

ALFRED THAYER MAHAN

The Influence of Sea Power upon
the French Revolution and Empire
1793-1812, Vol II

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A. T. Mahan
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CHAPTER XII

Events on the Continent, 1798-1800

Disorders of France under the Directory.—Disastrous War of the Second Coalition.—Establishment of the Consulate.—Bonaparte overthrows Austria and frames against Great Britain the Armed Neutrality of 1800.—Peace of Lunéville with Austria.

WHILE Bonaparte was crossing the Syrian desert and chafing over the siege of Acre, the long gathering storm of war known as the Second Coalition had broken upon France. It had been preceded by a premature outburst of hostility on the part of the Two Sicilies, induced by the excitement consequent

upon the battle of the Nile and fostered by Nelson; ¹ who, however influenced, was largely responsible for the action of the court. Despite the advice of Austria to wait, a summons was sent to the French on the 22d of November, 1798, to evacuate the Papal States and Malta. A Neapolitan army of fifty thousand men marched upon Rome; and five thousand were carried by Nelson's ships to Leghorn with the idea of harassing the confidently-expected retreat of the enemy. ² Leghorn was at once surrendered; but in the south the campaign ended in utter disaster. The French general Championnet, having but fifteen thousand men, evacuated Rome, which the Neapolitans consequently entered without opposition; but their field operations met with a series of humiliating reverses, due partly to bad generalship and partly to inexperience and the lack of mutual confidence often found among untried troops. The French re-entered Rome seventeen days after the campaign opened; and the king of Naples, who had made a triumphal entry into the city, hurried back to his capital, called upon the people to rise in defence of their homes against the invaders, and then fled with the royal family to Palermo, Nelson giving them and the Hamiltons passage on board his flag-ship. The peasantry and the populace flew to arms, in obedience to the king's proclamation and to their own feelings of hatred to the republicans. Under the

¹ See, for instance, his letter to Lady Hamilton, Oct. 3, 1798 (Disp., vol. iii. p. 140), which is but one of many similar expressions in his correspondence.

² Nels. Disp., vol. iii. p. 177.

guidance of the priests and monks, with hardy but undisciplined fury, they in the field harassed the advance of the French, and in the capital rose against the upper classes, who were suspected of secret intelligence with the enemy. Championnet, however, continued to advance; and on the 23d of January, 1799, Naples was stormed by his troops. After the occupation, a series of judicious concessions to the prejudices of the people induced their cheerful submission. The conquest was followed by the birth to the Batavian, Helvetian, Ligurian, Cisalpine, and Roman republics, of a little sister, named the Parthenopeian Republic, destined to a troubled existence as short as its name was long.

The Neapolitan declaration of war caused the ruin of the Piedmontese monarchy. The Directory, seeing that war with Austria was probable, decided to occupy all Piedmont. The king abdicated on the 9th of December, 1798; retiring to the island of Sardinia, which was left in his possession. Piedmont was soon after annexed to the French Republic.

On the 20th of February, 1799, having failed to receive from the emperor the explanations demanded concerning the entrance of the Russian troops into his dominions, the Directory ordered its generals to advance. Jourdan was to command in Germany, Masséna in Switzerland, and Schérer in Italy. The armies of the republic, enfeebled by two years of peace and by the economies of a government always embarrassed for money and deficient in executive vigor, were everywhere inferior to those of the enemy; and the plan of campaign, providing for several operations out

of reach of mutual support, has been regarded by military critics as essentially vicious.

Jourdan crossed the Rhine at Strasburg on the first of March, advancing through the Black Forest upon the head waters of the Danube. On the 6th Masséna crossed the river above Lake Constance, and moved through the Alps toward the Tyrol, driving the Austrians before him on his right and centre; but on the left he entirely failed to carry the important position of Feldkirch, upon which would depend the communication between his left and the right of Jourdan, if the latter succeeded in pushing on as ordered. This, however, he was unable to do. After some severe partial encounters there was fought on March 25th, at Stokach, near the north-west extremity of Lake Constance, a pitched battle in which the French were defeated. Jourdan then saw that he had to do with largely superior forces and retreated upon the Rhine, which he recrossed above Strasburg on the 6th of April.

