and sixth of which charged them with “intending to lie in wait, and attack the King, and treating of the time, means, and place, for effecting the same;” also “with a conspiracy to attack and seize upon the Bank, Tower, &c., to possess themselves of arms, in order to kill and destroy

the soldiers and others, His Majesty's liege subjects," &c. The trial lasted until 8 a.m. on the 10th of February, when Despard, who was found guilty on the 8th, and nine others, were sentenced to be hanged, disembowelled, beheaded, and quartered. But the day before they were executed, it was "thought fit to remit part of the sentence, viz., taking out and burning their bowels before their faces, and dividing the bodies into four parts." They were to be hanged, and afterwards beheaded; and this sentence was fully carried out on Despard, and six of his accomplices, on the 21st of February, 1803.

And so the year came to an end, but not quietly; clouds were distinctly visible in the horizon to those who watched the political weather. England hesitated to fulfil her portion of the treaty, with regard to the evacuation of Malta; and the relations of Lord Whitworth, our Ambassador, and the French Court, became somewhat strained.

Still the Three per Cents. kept up – in January 68, July 70, December 69; and bread stuffs were decidedly cheaper than in the preceding year – wheat averaging 68s. per. quarter, barley 33s., oats 20s., whilst the average quartern loaf was 1s.

CHAPTER VIII

1803

Strained relations with France – Prosecution and trial of Jean Peltier for libel against Napoleon – Rumours of war – King’s proclamation – Napoleon’s rudeness to Lord Whitworth – Hoax on the Lord Mayor – Rupture with France – Return of Lord Whitworth, and departure of the French Ambassador.

POLITICAL Caricatures, or, as they should rather be called, Satirical Prints, form very good indications as to the feeling of the country; and, on the commencement of 1803, they evidently pointed to a rupture with France, owing to the ambition of Napoleon. Lord Whitworth found him anything but pleasant to deal with. He was always harping on the license of the British press, and showed his ignorance of our laws and constitution by demanding its suppression. Hence sprung the prosecution, in our Law Courts, of one Jean Peltier, who conducted a journal in the French language – called *L’Ambigu*.

Napoleon’s grumbling at the license of our press, was somewhat amusing, for the French press was constantly publishing libels against England, and, as Lord Hawkesbury remarked, the whole period, since the signing of the treaty, had been “one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult, on the part of the French Government.” Still, to show every desire to act most impartially towards Napoleon, although the relations with his government were most strained, Jean Peltier was indicted; and his trial was commenced in the Court of King’s Bench, on the 21st of February, 1803, before Lord Ellenborough and a special jury.

The information was filed by the Attorney General, and set forth: “That peace existed between Napoleon Bonaparte and our Lord the King; but that M. Peltier, intending to destroy the friendship so existing, and to despoil said Napoleon of his consular dignity, did devise, print, and publish, in the French language, to the tenor following” – what was undoubtedly calculated to stir up the French against their ruler. The Attorney General, in his speech, details the libels, and gives the following description of the paper. “The publication is called *The Ambigu, or atrocious and amusing Varieties*. It has on its frontispiece a sphinx, with a great variety of Egyptian emblematical figures, the meaning of which may not be very easy to discover, or material to inquire after. But there is a circumstance which marks this publication, namely, the head of the sphinx, with a crown on it. It is a head, which I cannot pretend to say, never having seen Bonaparte himself, but only from the different pictures of him, one cannot fail, at the first blush, to suppose it was intended as the portrait of the First Consul,” &c.

It is very questionable, nowadays, whether such a press prosecution would have been inaugurated, or, if so, whether it would have been successful, yet there was some pretty hard hitting. “And now this tiger, who dares to call himself the founder, or the regenerator, of France, enjoys the fruit of your labours, as spoil taken from the enemy. This man, sole master in the midst of those who surround him, has ordained lists of proscription, and put in execution, banishment without sentence, by means of which there are punishments for the French who have not yet seen the light. Proscribed families give birth to children, oppressed before they are born; their misery has commenced before their life. His wickedness increases every day.” The Attorney General gave many similar passages, which it would be too tedious to reproduce, winding up with the following quotation: “Kings are at his feet, begging his favour. He is desired to secure the supreme authority in his hands. The French, nay, Kings themselves, hasten to congratulate him, and would take the oath to him like subjects. He is proclaimed Chief Consul for life. As for me, far from envying his lot, let him name, I consent to it, his worthy successor. Carried on the shield, let him be elected Emperor! Finally (and Romulus recalls

the thing to mind), I wish, on the morrow, he may have his apotheosis. Amen.' Now, gentlemen, he says, Romulus suggests that idea. The fate that is ascribed to him is well known to all of us – according to ancient history, he was assassinated.”

Peltier’s counsel, a Mr. Mackintosh, defended him very ably, asking pertinently: “When Robespierre presided over the Committee of Public Safety, was not an Englishman to canvass his measures? Supposing we had then been at peace with France, would the Attorney General have filed an information against any one who had expressed due abhorrence of the furies of that sanguinary monster? When Marat demanded 250,000 heads in the Convention, must we have contemplated that request without speaking of it in the terms it provoked? When Carrier placed five hundred children in a square at Lyons, to fall by the musketry of the soldiery, and from their size the balls passed over them, the little innocents flew to the knees of the soldiery for protection, when they were butchered by the bayonet! In relating this event, must man restrain his just indignation, and stifle the expression of indignant horror such a dreadful massacre must excite? Would the Attorney General in his information state, that when Maximilian Robespierre was first magistrate of France, as President of the Committee of Public Safety, that those who spoke of him as his crimes deserved, did it with a wicked and malignant intention to defame and vilify him...

“In the days of Cromwell, he twice sent a satirist upon his government to be tried by a jury, who sat where this jury now sit. The scaffold on which the blood of the monarch was shed was still in their view. The clashing of the bayonets which turned out the Parliament was still within their hearing; yet they maintained their integrity, and twice did they send his Attorney General out of court, with disgrace and defeat.”

However, all the eloquence, and ingenuity, of his counsel failed to prevent a conviction. Peltier was found guilty and, time being taken to consider judgment, he was bound over to appear, and receive judgment when called upon. That time never came, for war broke out between France and England, and Peltier was either forgotten, or his offence was looked upon in a totally different light.

The English Government looked with great distrust upon Napoleon, and the increasing armament on the Continent, and temporized as to the evacuation of Malta, to the First Consul’s intense disgust. But the Ministry of that day were watchful, and jealous of England’s honour, and as early as the 8th of March, the King sent the following message to Parliament:

“George R

“His Majesty thinks it necessary to acquaint the House of Commons, that, as very considerable military preparations are carrying on in the ports of France and Holland, he has judged it expedient to adopt additional measures of precaution for the security of his dominions; though the preparations to which His Majesty refers are avowedly directed to Colonial service, yet, as discussions of great importance are now subsisting between His Majesty and the French Government, the result of which must, at present, be uncertain, His Majesty is induced to make this communication to his faithful Commons, in the full persuasion that, whilst they partake of His Majesty’s earnest and unvarying solicitude for the continuance of peace, he may rely with perfect confidence on their public spirit, and liberality, to enable His Majesty to adopt such measures as circumstances may appear to require, for supporting the honour of his Crown, and the essential interests of his people.

“G. R.”

An address in accordance with the message was agreed to by both Houses, and, on the 10th, the King sent Parliament another message, to the effect he intended to draw out, and embody, the Militia. On the 11th of March the Commons voted the following resolution, “That an additional number of

10,000 men be employed for the sea service, for eleven lunar months, to commence from the 26th of February, 1803, including 3400 Marines.”