On the 26th of March, the day after the defeat of Jourdan at Stokach, Schérer in Italy attacked the Austrians, who were occupying the line of the Adige, rendered famous by Bonaparte in his great campaign of 1796. The events of that day were upon the whole favorable to the French; but Schérer showed irresolution and consequent delay in improving such advantages as he had obtained. After a week of manœuvring the two armies met in battle on the 5th of April near Magnano, and after a long and bloody struggle the French were forced to give way. On the

6th, the day that Jourdan retreated across the Rhine, Schérer also fell back behind the Mincio. Not feeling secure there, although the Austrians did not pursue, he threw garrisons into the posts on that line, and on the 12th retired behind the Adda; sending word to Macdonald, Championnet's successor at Naples, to prepare to evacuate that kingdom and bring to northern Italy the thirty thousand men now so sorely needed.

Jourdan having offered his resignation after the battle of Stokach, the armies in Germany and in Switzerland were united under the command of Masséna; whose long front, extending from the Engadine, around the sources of the Inn, along the Rhine as low as Dusseldorf, was held by but one hundred thousand men, of whom two-thirds were in Switzerland. In the position which Switzerland occupies, thrust out to the eastward from the frontiers of France, having on the one flank the fields of Germany, on the other those of Italy, and approachable from both sides by many passes, the difficulties of defence are great;³ and Masséna found himself menaced from both quarters, as well as in front, by enemies whose aggregate force was far superior to his own. Pressed along the line of the Rhine both above and

³ In an entirely open country, without natural obstacles, there are few or none of those strategic points, by occupying which in a central position an inferior force is able to multiply its action against the divided masses of the enemy. On the other hand, in a very broken country, such as Switzerland, the number of important strategic points, passes, heads of valleys, bridges, etc., are so multiplied, that either some must be left unoccupied, or the defenders lose, by dissemination, the advantage which concentration upon one or two controlling centres usually confers.

below Lake Constance, he was compelled to retire upon works constructed by him around Zurich; being unable to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces, which approached from both directions. On the 4th of June the Austrians assaulted his lines; and, though the attack was repulsed, Masséna thought necessary to evacuate the place forty-eight hours later, falling back upon a position on the Albis mountains a few miles in his rear.

During the two months over which these contests between Masséna and his enemies were spread, the affairs of the French in Italy were growing daily more desperate. After the victory of Magnano the Austrians were joined, on the 24th of April, by twenty thousand Russians under Marshal Suwarrow, who became general-in-chief of the allied armies. On the 26th Schérer turned over his command to Moreau; but, although the latter was an officer of very great capacity, the change was too late to avoid all the impending disasters. On the 27th the passage of the Adda was forced by the allies, and on the 29th they entered Milan; the French retiring upon the Ticino, breaking down the bridges over the Po, and taking steps to secure their communications with Genoa. Pausing but a moment, they again retreated in two columns upon Turin and Alessandria; Moreau drawing together near the latter place the bulk of his force, about twenty thousand men, and sending pressing invitations to Macdonald to hasten the northward march of the army of Naples. The new positions were taken the 7th of May, and it was not till the 5th that the Austro-Russians, delayed by

the destruction of the bridges, could cross the Po. But the insurrection of the country in all directions was showing how little the submission of the people and the establishment of new republics were accompanied by any hearty fidelity to the French cause; and on the 18th, leaving a garrison in Alessandria, Moreau retreated upon the Apennines. On the 6th of June his troops were distributed among the more important points on the crest of the range, from Pontremoli, above Spezia, to Loano, and all his convoys had safely crossed the mountains to the latter point. It was at this moment that he had an interview with Admiral Bruix, whose fleet had anchored in Vado Bay two days before.⁴

While events were thus passing in Upper Italy, Macdonald, in obedience to his orders, evacuated Naples on the 7th of May, at the moment when Moreau was taking his position on the Apennines and Bonaparte making his last fruitless assault upon Acre. Leaving garrisons at the principal strong places of the kingdom, he hurried north, and on the 25th entered Florence, where, though his junction with Moreau was far from being effected, he was for the first time in sure communication with him by courier. There were two routes that Macdonald might take,—either by the sea-shore, which was impracticable for artillery, or else, crossing the Apennines, he would find a better road in the plain south of the Po, through Modena and Parma, and by it might join the army of Italy under the walls of Tortona. The latter course was chosen, and after a delay

⁴ See ante, vol. i. p. [313](#).