Events were marching quickly. On the 13th of March Napoleon behaved very rudely to Lord Whitworth; in fact it was almost a parallel case with the King of Prussia’s rudeness to M. Benedetti on the 13th of July, 1870. But let our Ambassador tell his own story:

**“Despatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord
Hawkesbury dated Paris the 14th of March, 1803**

“My Lord,

“The messenger, Mason, went on Saturday with my despatches of that date, and, until yesterday, Sunday, I saw no one likely to give me any further information, such as I could depend upon, as to the effect which His Majesty’s Message had produced upon the First Consul.

“At the Court which was held at the Tuileries upon that day, he accosted me, evidently under very considerable agitation. He began by asking me if I had any news from England. I told him that I had received letters from your lordship two days ago. He immediately said, ‘And so you are determined to go to war.’ ‘No!’ I replied, ‘we are too sensible of the advantages of peace.’ ‘Nous avons,’ said he, ‘déjà fait la guerre pendant quinze ans.’ As he seemed to wait for an answer, I observed only, ‘C’en est déjà trop.’ ‘Mais,’ said he, ‘vous voulez la faire encore quinze années, et vous m’y forcez.’ I told him that was very far from His Majesty’s intentions. He then proceeded to Count Marcow, and the Chevalier Azara, who were standing together, at a little distance from me, and said to them, ‘Les Anglais veulent la guerre, mais s’ils sont les premiers à tirer l’épée, je serai le dernier à la remettre. Ils ne respectent pas les traités. Il faut dorénavant les couvrir de crêpe noir.’ He then went his round. In a few minutes he came back to me, and resumed the conversation, if such it can be called, by saying something civil to me. He began again: ‘Pourquoi des armémens? Contre qui des mesures de précaution? Je n’ai pas un seul vaisseau de ligne dans les ports de France; mais, si vous voulez armer, j’armerai aussi; si vous voulez vous battre, je me battraï aussi. Vous pourrez peut-être tuer la France, mais jamais l’intimider.’ ‘On ne voudrait,’ said I ‘ni l’un, ni l’autre. On voudrait vivre en bonne intelligence avec elle.’ ‘Il faut donc respecter les traités,’ replied he; ‘malheur à ceux qui ne respectent pas les traités; ils en serait responsable à toute l’Europe.’ He was too much agitated to make it advisable for me to prolong the conversation; I therefore made no answer, and he retired to his apartment, repeating the last phrase.

“It is to be remarked, that all this passed loud enough to be overheard by two hundred people who were present, and I am persuaded that there was not a single person, who did not feel the extreme impropriety of his conduct, and the total want of dignity as well as of decency, on the occasion.

“I propose taking the first opportunity of speaking to M. Talleyrand on this subject.

“I have the honour to be, &c.

“(Signed) Whitworth.”

He did call on Talleyrand, who assured him that it was very far from the First Consul’s intention to distress him, but that he had felt himself personally insulted by the charges which were brought against him by the English Government; *and that it was incumbent upon him to take the first*

opportunity of exculpating himself, in the presence of the ministers of the different Powers of Europe: and Talleyrand assured Lord Whitworth that nothing similar would again occur.

And so things went on, the French wishing to gain time, the English temporizing also, well knowing that the peace would soon be broken.

We are not so virtuous ourselves, in the matter of false news, as to be able to speak of the following Stock Exchange *ruse* in terms of proper indignation. It was boldly conceived, and well carried out.

On the 5th of May, 1803, at half-past eight in the morning, a man, booted and spurred, and having all the appearance of just having come off a long journey, rushed up to the Mansion House, and inquired for the Lord Mayor, saying he was a messenger from the Foreign Office, and had a letter for his lordship. When informed that he was not within, he said he should leave the letter, and told the servant particularly to place it where the Lord Mayor should get it the moment of his return. Of course the thing was well carried out; the letter bore Lord Hawkesbury's official seal, and purported to be from him. It ran thus:

“Downing Street, 8 a.m.

“To the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor

“Lord Hawkesbury presents his compliments to the Lord Mayor, and is happy to inform him that the negotiations between this country, and the French Republic, have been amicably adjusted.”

His lordship made inquiries as to the messenger, and, as the whole thing seemed to be genuine, he wrote one copy, which was straightway stuck up outside the Mansion House, and sent another to Lloyd's, going himself to the Stock Exchange with the original, and, about 10 a.m., wrote to Lord Hawkesbury expressing his satisfaction. Before a reply could be obtained, and the whole fraud exposed, Mr. Goldsmid called at the Mansion House, saw the letter, and pronounced it a forgery. Meanwhile, the excitement on the Stock Exchange had been terrible. Consols opened at 69, and rose, before noon, to over 70, only to sink, when the truth came out, to 63. If the bargains had been upheld, it would have been hopeless ruin to many; so a committee of the Stock Exchange decided that all transactions on that day, whether for money or time, were null and void. The perpetrators of this fraud, consequently, did not reap any benefit; nor were they ever found out, although the Lord Mayor offered a reward of £500.

The Caricaturists were, at this time, very busy with their satirical pictures, some of which are very good, especially one by Gillray (May 18, 1803) called “Armed Heroes.” Addington, in military costume, with huge cocked hat and sword, bestrides a fine sirloin of the “Roast Beef of Old England,” and is vapouring at little Bonaparte, who, on the other side of the Channel, is drawing his sword, and hungrily eyeing the beef. Says he:

“Ah, ha! sacrè dieu! vat do I see yonder?
Dat look so invitingly Red and de Vite?
Oh, by Gar! I see 'tis de Roast Beef of Londres,
Vich I vill chop up, at von letel bite!”

Addington alternately blusters and cringes, “Who's afraid? damme! *O Lord, O Lord, what a Fiery Fellow he is!* Who's afraid? damme! *O dear! what will become of ye Roast Beef?* Damme! who's afraid? *O dear! O dear!*” Other figures are introduced, but they are immaterial.

But the crisis was rapidly approaching. On the 12th of May Lord Whitworth wrote Lord Hawkesbury: “The remainder of this day passed without receiving any communication from M. de Talleyrand. Upon this, I determined to demand my passports, by an official note, which I sent this

morning by Mr. Mandeville, in order that I might leave Paris in the evening. At two I renewed my demand of passports, and was told I should have them immediately. They arrived at five o'clock, and I propose setting out as soon as the carriages are ready." He did not, however, land at Dover until a quarter to twelve on the night of the 17th of May, where he found the French Ambassador, General Andreossi, almost ready to embark. This he did early in the morning of the 19th of May, being accompanied to the water side by Lord Whitworth.

CHAPTER IX

Declaration of War against France – Napoleon makes all the English in France prisoners of war – Patriotic Fund – Squibs on the threatened invasion – “The New Moses” – Handbill signed “A Shopkeeper” – “Britain’s War-song” – “Who is Bonaparte?” – “Shall Frenchmen rule over us?” – “An Invasion Sketch.”

ON THE 16th of May the King sent a message to Parliament announcing his rupture with the French Government, and the recall of his ambassador, and laying before them the papers relating to the previous negotiations; and on the 18th of May, His Majesty’s Declaration of War against France (a somewhat lengthy document) was laid before Parliament. No time was lost, for, on the 20th of May, Lord Nelson sailed from Portsmouth in the *Victory*, accompanied by the *Amphion*, to take the command in the Mediterranean; and prizes were being brought in daily.

Whether it was in reprisal for this, or not, there are no means of telling, but Napoleon, on the 22nd of May, took the most unjustifiable step of making prisoners of war of all the English in France, and Holland, where, also, an embargo was laid on all English vessels. This detention of harmless visitors was unprecedented, and aroused universal reprobation. They were not well treated, and, besides, were harassed by being moved from place to place.

In the *Annual Register*, vol. xlv. p. 399, we read: “In consequence of orders from the Government, the English, confined at Rouen, have been conducted to Dourlens, six miles from Amiens. The English that were at Calais when Bonaparte visited that place, have all been sent to Lisle. The English prisoners at Brussels have been ordered to repair to Valenciennes. The great Consul, like a politic shepherd, continually removes the pen of his bleating English flock from spot to spot, well knowing that the soil will everywhere be enriched by their temporary residence. How their wool will look when they return from their summer pasture is of little consequence!”

It is not my province to write on the progress of the war, except incidentally, and as it affected England socially. The old Volunteer Corps, which had been so hastily disbanded, again came to the fore, in augmented strength, and better organization; but of them I shall treat in another place. As both men, and money, constitute the sinews of war, the volunteers found one, the merchants helped with the other. On the 20th of July the merchants, underwriters, and subscribers of Lloyd’s, held a meeting for the purpose of “setting on foot a general subscription, on an extended scale, for the encouragement and relief of those who may be engaged in the defence of their country, and who may suffer in the common cause; and of those who may signalize themselves during this present most important contest.” The Society of Lloyd’s gave £20,000 Stock in the Three per Cent. Consols, and over £12,000 was subscribed at once, five subscriptions each of £1000 coming from such well-known City names as Sir F. Baring, John J. Angerstein, B. and A. Goldsmid, John Thomson, and Thomson Bonar. Other loyal meetings took place, and everything was done that could be done, to arouse the enthusiasm of the people, and the spirit of patriotism.

One method was by distributing heart-stirring handbills, serious or humorous, but all having the strongest patriotic basis. Of these very many hundreds are preserved in the British Museum,¹⁷ and very curious they are. That they answered their purpose no one could doubt, for, although the threatened invasion of England was a patent fact, to which no one could shut their eyes, nor doubt its gravity, these handbills kept alive an enthusiasm that was worth anything at the time, and it was an enthusiasm, that although in its style somewhat bombastic, and with some insular prejudice, was deep-seated and real; and, had the invasion ever taken place, there can be little doubt but that, humanly

¹⁷ Notably the following, 806. k. 1. — 1 – 154 Squibs on Bonaparte’s threatened Invasion; 1890 e. Miss Banks’ Collection, Threatened Invasion; and 554 f. 25 Squibs on the Threatened French Invasion.

speaking, it would have resulted in a disastrous defeat for Napoleon, or, had it been otherwise, it would not have been the fault of the defenders, for, like Cromwell's Ironsides, "Every man had a heart in him."

In these handbills, Bonaparte was accused of many things – that he became Mohammedan, poisoned his sick at Jaffa, with many other things which do not come within the scope of this work, and have been fully treated in my "English Caricature and Satire on Napoleon I.," and which I do not wish to reproduce; only, naturally, Napoleon's name can hardly be kept out, and, as I took the best for that book, this must not suffer therefrom. They are of all dates, as can be seen from internal evidence, but very few are dated, so that they may be taken nearly haphazard. The following, from its mention of Lord Whitworth, and his recall, is evidently an early one:

“The New Moses

or

“Bonaparte's Ten Commandments

“Translated from a French Manuscript

by

Soliman the Traveller

“And when the great man came from Egypt, he used cunning and force to subject the people. The good as well as the wicked of the land trembled before him, because he had won the hearts of all the fighting men; and after he had succeeded in many of his schemes, his heart swelled with pride, and he sought how to ensnare the people more and more, to be the greatest man under the sun.

“The multitude of the people were of four kinds: some resembled blind men, that cannot see; some were fearful, who trembled before him; others courageous, and for the good of the people, but too weak in number; and others yet, who were as wicked as the great man himself. And when he was at the head of the deluded nation, he gave strict laws and the following commandments, which were read before a multitude of people, and in a full congregation of all his priests —

“1. Ye Frenchmen, ye shall have no other commander above me; for I, Bonaparte, am the supreme head of the nation, and will make all nations about you bow to you, and obey me as your Lord and Commander.

“2. Ye shall not have any graven images upon your Coin, in marble, wood, or metal, which might represent any person above me; nor shall ye acknowledge any person to excel me, whether he be among the living, or the dead, whether he be in the happy land of the enlightened French, or in the cursed island of the dull English; for I, the Chief Consul of France, am a jealous hero, and visit disobedience of an individual upon a whole nation, and of a father upon the children, and upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and show mercy unto them that love me, and humble themselves.

“3. Ye shall not trifle with my name, nor take it in vain; nor shall you suffer that any other nation, treat it disrespectfully; for I will be the sole commander of the earth, and make you triumph over your enemies.

“4. Remember that ye keep the days of prayers, and pray for me as the head of the nation, and the future conqueror of the base English. Ye shall pray fervently with your faces cast upon the ground, and not look at the priest when he pronounces my name; for I am a jealous hero, and delight in my priests because they are humble, and I have regarded the lowliness of their hearts, and forgiven them all their past iniquities. And, ye priests, remember the power of him who made you his creatures, and do your duty.

“5. Respect and honour all French heroes, that ye may find mercy in mine eyes for all your iniquities, and that ye may live in the land in which I, the Lord your Commander, lives.

“6. Ye shall not murder each other, save it be by my own commands, for purposes that may be known to me alone; but of your enemies, and all those nations that will not acknowledge your, and my greatness, ye may kill an infinite number; for that is a pleasing sight in the eyes of your supreme Commander.

“7. Ye shall not commit adultery at home, whatever ye may do in the land of the infidels, and the stiff-necked people; for they are an abomination to the Lord your Commander.

“8. Ye shall not steal at home, but suppress your covetousness and insatiable desire for plunder until ye may arrive in the land of your enemies. Ye shall neither steal from them with indiscretion, but seem to give with the left hand, when the right taketh.

“9. Ye shall not bear false witness against your neighbour, if he should distinguish himself in the land of the enemies.

“10. Ye shall not covet anything of your neighbour, but everything of your enemies – his jewels, his gold, his silver, his horse or ass, his maid, his daughter, his wife, or anything in which your hearts find delight; and ye may take it, but still with cunning; for the Lord your Commander loveth mildness more than strength, to please the people when he plunders. Use the sword in battle, cunning after it; look for plunder, but subject the people to me. Herein lie all my Commandments, and those who keep them shall be protected by my power, and prosper in all their undertakings.

“When the reading of these Commandments were over, the multitude gazed with amazement. There were present the gentiles, and ambassadors of various nations, and many looked at each other as if they were looking for the sense of what they had heard. The Chief Priest, however, more cunning than all the rest, thus broke silence:

“*Bishop.* Our mouths shall glorify thee for ever; for thou hast regarded the lowliness of our hearts, and hast raised thy servants from the dust.

“*Pope.* And I will support your holy endeavours; for without him I would not sit upon the holy seat of Peter.

“*All (Priests and many of the Multitude).* Praise be to him, for he has mercy on those that are humble, and fear him – throughout all the world, and all nations but the English, who are an abomination in his sight.

“*Bishop of Amiens.* Bow to him, for he commands ye.

“*An Italian to a Swiss.* I bow to him, for I fear and dread him.

“*A Dutchman (to the two former).* Ay, ay! I must bow, at present, with you; but I would rather make him bow before me and my nation.

“*French Gentleman.* Dat be very right to you! Vy vere ye sush fools, and bigger fools yet, as we French, to submit to him, and even to court his tyranny?

“*Bonaparte (in one corner of the hall, and not hearing part of the preceding discourse, to one of his slaves).* Do you observe that proud Englishman?

“*1st Slave.* He neither bows, nor does he seem to approve of the homage paid to thee by the worshippers.