too much prolonged the army of Naples set out on the 9th of June. All went well with it until the 17th, when, having passed Modena and Parma, routing the allied detachments which he encountered, Macdonald reached the Trebia. Here, however, he was met by Suwarrow, and after three days' desperate fighting was forced to retreat by the road he came, to his old positions on the other side of the mountains. On the same day the citadel of Turin capitulated to the allies. After pursuing Macdonald some distance, Suwarrow turned back to meet Moreau, and compelled him also to retire to his former posts. This disastrous attempt at a junction within the enemies' lines cost the French fifteen thousand men. It now became necessary for the army of Naples to get to Genoa at all costs by the Corniche road, and this it was able to do through the inactivity of the enemy,—due, so Jomini says, not to Suwarrow, but to the orders from Vienna. By the middle of July both armies were united under Moreau. As a result of the necessary abandonment of Naples by the French troops, the country fell at once into the power of the armed peasantry, except the garrisons left in a few strong places; and these, by the help of the British navy, were also reduced by the 1st of August.

This striking practical illustration of the justness of Bonaparte's views, concerning the danger incurred by the French in Upper Italy through attempting to occupy Naples, was followed by further disasters. On the 21st of July the citadel of Alessandria capitulated; and this loss was followed on the 30th by that of Mantua, which had caused Bonaparte so much delay

and trouble in 1796. The latter success was somewhat dearly bought, inasmuch as the emperor of Germany had positively forbidden Suwarrow to make any further advance before Mantua fell. ⁵ Opportunity was thus given for the junction of Moreau and Macdonald, and for the reorganization of the latter's army, which the affairs of the Trebia and the subsequent precipitate retreat had left in a state of prostration and incoherence, from which it did not recover for a month. The delay would have been still more favorable to the French had Mantua resisted to the last moment; but it capitulated at a time when it could still have held out for several days, and Suwarrow was thus enabled to bring up the besieging corps to his support, unknown to the enemy.

Meanwhile Moreau had been relieved by Joubert, one of the most brilliant of the young generals who had fought under Bonaparte in Italy. The newcomer, reaching his headquarters on the 2d of August, at once determined upon the offensive, moved thereto by the wish to relieve Mantua, and also by the difficulty of feeding his army in the sterile mountains now that ruin had befallen the coastwise traffic of Genoa, by which supplies had before been maintained. ⁶ On the 10th of August the French advanced. On the 14th they were in position at Novi; and there Joubert saw, but too late, that Suwarrow's army was far larger

⁵ It is said that the old marshal on receiving these orders cried: "This is the way armies are ruined."

⁶ Jomini, *Guerres de la Rév. Fran.*, livre xv. p. 124. Martin, *Hist. de France depuis 1789*, vol. iii. p. 50. It was just at this moment that Nelson sent a division to the Gulf of Genoa to co-operate with Suwarrow. (Nels. Disp., vol. iii. p. 431.)

than he had expected, and that the rumor of Mantua's fall, which he had refused to credit, must be true. He intended to retreat; but the Russian marshal attacked the next morning, and after a fierce struggle, which the strength of their position enabled the French to prolong till night, they were driven from the field with heavy loss, four general officers and thirty-seven guns being captured. Joubert was killed early in the day; and Moreau, who had remained to aid him until familiar with all the details of his command, again took the temporary direction of the army by the agreement of the other generals. Immediately after the battle Suwarrow sent into the late Papal States a division which, co-operating with the Neapolitan royalists and the British navy, forced the French to evacuate the new Roman republic on the 27th of September, 1799.

At this moment of success new dispositions were taken by the allied governments, apparently through the initiative of Austria; which wished, by removing Suwarrow, to keep entire control of Italy in her own hands. This change of plan, made at so critical a moment, stopped the hitherto triumphant progress; and, by allowing time for Bonaparte to arrive and to act, turned victory into defeat. By it Suwarrow was to march across the Alps into Switzerland, and there take charge of the campaign against Masséna, having under him an army composed mainly of Russians. The Archduke Charles, now commanding in Switzerland, was to depart with the greater part of the Austrian contingent to the lower Rhine, where he would by his operations

support the invasion of Holland then about to begin.

On the 13th of August,—the same day that Bruix entered Brest, carrying with him the Spanish fleet, and two days before the battle of Novi,—the expedition against Holland, composed of seventeen thousand Russians and thirty thousand British troops, sailed from England. Delayed first by light winds and then by heavy weather, the landing was not made till the 27th of the month. On the 31st the Archduke, taking with him thirty-six thousand Austrians, started for the lower Rhine, leaving General Hotze and the Russian Korsakoff to make head against Masséna until the arrival of Suwarrow. The latter, on the 11th of September, immediately after the surrender of Tortona, began his northward march.