“*2nd Slave*. Ay, he is one of the stiff-necked Englishmen.

“*Bonaparte*. And so are all of his breed, except some of the meanest rabble.

“*Lord Whitworth* (to himself). I shall bow to thee with all my heart and soul, as soon as I may have the pleasure of being recalled.

“*Bonaparte*. This is an insult which shall be revenged on the whole nation.”

There is not much “go” in the above, but it is mild, as being one of the first; they soon developed.

“Fellow Citizens,

“Bonaparte threatens to invade us; he promises to enrich his soldiers with our property, to glut their lust with our Wives and Daughters. To incite his Hell Hounds to execute his vengeance, he has *sworn* to permit everything. Shall we Merit by our Cowardice the titles of sordid Shopkeepers, Cowardly Scum, and Dastardly Wretches, which in every proclamation he gives us? No! we will loudly give him *the lie*: Let us make ourselves ready to shut our Shops, and march to give him the reception his malicious calumnies deserve. Let every brave young fellow instantly join the *Army* or *Navy*; and those among us who, from being married, or so occupied in business, cannot, let us join some Volunteer Corps, where we may learn the use of arms, and yet attend our business. Let us encourage recruiting in our neighbourhood, and loudly silence the tongues of those whom Ignorance or Defection (if any such there be) lead them to doubt of the attempt to invade or inveigh against the measures taken to resist it. By doing this, and feeling confidence in ourselves, we shall probably prevent the attempt; or, if favoured by a dark night, the enemy should reach our shores, our Unanimity and Strength will paralyze his efforts, and render him an easy prey to our brave *Army*. Let *us*, in families and neighbourhood, thus contribute to so desirable an event, and the *blood-stained banners of the Vaunted Conquerors of Europe will soon be hung up in our Churches, the honourable Trophies of our brave Army*— an Army ever Victorious when not doubled in numbers, and the only Army who can stand the charge of Bayonets. What *Army* ever withstood THEIRS!!! Let the welfare of our Country animate all, and ‘come the World in Arms against us, and we’ll shock ‘em!’

“A Shopkeeper.”

“Prave ‘orts,” but they answered their purpose. It was an article of faith that an Englishman was certainly a match for two ordinary foes, perhaps three, and this, no doubt, was to a certain extent true. The history of that time shows victories, both by land and sea, gained against fearful odds. What then might not have been done under such stimulant as

“BRITAIN’S WAR-SONG

“Britons rouse; with Speed advance;
Seize the Musket, grasp the Lance;
See the Hell-born Sons of France!

Now Murder, Lust, and Rapine reign
Hark! the Shriek o’er Infants slain!
See the desolated Plain!

Now’s the Day, and now’s the Hour,
See the Front of Battle lower!

See curs'd Buonaparte's Power!

Who will be a Traitor Knave?
Who can fill a Coward's Grave?
Who so base as live a Slave?

Rush indignant on the Foe!
Lay the Fiend Invaders low!
Vengeance is on every Blow!

Forward! lo, the Dastards flee;
Drive them headlong to the Sea;
Britons ever will be free!
Huzza, Huzza, Huzza!"

“Who is BONAPARTE?”

“Who is he? Why an obscure Corsican, that began his Murderous Career with turning his Artillery upon the Citizens of Paris – who boasted in his Public Letters from Pavia, of *having shot the whole Municipality*– who put the *helpless, innocent, and unoffending* Inhabitants of Alexandria, *Man, Woman, and Child*, to the Sword, till *Slaughter* was tired of its work – who, against all the Laws of War, put near 4000 Turks to death, in cold blood, after their Surrender – who destroyed his own Comrades by *Poison*, when lying sick and wounded in Hospitals, because they were unable to further the plan of Pillage which carried him to St. Jean d’Acre – who, having thus stained the profession of Arms, and solemnly and publicly renounced the religious Faith of Christendom, and embraced Mohametanism, again pretended to embrace the Christian Religion – who, on his return to France, destroyed the Representative System – who, after seducing the Polish Legion into the Service of his pretended Republic, treacherously transferred it to St. Domingo, where it has perished to a Man, either by Disease or the Sword – and who, finally, as it were to fill the Measure of his Arrogance, has *Dared* to attack what is most dear and useful to civilized Society, the Freedom of the Press and the Freedom of Speech, by proposing to restrict the *British Press* and the Deliberations of the *British Senate*. Such is the *Tyrant* we are called upon to oppose; and such is the Fate which awaits England should We suffer him and his degraded Slaves to pollute Our Soil.”

“Shall, Frenchmen rule o’er us? King Edward said, No!

And No! said King Harry, and Queen Bess she said, No!
And No! said Old England, and No! she says still;
They never shall rule Us; let them try if they will.
Hearts of Oak we are all, both our Ships and our Men;
Then steady, Boys, steady,
Let’s always be ready;
We have trimmed them before, let us trim them again.

Shall Frenchmen rule o’er us? King George he says No!
And No! say our Lords, and our Commons they say No!
And No! say All Britons of every degree;
They shall never rule Britons, United and Free.

Hearts of Oak, &c.

Shall Frenchmen rule us, the Free Sons of the Waves?
Shall England be ruled by a Nation of Slaves?
Shall the Corsican Tyrant, who bound on their Chains,
Govern Us, in the room of Our Good King who reigns?

Hearts of Oak, &c.

Though He'd fain stop our Press, yet we'll publish his shame;
We'll proclaim to the World his detestable Fame;
How the Traitor Renounced his Redeemer, and then
How he murder'd his Pris'ners and Poison'd his Men.

Hearts of Oak, &c.

Then Down with the Tyrant, and Down with his Rod!
Let us stand by our Freedom, our King, and our God!
Let us stand by our Children, our Wives, and our Homes!
Then Woe to the Tyrant Whenever he Comes!

Hearts of Oak, &c."

The following is particularly good, as it gives a very vivid description of what might have occurred, had Napoleon's threatened invasion been successful, and it will favourably contrast with its congener of modern times, "The Battle of Dorking."

"Our Invasion Sketch

"If there be one Person so lost to all Love for his Country, and the British Constitution, as to suppose that his Person or his Property, his Rights and his Freedom, would be respected under a Foreign Yoke, let him contemplate the following Picture – not Overcharged, but drawn from Scenes afforded by every Country: Italy, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Hanover, which has been exposed to the Miseries of a French Invasion.

"London, 10 Thermidor Year –

General Bonaparte made his public entrance into the Capital, over London Bridge, upon a charger from his Britannic Majesty's Stables at Hanover, preceded by a detachment of Mamelukes. He stopped upon the bridge for a few seconds, to survey the number of ships in the river; and, beckoning to one of his Aide-de-camps, ordered the French flags to be hoisted above the English – the English sailors on board, who attempted to resist the execution of this order, were bayoneted, and thrown overboard.

"When he came to the Bank, he smiled with Complaisance upon a detachment of French Grenadiers, who had been sent to load all the bullion in waggons, which had previously been put in requisition by the Prefect of London, Citizen Mengaud, for the purpose of being conveyed to France. The Directors of the Bank were placed under a strong guard of French soldiers, in the Bank parlour.

"From the Bank, the First Consul proceeded, in grand procession, along Cheapside, St. Paul's, Ludgate Hill, Fleet Street, and the Strand, to St. James's Palace. He there held a grand Circle, which

was attended by all his officers, whose congratulations he received upon his entrance into the Capital of these once proud Islanders. Bonaparte, previous to his arrival, appointed two Prefects, one for London, and one for Westminster. Citizen Mengaud, late Commissary at Calais, is the Prefect of London, and Citizen Rapp, of Westminster. He also nominated Citizen Fouché to the office of Minister of Police. The Mansion-house has been selected for the residence of the Prefect of London, and Northumberland House,¹⁸ for the residence of the Prefect of Westminster. As it has been deemed necessary to have the Minister of Police always near the person of the First Consul, Marlborough House has been given to Citizen Fouché. Lodgings have been prepared elsewhere, for the late owners of that splendid palace.

“London was ordered to be illuminated, and detachments of French Dragoons paraded the principal streets, and squares, all night.

“11 Thermidor

“Bonaparte, at five o’clock in the morning, reviewed the French troops on the Esplanade at the Horse Guards. A Council was afterwards held, at which the following Proclamations were drawn up, and ordered to be posted in every part of the City:

“By Order of the First Consul.“Proclamation

“St. James’s Palace.

“Inhabitants of London, be tranquil. The Hero, the Pacificator, is come among you. His moderation, and his mercy, are too well known to you. He delights in restoring peace and liberty to all mankind. Banish all alarms. Pursue your usual occupations. Put on the habit of joy and gladness.

“The First Consul orders,

“That all the Inhabitants of London and Westminster remain in their own houses for three days.

“That no molestation shall be offered to the measures which the French Soldiers will be required to execute.

“All persons disobeying these Orders, will be immediately carried before the Minister of Police.

“(Signed) Bonaparte.

“The Minister of Police, Fouché.’

“Proclamation

“To the French Soldiers

“Soldiers! Bonaparte has led you to the Shores, and the Capital of this proud island. He promised to reward his brave companions in arms. He promised to give

¹⁸ On the site of which The Grand Hotel, Charing Cross, now stands.

up the Capital of the British Empire to pillage. Brave Comrades, take your reward. London, the second Carthage, is given up to pillage for three days.

“(Signed) Bonaparte.

“*The Minister of War, par interim, Angereau.*’

“The acclamations of the French Soldiery —*Vive Bonaparte—le Héros—le Pacificateur—le Magnanime*— resound through every street.

“12th, 13th, 14th Thermidor

“London Pillaged! The doors of private houses forced. Bands of drunken soldiers dragging wives, and daughters, from the hands of husbands and fathers. Many husbands, who had the *temerity* to resist, butchered in the presence of their Children. Flames seen in a hundred different places, bursting from houses which had been set fire to, by the *vivacity* of the troops. Churches broken open, and the Church plate plundered – the pews and altars converted into Stabling. Four Bishops murdered, who had taken refuge in Westminster Abbey – the screams of women and of children mix with the cries of the Soldiers —*Vive la Republique! Vive Bonaparte!*

“St. Martin’s Church converted into a *depôt* for the property acquired by the pillage of the Soldiery.

“15 Thermidor

“A proclamation published by the First Consul, promising *protection* to the inhabitants.

“The houses of the principal Nobility and Gentry appropriated to the use of the French Generals. Every house is required to furnish so many rations of bread and meat for the troops.

“At a Council of State, presided over by Bonaparte, the two Houses of Parliament are solemnly abolished, and ordered to be replaced by a Senate, and a Council of State. General Massena appointed Provisional President of the former, and General Dessolles of the latter. The Courts of Law are directed to discontinue their sittings, and are replaced by Military Tribunals.

“16 Thermidor

“A contribution of twenty millions ordered to be levied upon London. A deputation was sent to Bonaparte to represent the impossibility of complying with the demand, the Bank and the Capital having been pillaged. After waiting in the ante-chamber of the Consul for four hours, the deputation are informed by a Mameluke guard, that Bonaparte will not see them. Two hundred of the principal Citizens ordered to be imprisoned till the Contribution is paid.

“17 Thermidor

“A plot discovered by Fouché against the First Consul, and three hundred, supposed to be implicated in it, sent to the Tower.

“Insurrections in different parts of the Capital, on account of the excesses of the Soldiers, and the contribution of twenty millions. Cannon planted at all the principal avenues, and a heavy fire of grape shot kept up against the insurgents.

“Lords Nelson, St. Vincent, and Duncan, Messrs. Addington, Pitt, Sheridan, Grey, twenty Peers and Commons, among the latter is Sir Sidney Smith, tried by the Military Tribunals for having been concerned in the *insurrection* against France, and sentenced to be shot. Sentence was immediately carried into execution in Hyde Park.

“18 Thermidor

“The Dock-yards ordered to send all the timber, hemp, anchors, masts, &c., to France. The relations of the British sailors at sea, sent to prison till the ships are brought into port, and placed at the disposal of the French. Detachments dispatched to the different Counties to disarm the people.

“The Island ordered to be divided into departments, and military divisions – the name of London to be changed for *Bonapart-opolis*– and the appellation of the Country to be altered from Great Britain, to that of *La France insulaire*. – Edinburgh to take the name of *Lucien-ville*– Dublin, that of *Massen-opolis*.

“BRITONS! can this be endured? shall we suffer ourselves thus to be parcelled off? I hear you one and all say, No! No! No! To your Tents, O Israel! – for BRITONS NEVER WILL BE SLAVES.”

CHAPTER X

Invasion Squibs continued – “The Freeman’s Oath” – “John Bull and Bonaparte” – “The Eve of Invasion” – “A Biography of Napoleon” – “Britons, strike home” – Enrolment of 400,000 Volunteers – Napoleon at Calais – Apprehension of vagrants, and compulsorily recruiting the Army and Navy with them – Patriotism of the nation – Preparations in case of reverse – Beacons – Spies – The French prisoners – Emmett’s rebellion in Ireland – Its prompt suppression – General Fast – Relief of the Roman Catholics.

SEE yet another:

“The Consequences of Buonaparte’s succeeding in his designs against this Country: – Universal Pillage, Men of all parties slaughtered, Women of all Ranks violated, Children Murdered, Trade Ruined, the Labouring Classes thrown out of Employment, Famine with all its Horrors, Despotism Triumphant. The remaining Inhabitants Carried away by Ship Loads to Foreign Lands. *Britons look before you.*”

There were sham playbills such as – “Theatre Royal, England. In Rehearsal, and meant to be speedily attempted, A Farce in one Act, called The Invasion of England. Principal Buffo, Mr. Buonaparte; being his First (and most likely his last) Appearance on the Stage,” &c. “In Rehearsal, Theatre Royal of the United Kingdoms. Some dark, foggy night, about November next, will be Attempted, by a Strolling Company of French Vagrants, an Old Pantomimic Farce, called Harlequin’s Invasion, or the Disappointed Banditti,” &c. “Theatre Royal, the Ocean. In preparation, A *magnificent* Naval *and* Military SPECTACLE, superior to anything of the kind ever witnessed; consisting of an immense display of Flat-bottomed Boats Burning, Sinking, &c., to be called BUONAPARTE; or The Free-Booter running away; the Triumph of the British Flag,” &c.

“Our bosoms we’ll bare for the glorious strife,
And our oath is recorded on high;
To prevail in the cause that is dearer than life,
Or, crush’d in its ruins, to die.
Then rise, fellow freemen, and stretch the right hand,
And swear to prevail in your dear native land.

’Tis the home we hold sacred is laid to our trust,
God bless the green isle of the brave,
Should a conqueror tread on our forefathers’ dust,
It would rouse the old dead from their grave.
Then rise, fellow freemen, and stretch the right hand,
And swear to prevail in your dear native land.

In a Briton’s sweet home shall the spoiler abide,
Prophaning its loves and its charms?
Shall a Frenchman insult the lov’d fair at our side?
To arms! Oh, my country, to arms!
Then rise, fellow freemen, and stretch the right hand,
And swear to prevail in your dear native land.

Shall Tyrants enslave us, my Countrymen? No!