At the moment the Archduke assumed his new command, the French on the lower Rhine, crossing at Mannheim, invested and bombarded Philipsburg; and their operations seemed so far serious as to draw him and a large part of his force in the same direction. This greatly diminished one of the difficulties confronting Masséna in the offensive movement he then had in contemplation. Hearing at the same time that Suwarrow had started from Italy, he made his principal attack from his left upon the Russians before Zurich on the 25th of September, the right wing of his long line advancing in concert against the Austrian position east of Lake Zurich upon its inlet, the Linth. Each effort was completely successful, and decisive; the enemy being in both directions driven back, and forced to recross the streams above

and below the lake. Suwarrow, after a very painful march and hard fighting, reached his first appointed rendezvous at Mitten two days after the battle of Zurich had been lost; and the corps that were to have met him there, fearing their retreat would be cut off, had not awaited his arrival. The old marshal with great difficulty fought his way through the mountains to Ilanz, where at length he assembled his exhausted and shattered forces on the 9th of October, the day on which Bonaparte landed at Fréjus on his return from Egypt. By that time Switzerland was entirely cleared of Russians and Austrians. The river Rhine, both above and below Lake Constance, marked the dividing line between the belligerents.

The Anglo-Russian attack upon Holland had no better fate. Landing upon the peninsula between the Zuyder Zee and the North Sea, the allies were for awhile successful; but their movements were cautious and slow, giving time for the local resistance to grow and for re-enforcements to come up. The remnants of the Dutch navy were surrendered and taken back to England; but the Duke of York, who had chief command of the allied troops, was compelled on the 18th of October to sign a convention, by which the invading force was permitted to retire unmolested by the first of December.

During the three remaining months of 1799 some further encounters took place in Germany and Italy. In the latter the result was a succession of disasters to the French, ending with the capitulation, on the 4th of December, of Coni, their

last remaining stronghold in Piedmont, and the retreat of the army into the Riviera of Genoa. Corfu and the Ionian Islands having been reduced by the combined Russian and Turkish fleets in the previous March, and Ancona surrendered on the 10th of November, all Bonaparte's conquests in Italy and the Adriatic had been lost to France when the Directory fell. The brave soldiers of the army of Italy, destitute and starving, without food, without pay, without clothing or shoes, without even wood for camp-fires in the bitter winter nights on the slopes of the Apennines, deserted in crowds and made their way to the interior. In some regiments none but officers and non-commissioned officers were left. An epidemic born of want and exposure carried off men by hundreds. Championnet, overwhelmed by his misfortunes and by the sight of the misery surrounding him, fell ill and died. Bonaparte, now First Consul, sent Masséna to replace him.

In Germany nothing decisive occurred in the field; but in consequence of some disagreements of opinion between himself and the Archduke, Suwarrow declined further co-operation, and, alleging the absolute need of rest for his soldiers after their frightful exposure in Switzerland, marched them at the end of October into winter quarters in Bavaria. This closed the share of the Russians in the second coalition. The Czar, who had embarked in the war with the idea of restoring the rights of monarchs and the thrones that had been overturned, was dissatisfied both with the policy of Austria, which looked

to her own predominance in Italy, and with Great Britain. A twelvemonth more was to see him at the head of a league of the northern states against the maritime claims of the great Sea Power, and completely won over to the friendship of Bonaparte by the military genius and wily flattery of the renowned captain.

During this disastrous year, in which France lost all Italy except the narrow strip of sea-coast about Genoa, and after months of desperate struggle had barely held her own in Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, the internal state of the country was deplorable. The Revolutionary government by the Committee of Public Safety had contrived, by the use of the extraordinary powers granted to it, to meet with greater or less success the demands of the passing hour; although in so doing it was continually accumulating embarrassments against a future day of reckoning. The Directory, deprived of the extraordinary powers of its predecessor, had succeeded to these embarrassments, and the day of reckoning had arrived. It has been seen how the reactionary spirit, which followed the rule of blood, had prevailed more and more until, in 1797, the political composition of the two Councils was so affected by it as to produce a strong conflict between them and the executive. This dead-lock had been overcome and harmony restored by the violent measures of September, 1797, by which two Directors and a number of members of the legislature had been forcibly expelled from their office. The parties, of two very different shades of opinion, to which the ejected members belonged, had

not, however, ceased to exist. In 1798, in the yearly elections to replace one-third of the legislature, they again returned a body of representatives sufficient to put the Councils in opposition to the Directory; but this year the choice of the electors was baffled by a system of double returns. The sitting Councils, of the same political party as the Directory, pronounced upon these, taking care in so doing to insure that the majority in the new bodies should be the same as in the old. In May, 1799, however, the same circumstance again recurred. The fact is particularly interesting, as showing the opposition which was felt toward the government throughout the country.