Their heads to the sword shall be given:
Let a deathbed repentance be taught the proud foe,
And his blood be an offering to Heaven.
Then rise, fellow freemen, and stretch the right hand,
And swear to prevail in your dear native land.”

Turning from the sublimity of this patriotic effusion, we shall find a change in “John Bull and Bonaparte!! to the tune of the Blue Bells of Scotland:”

“When and O when does this little Boney come?
Perhaps he’ll come in August! perhaps he’ll stay at home;
But it’s O in my heart, how I’ll hide him should he come.

Where and O where does this little Boney dwell?
His birth place is in Corsica – but France he likes so well,
That it’s O the poor French, how they crouch beneath his spell.

What cloathes and what cloathes does this little Boney wear?
He wears a large cock’d hat for to make the people stare;
But it’s O my oak stick! I’d advise him to take care!

What shall be done, should this little Boney die?
Nine cats shall squall his dirge, in sweet melodious cry,
And it’s O in my heart, if a tear shall dim my eye!

Yet still he boldly brags, with consequence full cramm’d
On England’s happy island, his legions he will land;
But it’s O in my heart, if he does may I be d – d.”

I will give but one more example, not that the stock is exhausted by some hundreds, but that I fear to be wearisome, and this one shows that if occasionally the matter of invasion was treated with a light heart, there were many, nay, the large majority, who looked upon its possibility *au grand serieux*.

“THE EVE OF INVASION

“The hour of battle now draws nigh,
We swear to conquer, or to die;
Haste quick away, thou slow pac’d Night,
To-morrow’s dawn begins the fight.

Chorus

Brothers, draw th’ avenging sword,
Death or Freedom be the word.

A Soldier

Did ye not leave, when forc'd to part,
Some treasure precious to the heart?
And feel ye not your bosoms swell,
Whene'er ye think of that farewell?

Chorus

Another Soldier

My Lucy said, no longer stay,
Thy country calls thee hence away,
Adieu! may angels round thee hover,
But no slave shall be my lover.

Chorus

Another

My Grandsire cried, I cannot go,
But thou, my Son, shall meet the foe;
I need not say, dear Boy, be brave,
No Briton sure would live a slave.

Chorus

Another

My Wife, whose glowing looks exprest,
What patriot ardour warm'd her breast,
Said, 'In the Battle think of me;
These helpless Babes, they shall be free.'

Chorus

All

Shades of Heroes gone, inspire us,
Children, Wives, and Country fire us.
Freedom loves this hallow'd ground —
Hark! Freedom bids the trumpet sound.

Chorus

Brothers, draw th' avenging sword,
Death or Freedom be the word."

If the foregoing examples of the Patriotic Handbills of 1803 are not choice specimens of refined literature, they are at least fairly representative. I have omitted all the vilification of Napoleon, which permeates all the series in a greater or less degree, because I have already given it in another work. It was gravely stated that his great grandfather was the keeper of a wine-shop, who, being convicted of robbery and murder, was condemned to the galleys, where he died in 1724. His wife, Napoleon's great grandmother, was said to have died in the House of Correction at Genoa. "His grandfather was a butcher of Ajaccio, and his grandmother daughter of a journeyman tanner at Bastia. His father was a low pettyfogging lawyer, who served and betrayed his country by turns, during the Civil Wars. After France conquered Corsica, he was a spy to the French Government, and his mother their trull." General Marbœuf was said to have been Napoleon's father. He was accused of seducing his sisters, and his brothers were supposed to be a very bad lot. He massacred the people at Alexandria and Jaffa, besides poisoning his own sick soldiers there. There was nothing bad enough for the *Corsican Ogre*; they even found that he was the real, original, and veritable Apocalyptic Beast, whose number is 666. It is but fair to say that the majority of these accusations came originally from French sources, but they were eagerly adopted here; and, although they might be, and probably were, taken at their proper valuation by the educated classes, there is no doubt but the lower classes regarded him as a ruffianly murderer. "Boney will come to you," was quite enough to quiet and overawe any refractory youngster, who, however, must have had some consolation, and satisfaction, in crunching, in sweetstuff, *Bonaparte's Ribs*. It was all very well to sing —

"Come, Bonaparte, if you dare;
John Bull invites you; bring your Host,
Your slaves with Free men to compare;
Your Frogs shall croak along the Coast.

When slain, thou vilest of thy Tribe,
Wrapped in a sack your Bones shall be,
That the Elements may ne'er imbibe
The venom of a Toad like thee" —

but there was the flat-bottomed Flotilla, on the opposite shore, which we were unable to destroy, or even to appreciably damage, and the “Army of England,” inactive certainly, was still there, and a standing menace. The Volunteers were fêted, and praised to the top of their bent. An old air of Henry Purcell’s (1695), which accompanied some words interpolated in Beaumont and Fletcher’s play of “Bonduca” or “Boadicea,” became extremely popular; and the chorus, “Britons, strike home,” was married to several sets of words, and duly shouted by loyal Volunteers. The Pictorial Satirist delineates the Volunteer as performing fabulous deeds of daring. Gillray gives us his idea of the fate of “Buonaparte forty-eight hours after Landing!” where a burly rustic Volunteer holds the bleeding head of Napoleon upon a pitchfork, to the delight of his comrades, and he thus apostrophises the head: “Ha, my little Boney! what do’st think of Johnny Bull, now? Plunder Old England! hay? make French slaves of us all! hay? ravish all our Wives and Daughters! hay? O Lord, help that silly Head! To think that Johnny Bull would ever suffer those lanthorn Jaws to become King of Old England Roast Beef and Plum Pudding!”

Ansell, too, treats Bonaparte’s probable fate, should he land, in a somewhat similar manner. His etching is called “After the Invasion. The Levée en Masse, or, Britons, strike home.” The French have landed, but have been thoroughly routed, of course, by a mere handful of English, who drive them into the sea. Our women plunder the French dead, but are disgusted with their meagre booty – garlic, onions, and pill-boxes. A rural Volunteer is, of course, the hero of the day, and raises Napoleon’s head aloft on a pitchfork, whilst he thus addresses two of his comrades. “Here he is exalted, my Lads, 24 Hours after Landing.” One of his comrades says, “Why, Harkee, d’ye zee, I never liked soldiering afore, but, somehow or other, when I thought of our Sal, the bearns, the poor Cows, and the Geese, why I could have killed the whole Army, my own self.” The other rustic remarks, “Dang my Buttons if that beant the head of that Rogue Boney. I told our Squire this morning, ‘What! do you think,’ says I, ‘the lads of our Village can’t cut up a Regiment of them French Mounseers? and as soon as the lasses had given us a kiss for good luck, I could have sworn we should do it, and so we have.’”

Well! it is hard to look at these things in cold blood, at a great distance of time, and without a shadow of a shade of the fear of invasion before our eyes, so we ought to be mercifully critical of the bombast of our forefathers. It certainly has done us no harm, and if it kept up and nourished the flame of patriotism within their breasts, we are the gainers thereby, as there is no doubt but that the bold front shown by the English people, and the unwearying vigilance of our fleet, saved England from an attempted, if not successful, invasion. Upwards of 400,000 men voluntarily rising up in arms to defend their country, must have astonished not only Bonaparte, but all Europe; and by being spontaneous, it prevented any forced measures, such as a *levée en masse*. The Prince of Wales, in vain, applied for active service; but, it is needless to say, it was refused, not to the colonel of the regiment, but to the heir to the throne. The refusal was tempered by the intimation that, should the enemy effect a landing, the Prince should have an opportunity of showing his courage, a quality which has always been conspicuous in our Royal Family.

But before we leave the subject of the threatened Invasion, it would be as well to read some jottings respecting it, which have no regular sequence, and yet should on no account be missed, as they give us, most vividly, the state of the public mind thereon.

Napoleon was at Boulogne, at the latter end of June, making a tour of the ports likely to be attacked by the British, and, as an example of how well his movements were known, see the following cutting from the *Times* of 4th of July: “The Chief Consul reached Calais at five o’clock on Friday afternoon (the 1st of July). His entry, as might be expected, was in a grand style of parade: he rode on a small iron grey horse of great beauty. He was preceded by about three hundred Infantry, and about thirty Mamelukes formed a kind of semicircle about him. . . . In a short time after his arrival he dined at *Quillac & Co’s*. (late *Dessin’s*) hotel. The time he allowed himself at dinner was shorter than usual; he did not exceed ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. Immediately after dinner he went, attended by

M. Francy, Commissary of Marine, Mengaud, Commissary of Police, and other municipal officers, through the Calais gates, to visit the different batteries erected there. As soon as he and his attendants had passed through the gates, he ordered them to be shut, to prevent their being incommoded by the populace. The execution of this order very much damped the ardour of the Corsican's admirers, who remained entirely silent, although the moment before, the whole place resounded with *Vive Buonaparte!* The same evening the General went on board the *Josephine* packet, Captain Lambert, and, after examining everything there minutely, he took a short trip upon the water in a boat as far as the pier-head to the Battery at the entrance of the harbour, where he himself fired one of the guns; afterwards, he visited all the different Forts, and at night slept at Quillac's Hotel."

They had a rough-and-ready method, in those days, of recruiting for the services, apprehending all vagrants, and men who could not give a satisfactory account of themselves, and giving them the option of serving His Majesty or going to prison. There is a curious instance of this in the following police report, containing as it does an amusing anecdote of "diamond cut diamond." *Times*, the 7th July, 1803: "Public Office, Bow Street. Yesterday upwards of forty persons were taken into custody, under authority of privy search warrants, at two houses of ill fame; the one in Tottenham Court Road, and the other near Leicester Square. They were brought before N. Bond, Esq., and Sir W. Parsons, for examination; when several of them, not being able to give a satisfactory account of themselves, and being able-bodied men, were sent on board a tender lying off the Tower. Two very notorious fellows among them were arrested in the office for pretended debts, as it appeared, for the purpose of preventing their being sent to sea, the writs having been just taken out, at the suit of persons as notorious as themselves. The magistrates, however, could not prevent the execution of the civil process, as there was no criminal charge against them, which would justify their commitment." Take also a short paragraph in the next day's *Times*: "Several young men, brought before the Lord Mayor yesterday, charged with petty offences, were sent on board the tender."

But, perhaps, this was the best use to put them to, as idle hands were not wanted at such a juncture. Men came forward in crowds as volunteers. Lloyd's, and the City generally, subscribed most liberally to the Patriotic Fund, and even in minor things, such as transport, the large carriers came forward well – as, for instance, the well-known firm of Pickford and Co. offered for the service of the Government, four hundred horses, fifty waggons, and twenty-eight boats.¹⁹ County meetings were held all over England to organize defence, and to find means of transport for cannon, men, and ammunition in case of invasion. The people came forward nobly; as the *Times* remarked in a leader (6th of August, 1803): "Eleven Weeks are barely passed since the Declaration of War, and we defy any man living, to mention a period when *half so much* was ever effected, in the same space of time, for the defence of the country. 1st. A naval force such as Great Britain never had before, has been completely equipped, manned, and in readiness to meet the enemy. 2nd. The regular military force of the kingdom has been put on the most respectable footing. 3rd. The militia has been called forth, and *encamped* with the regular forces. 4th. The supplementary militia has also been embodied, and even encamped. 5th. An army of reserve of 50,000 men has been already added to this force, and is now in great forwardness. 6th. A measure has been adopted for calling out and arming the whole mass of the people, in case of emergency; and we are confident that our information is correct, when we say, that at *this moment* there are nearly 300,000 men enrolled in different Volunteer, Yeomanry, and Cavalry Corps, of whom at least a *third* may be considered as already disciplined, and accoutred."

But, naturally, and sensibly, the feeling obtained of what might occur in case the French did actually land, and, among other matters, the safety of the King and the Royal Family was not forgotten. It was settled that the King should not go far, at least at first, from London, and both Chelmsford, and Dartford, as emergency might direct, were settled on as places of refuge for His Majesty: the

¹⁹ In two advertisements only of voluntary offers of horses and carriages, in August, we find they amount to 2,370 horses and 510 carriages.

Queen, the Royal Family, and the treasure were to go to Worcester the faithful, *Civitas in bello, et in pace fidelis*. The artillery and stores at Woolwich were to be sent into the Midland districts by means of the Grand Junction Canal. Beacons were to be affixed to some of the seaside churches, such as Lowestoft and Woodbridge, and these were of very simple construction – only a tar barrel!

But, by and by, a better, and more organized, system of communication by beacon was adopted, and the beacons themselves were more calculated to effect their object. They were to be made of a large stack, or pile, of furze, or faggots, with some cord-wood – in all, at least, eight waggon loads, with three or four tar barrels, sufficient to yield a light unmistakable at a distance of two or three miles. These were to be used by night; by day, a large quantity of straw was to be wetted, in order to produce a smoke.

When the orders for these first came out, invasion was only expected on the Kent and Sussex coasts, and the beacon stations were proportionately few; afterwards, they became general throughout the country. The first lot (17th of November) were

1. Shorncliffe.	5. Egerton.
1. Canterbury.	5. Tenderden.
2. Barham.	6. Coxheath.
2. Shollenden.	6. Highgate near Hawkehurst.
2. Lynne Heights.	7. Boxley Hill.
3. Isle of Thanet.	7. Goodhurst.
3. Postling Down.	8. Chatham Lines.
4. Chalmagna.	8. Wrotham Hill.

N.B. Stations marked with the same figures, communicate directly with each other.

Of course, naturally, there was the Spy craze, and it sometimes led to mistakes, as the following will show: *Times*, the 29th of August, “A respectable person in town a short time ago, went on a party of pleasure to the Isle of Wight, and, being anxious to see all the beauties of the place, he rose early one day to indulge himself with a long morning’s walk. In his way he took a great pleasure in viewing with his glass, the vessels at sea. In the midst of his observations he was interrupted by an officer, who, after a few questions, took him into custody upon suspicion of being a spy. After a proper investigation of his character, he was liberated.”

In more than one case, however, the charge of *espionage* seems to have rested on a far more solid basis; but, of course, the “Intelligence Department” of every nation will have its agents, in the enemy’s camp, if possible. Two persons, one named Nield, the other Garrick (nephew to the famous actor), were actually arrested as being Bonaparte! I do not know how Mr. Nield fared, but Mr. Garrick was enabled to prosecute his journey under the protection of the following certificate from the Mayor of Haverfordwest:

“This is to certify whom it may concern, that the bearer, Mr. George Garrick, is known to me; who is on a tour through the country, and intends returning to England, by the way of Tenby.

“*Richard Lloyd, Mayor.*”

We cannot wonder at the rumour of spies being in their midst, when we think of the number of French prisoners of war there were in our keeping, one prison alone (Mill Prison, Plymouth) having 2,500.

Many were out on parole, which I regret to say all did not respect, many broke prison and got away; in fact, they did not know where to put them, nor what to do with them, so that it was once seriously proposed that, in an hour of danger, should such ever arrive, they should be shut up in the numerous spent mines throughout England. When on parole, the following were the regulations – they were allowed to walk on the turnpike road within the distance of one mile from the extremity

of the town in which they resided, but they must not go into any field or cross road, nor be absent from their lodgings after five o'clock in the afternoon, during the months of November, December, and January; after seven o'clock in the months of February, March, April, August, September, and October; or, after eight o'clock in the months of May, June, and July; nor quit their lodgings in the morning until the bell rang at six o'clock.