This opposition was due to a cause which rarely fails to make governments unpopular. The Directory had been unsuccessful. It was called upon to pay the bills due to the public expectation of better things when once the war was over. This it was not able to do. Though peace had been made with the continent, there remained so many matters of doubt and contention that large armies had to be maintained. The expenses of the state went on, but the impoverished nation cried out against the heavy taxation laid to meet them; the revenues continually fell short of the expenditures, and the measures proposed by the ministers to remedy this evil excited vehement criticisms. The unpopularity of the government, arising from inefficient action, reacted upon and increased the weakness which was inherent in its cumbrous, many-headed form. Hence there resulted, from the debility of the head, an impotence which permeated all the links of the

executive administration down to the lowest members.

In France itself the disorder and anarchy prevailing in the interior touched the verge of social dissolution.⁷ Throughout the country, but especially in the south and west, prevailed brigandage on a large scale—partly political, partly of the ordinary highway type. There were constant reports of diligences and mail-wagons stopped,⁸ of public treasure plundered, of republican magistrates assassinated. Disorganization and robbery spread throughout the army, a natural result of small pay, irregularly received, and of the system of contributions, administered with little responsibility by the commanders of armies in the field. The attempt of the government to check and control this abuse was violently resented by generals, both of the better and the worse class; by the one as reflecting upon their character and injuring their position, by the other as depriving them of accustomed though unlawful gains. Two men of unblemished repute, Joubert and Championnet, came to a direct issue with the Directory upon this point. Joubert resigned the command of the army of Italy, in which Bernadotte from the same motive refused to replace him; while Championnet, in

⁷ The phrase is that of Thiers. *Hist. de la Rév.*, vol. x. p. 353.

⁸ A curious evidence of the insecurity of the highways is afforded by an ordinance issued by Bonaparte a year after he became First Consul (Jan. 7, 1801), that no regular diligence should travel without carrying a corporal and four privates, with muskets and twenty rounds, and in addition, at night, two mounted gendarmes. If specie to the value of over 50,000 francs were carried, there must be four gendarmes by day and night. (*Corr. de Nap.*, vol. vi. p. 697.)

Naples, compelled the commissioner of the Directory to leave the kingdom. For this act, however, he was deprived and brought to a court-martial.

From the weakness pervading the administration and from the inadequate returns of the revenue, the government was driven to extraordinary measures and to the anticipation of its income. Greater and more onerous taxes were laid; and, as the product of these was not immediate, purchases had to be made at long and uncertain credit, and consequently were exorbitant in price while deficient in quantity and quality. From this arose much suffering among all government employés, but especially among the soldiers, who needed the first attention, and whose distress led them easily to side with their officers against the administration. Contracts so made only staved off the evil day, at the price of increasing indebtedness for the state and of growing corruption among the contractor class and the officials dealing with them. Embarrassment and disorder consequently increased apace without any proportionate vigor in the external action of the government, and the effects were distributed among and keenly felt by all individuals, except the small number whose ability or whose corruptness enables them to grow rich when, and as, society becomes most distressed. The creditors of the nation, and especially the holders of bonds, could with difficulty obtain even partial payment. In the general distrust and perplexity individuals and communities took to hoarding both money and food, moved by the dangers of transit and by fear of

the scarcity which they saw to be impending. This stagnation of internal circulation was accompanied by the entire destruction of maritime commerce, due to the pressure of the British navy and to the insane decree of Nivôse 29 (January 19, 1798).⁹ Both concurred to paralyze the energies of the people, to foster indolence and penury, and by sheer want to induce a state of violence with which the executive was unable to cope.

When to this internal distress were added the military disasters just related, the outcry became loud and universal. All parties united against the Directors, who did not dare in 1799 to repeat the methods by which in the two previous years a majority had been obtained in the legislature. On the 18th of June the new Councils were able to force a change in the composition of the Directory, further enfeebling it through the personal weakness of the new members. These hastened to reverse many of the measures of their predecessors, but no change of policy could restore the lost prestige. The effect of these steps was only further to depress that branch of the government which, in so critical a moment and in so disordered a society, should overbear all others and save the state—not by discussion, but by action.

Such was the condition of affairs found by Bonaparte when he returned from Egypt. The revolution of Brumaire 18 (November 9, 1799) threw into his hands uncontrolled power. This he proceeded at once to use with the sagacity and vigor that rarely failed him in his early prime. The administration of the country

⁹ See *post*, Chapter XVII.

was reconstituted on lines which sacrificed local independence, but invigorated the grasp of the central executive, and made its will felt in every corner of the land. Vexatious measures of the preceding government were repealed, and for them was substituted a policy of liberal conciliation, intended to rally all classes of Frenchmen to the support of the new rule. In the West and North, in La Vendée, Brittany, and Normandy, the insurrection once suppressed by Hoche had again raised its head against the Directory. To the insurgents Bonaparte offered reasonable inducements to submission, while asserting his firm determination to restore authority at any cost; and the rapid gathering of sixty thousand troops in the rebellious districts proved his resolution to use for that purpose a force so overwhelming, that the completion of its task would release it by the return of spring, to take the field against external foes. Before the end of February the risings were suppressed, and this time forever. Immediate steps were taken to put the finances on a sounder basis, and to repair the military disasters of the last twelvemonth. To the two principal armies, of the Rhine and of Italy, were sent respectively Moreau and Masséna, the two greatest generals of the republic after Bonaparte himself; and money advanced by Parisian bankers was forwarded to relieve the more pressing wants of the destitute soldiery.

At the same time that these means were used to recover France herself from the condition of debility into which she had fallen, the first consul made a move calculated either to gain

for her the time she yet needed, or, in case it failed, to rally to his support all classes in the state. Departing from the usual diplomatic routine, he addressed a personal letter to the king of Great Britain and to the emperor of Germany, deploring the existing war, and expressing a wish that negotiations for peace might be opened. The reply from both sovereigns came through the ordinary channels of their respective ministries. Austria said civilly that she could not negotiate apart from her allies; and furthermore, that the war being only to preserve Europe from universal disorder, due to the unstable and aggressive character of the French governments since the Revolution, no stable peace could be made until there was some guarantee for a change of policy. This she could not yet recognize in the new administration, which owed its existence only to the violent overthrow of its predecessor. Great Britain took substantially the same ground. Peace was worse than worthless, if insecure; and experience had shown that no defence except that of steady and open hostility was availing, while the system which had prevailed in France remained the same. She could not recognize a change of system in the mere violent substitution of one set of rulers for another. Disavowing any claim to prescribe to France what should be her form of government, the British ministry nevertheless said distinctly that the best guarantee for a permanent change of policy would be the restoration of the Bourbons. This seemingly impolitic suggestion insured—what was very possibly its object—the continuance of the war until

were realized the advantages that seemed about to accrue. Not only were the conditions at that time overwhelmingly in favor of the allies, but there was also every probability of the reduction of Egypt and Malta, and of further decisive successes in Italy. These, if obtained, would be so many cards strengthening their hands in the diplomatic game to be played in the negotiations for peace. Believing, as the British ministry of that day assuredly did, that a secure peace could only be based on the exhaustion, and not upon the moderation or good faith, of their enemy, it would have been the height of folly to concede time, or submit to that vacillation of purpose and relaxation of tension which their own people would certainly feel, if negotiations were opened.

Nor were these military and moral considerations the only ones affecting the decision of the government. Despite the immense burdens imposed by the war to support her own military expenditures and furnish the profuse subsidies paid to her allies, the power of the country to bear them was greatly increased. Thanks to the watery rampart which secured peace within her borders, Great Britain had now become the manufactory and warehouse of Europe. The commercial and maritime prostration of Holland and France, her two great rivals in trade and manufactures, had thrown into her hands these sources of their prosperity; and she, through the prodigious advances of the ten years' peace, was fully ready to profit by them. By the capture of their foreign possessions and the ruin of the splendid French colony in Haïti, she now controlled

the chief regions whence were drawn the tropical products indispensable to Europeans. She monopolized their markets as well as the distribution of their produce. Jealously reserving to British merchant shipping the trade of her own and conquered colonies, she yet met the immense drain made by the navy upon her merchant seamen by relaxing the famous Navigation Laws; permitting her ships to be manned by foreigners, and foreign ships to engage in branches of her commerce closed to them in time of peace. But while thus encouraging neutrals to carry the surplus trade, whose rapid growth was outstripping the capacity of her own shipping, she rigorously denied their right to do as much for her enemies. These severe restrictions, which her uncontrolled sea-power enabled her to maintain, were re-enforced by suicidal edicts of the French government, retaliating upon the same unhappy neutrals the injury their weakness compelled them to accept from the mistress of the seas,—thus driving them from French shores, and losing a concurrence essential to French export and import. In this time of open war no flag was so safe from annoyance as the British, for none other was protected by a powerful navy. Neutrals sought its convoy against French depredations, and the navigation of the world was now swayed by this one great power, whom its necessities had not yet provoked to lay a yoke heavier than the oppressed could bear.