If they did not keep to these regulations, they were liable to be taken up and sent to prison, a reward of one guinea being offered for their recapture. Should they not behave peaceably, they would also have to return to durance.

There were also very many refugees here who were not prisoners of war, and, in order to keep them under supervision, a Royal Proclamation was issued on the 12th of October, citing an Act passed the last session of Parliament, respecting the Registration of Aliens, and proclaiming that all aliens must, within eighteen days from date, register themselves and their place of abode – if in London, before the Lord Mayor, or some magistrate at one of the police offices; if in any other part of Great Britain, before some neighbouring magistrate.

However, enemies nearer home were plaguing John Bull. “Mannikin Traitors” verily, but still annoying. Then, as now, England’s difficulty was Ireland’s opportunity; and of course, the chance was too tempting to be resisted. The Union (curious phrase!) was but in the third year of its existence, and Ireland was once more in open rebellion. Chief of the spurious patriots was one Robert Emmett, whose picture in green and gold uniform coat, white tights and Hessian boots, waving an immense sword, appears periodically, in some shop windows, whenever Irish sedition is peculiarly rampant, only to disappear when the inevitable petty rogue, the approver, has done his work, and the windbag plot is pricked.

Emmett was the son of one of the State physicians in Dublin, and brother to that Thomas Eddis Emmett, who was prominent in the rebellion of 1798. Robert had so compromised himself, by his speech and behaviour, that he deemed it wise to live abroad during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, but he returned when his father died, having become possessed of about £2,000, which he must needs spend, in “regenerating” Ireland.

Silly boy! (he was only twenty-four) with such a sum, and about one hundred followers, he thought it could be done. His crazy brain imagined his down-trodden compatriots hastening to his side, to fight for the deliverance of their beloved country from the yoke of the hated Saxon despot. There were meetings *sub rosâ*– assemblages on the quiet – as there always will be in Ireland when the pot is seething; and at last the curtain was to be drawn up, for the playing of this farce, on the 23rd of July, when towards evening, large bodies of men began to assemble in some of the streets of Dublin – but vaguely, and without leaders.

At last a small cannon was fired, and a single rocket went upwards to the sky; and the deliverer, Emmett, sallied out, waving that big sword. A shot from a blunderbuss killed Colonel Browne; and the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, Lord Kilwarden, and his nephew, Rev. Richard Wolfe, were dragged from their carriage, and brutally murdered.

A little more bluster, and then, some three hours after its rising, this scum was put down by about one hundred and twenty soldiers. The ringleaders were caught and executed. Emmett, tried on the 19th of September, was hanged next day.

To show how slowly news travelled in those days, the *Times* has no notice of this riot on the 23rd till the 28th of July, and then not a full account. The Government, however, seems to have estimated the situation quite at its full gravity, for there was a message from the King to his faithful Parliament on the subject; the Habeas Corpus Act was once more suspended, and martial law proclaimed.

On the 19th of October the religious panacea of a general fast was tried, and “was observed with the utmost decorum” in the Metropolis. The Volunteers, especially, won the encomia of the *Times* for their goodness in going to church, and the *Annual Register* also warms up into unusual fervour on the occasion: “Such a number of corps attended this day, that it is impossible to enumerate them. Every

principal church was crowded with the ardent patriots who fill the voluntary associations; and there can be no doubt that, in the present temper of the people of this country, not only every other great city and town, but even the smallest village or hamlet throughout the island, evinced a proportionate degree of fervour and animation in the holy cause. The corps who had not before taken the oath of allegiance, did so this day, either on their drill grounds, or in their respective churches.”

Of the latter part of the year, other than the Invasion Scare, there is little to say. Among the Acts passed this year, however, was one of hopeful import, as showing a glimmer of a better time to come in the era of religious toleration. It was to relieve the Roman Catholics of some pains and disabilities to which they were subject, on subscribing the declaration and oath contained in the Act 31 George III.

Three per Cent. Consols opened this year at 69; dropped in July to 50, and left off the 31st of December at 55.

Bread stuffs were cheaper, the average price of wheat being 77s. per quarter, and the quartern loaf, 9d.

CHAPTER XI

1804

Caricatures of the Flotilla – Scarcity of money – Stamping Spanish dollars – Illness of the King – His recovery – General Fast – Fall of the Addington Ministry – Debate on the Abolition of the Slave Trade – Beacons – Transport – Election for Middlesex – Reconciliation between the King and the Prince of Wales.

THE YEAR 1804 opens with Britain still in arms, watching that flotilla which dare not put out, and cannot be destroyed; but somehow, whether familiarity had bred contempt, or whether it had come to be looked upon as a “bugaboo” – terrible to the sight, but not so very bad when you knew it – the patriotic handbills first cooled down, and then disappeared, and the satirical artist imparted a lighter tone to his pictures. Take one of Gillray’s (February 10, 1804): “The King of Brobdingnag and Gulliver” (Plate 2). Scene – “Gulliver manœuvring with his little boat in the cistern,” *vide Swift’s Gulliver*: “I often used to row for my own diversion, as well as that of the Queen and her ladies, who thought themselves well entertained with my skill and agility. Sometimes I would put up my sail and show my art by steering starboard and larboard. However, my attempts produced nothing else besides a loud laughter, which all the respect due to His Majesty from those about him, could not make them contain. This made me reflect how vain an attempt it is for a man to endeavour to do himself honour among those who are out of all degree of equality or comparison with him!!!” The King and Queen look on with amusement at the pigmy’s vessel, for the better sailing of which, the young princes are blowing; and creating quite a gale.

Take another by West (March, 1804), which shows equally, that terror is turning to derision. It is called “A French Alarmist, or, John Bull looking out for the Grand Flotilla!” John Bull is guarding his coast, sword on thigh, and attended by his faithful dog. Through his telescope he scans the horizon, and is thus addressed by a Frenchman who is behind him. “Ah, ah! Monsieur Bull, dere you see our Grande Flotilla, de grande gon boats, ma foi – dere you see ‘em sailing for de grand attack on your nation – dere you see de Bombs and de Cannons – dere you see de Grande Consul himself at de head of his Legions? Dere you see – “ But John Bull, mindful of the old saying, anent the Spanish Armada, replies, “Monsieur, all this I cannot see, because ’tis not in sight.”

Money was scarce in this year; and in spite of the all-but million given the King not so long since to pay his debts, we find (*Morning Herald*, April 26, 1804), “The Civil List is now paying up to the Lady-day quarter, 1803.”

So scarce was money —*i. e.*, bullion – that a means had to be found to supplement the currency; and it so happened that a large quantity of Spanish dollars were opportunely taken in prizes. In 1803 the idea of utilizing these as current English coins was first mooted, and some were stamped with the King’s head, the size of the ordinary goldsmith’s mark; but in 1804 a much larger issue of them was made, and they were stamped with a profile likeness of the King, in an octagon of about a quarter of an inch square. They were made to pass for five shillings each, which was about threepence-halfpenny over their value as bullion; and this extra, and fictitious, value was imposed upon them in order that they should not be melted down. They were also to be taken back for a time at that price, and on the 12th of January, 1804, every banking house received £1,000 worth of them from the Bank of England, against the Bank’s paper. But, as currency, they did not last long, the Bank refusing, as early as April the same year, to receive them back again, on “various frivolous and ill-founded pretensions.” For some reason, probably forgery, they were recalled, and on the 22nd of May there was a notice in the *Gazette*

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