To this control of the carrying trade, and of so much of the agricultural production of the globe, was added a growing absorption of the manufactures of Europe, due to the long war

paralyzing the peaceful energies of the continental peoples. In the great system of circulation and exchange, everything thus tended more and more to Great Britain; which was indicated as the natural centre for accumulation and distribution by its security, its accessibility, and its nearness to the continent on which were massed the largest body of consumers open to maritime commerce. Becoming thus the chief medium through which the business of the civilized world was carried on and its wants supplied, her capital grew apace; and was steadily applied, by the able hands in which it accumulated, to develop, by increased production and increased facilities of carriage, the powers of the country to supply demands that were continually increasing on both sides of the Atlantic. The foreign trade, export and import, which in 1792, the last year of peace, had amounted to £44,500,000, rose in 1797 to £50,000,000, and in 1800 to £73,700,000. Encouraged by these evident proofs of growing wealth, the ministry was able so to increase the revenue that its receipts, independent of extraordinary war taxes, far exceeded anything it had ever been before, "or," to use Pitt's words, "anything which the most sanguine hopes could have anticipated. If," he continued, "we compare this year of war with former years of peace, we shall in the produce of our revenue and in the extent of our commerce behold a spectacle at once paradoxical, inexplicable, and astonishing. We have increased our external and internal commerce to a greater pitch than ever it was before; and we may look to the present as the proudest year that has ever

occurred for this country." ¹⁰

With such resources to sustain the armies of their allies, and certain of keeping a control of the sea unparalleled even in the history of Great Britain, the ministry looked hopefully forward to a year which should renew and complete the successes of 1799. They reckoned without Bonaparte, as Bonaparte in his turn reckoned again and again without Nelson.

Russia took no more part in the coalition; but the forces of Germany, under the control of Austria and subsidized by Great Britain, either actually in the field or holding the fortified posts on which the operations depended, amounted to something over two hundred and fifty thousand men. Of these, one hundred and twenty-five thousand under Mélas were in Italy. The remainder under General Kray were in Germany, occupying the angle formed by the Rhine at Bâle, where, after flowing west from Lake Constance, it turns abruptly north for the remainder of its course. The plan of campaign was to stand on the defensive in Germany, holding in check the enemies there opposed to them, and in Italy to assume a vigorous offensive, so as to drive the French finally out of the country. That achieved, the idea was entertained of entering France at the extreme south, and possibly investing Toulon, supported by the British navy.

When Bonaparte first took charge, there remained to France only two hundred and fifty thousand soldiers, of whom at the opening of the campaign of 1800 there were in the field, opposed

¹⁰ Speech of February 18, 1801.

to the Austrians, but one hundred and sixty-five thousand. One hundred thousand conscripts were called for; but time would be needed to turn these into soldiers, even with the advantage of the nucleus of veterans around whom they would be gathered. The equipment and provisioning both of the old and new levies also required time and effort. Bonaparte's project was to assume the offensive in Germany, turning there the position of the Austrians, and driving them northward from the Rhine towards the head waters of the Danube. For this great operation the army under Moreau was raised to an equality with the enemy opposed to him. Masséna in Italy was directed to stand solely on the defensive, concentrating around Genoa the bulk of the thirty-five or forty thousand men which alone he had. While he held this position in such force, the Austrians could scarcely advance into France along the narrow coast road, leaving him in the rear. When the expected success in Germany was won, there was to be detached from that army, which should then assume an attitude of observation, a corps twenty thousand strong. This should cross Switzerland, entering Italy by the St. Gothard Pass, and there joining a force of forty thousand to be led by the First Consul in person through the Pass of St. Bernard. This mass of sixty thousand men was to throw itself in rear of the Austrians, forcing them to fight for their communications through Lombardy, and hoping under the first general of the age to win, over a less skilful opponent, such victories as had illustrated the famous campaigns of 1796 and 1797.

Bonaparte's plan thus hinged upon the French occupation of Switzerland, which, intervening as a great rampart between the Austrians in Germany and Italy, permitted him to cover the movements against the former by the curtain of the Rhine between Lake Constance and Bâle, and to use safely and secretly the passes leading into the plains of Lombardy and Piedmont. To this advantage of position he conjoined, with inconceivable wiliness, an absolute secrecy as to the very existence of the forty thousand, known as the Army of Reserve, which he himself was to lead. The orders constituting this force were given the utmost publicity. Its headquarters were established at Dijon, and one of Bonaparte's most trusted subordinates was sent to command it. An appeal was made to discharged soldiers to join its ranks; some material of war and some conscripts, with a corps of officers, were assembled. There preparations stopped—or went on so feebly in comparison with the glowing boasts of the French journals, that hostile spies were entirely deceived. The Army of Reserve became the joke of Europe, while the scattered detachments that were to compose it were assembling at points separated, yet chosen with Bonaparte's consummate skill to permit rapid concentration when the hour came. To insure perfect secrecy, the correspondence of these different bodies was with him alone, not through the Ministry of War.

The campaign was opened by the Austrians in Italy. Mélas, with seventy thousand men, attacked Masséna along the chain of the Apennines. Difficulties of subsistence had forced the latter

to disseminate his troops between Genoa and Nice. Through this necessarily thin line the Austrians broke on the 5th of April, and after several days of strenuous resistance, furthered by the facilities for defence offered by that mountainous region, Masséna was driven into Genoa. The left wing of his army under Suchet was forced back toward Nice, where it took position on the Var. On the 18th of April Masséna was definitively shut up in Genoa with eighteen thousand men, and so short of provisions that it became a matter of the utmost urgency to relieve him.

On April 25 Moreau began his movements, of a somewhat complicated character, but resulting in his whole army being safely across the Rhine on the first of May. Eighty thousand French troops were then drawn up between Bâle and Lake Constance in an east and west direction, threatening the left flank of the enemy, whose front was north and south, and in position to attack both their line of retreat and the immense depots whose protection embarrassed all the movements of the Austrians. On the 3d of May the latter were defeated at Engen, and their depot at Stokach was captured. On the 5th they were again beaten at Moesskirch, and on the 9th at Biberach, losing other large deposits of stores. General Kray then retired upon Ulm on the Danube, and the first act of Bonaparte's design was accomplished. It had not corresponded with the lines laid down by him, which were too adventurous to suit Moreau, nor was the result equal to his expectations; but the general strategic outcome was to check for the time any movements of the enemy

in Germany, and enable Moreau to send the force needed to co-operate with Bonaparte in Italy. This started on the 13th of May, and was joined on the way by some detachments in Switzerland; the whole amounting to between fifteen and twenty thousand men.¹¹

On the 6th of May the first consul left Paris, having delayed to the last moment in order to keep up the illusions of the Austrian commander-in-chief in Italy. The crossing of the St. Bernard began on the 15th, and on the 20th the whole army had passed. On the 26th it issued in the plains of Piedmont; whence Bonaparte turned to the eastward, to insure his great object of throwing his force across the enemy's communications and taking from him all hope of regaining them without a battle. On the first of June he entered Milan.

Meanwhile Masséna's army, a prey to horrible famine, prolonged in Genoa a resistance which greatly contributed to the false position of the Austrians. Of these, twenty-five thousand were before Nice, thirty thousand before Genoa. Twenty thousand more had been lost by casualties since the campaign opened. Unwilling to relinquish his gains, Mélas waited too long to concentrate his scattered troops; and when at last he sent the necessary orders, Masséna was treating to evacuate Genoa. The Austrian officer on the spot, unwilling to lose the prize, postponed compliance until it was secured,—a delay fraught with serious results. On the 5th Genoa was given

¹¹ Thiers, *Cons. et Empire*, vol. i., p. 332.

up, and the besiegers, leaving a garrison in the place, marched to join the commander-in-chief, who was gathering his forces around Alessandria. Meanwhile Bonaparte had crossed to the south side of the Po with half his army. On the 14th of June was fought the battle of Marengo. Anxious lest the foe might give him the slip, the first consul had spread his troops too widely; and the first events of the day were so far in favor of the Austrians that Mélas, who was seventy-six years old, left the field at two in the afternoon, certain of victory, to seek repose. An hour later the opportune arrival of General Desaix turned the scales, and Bonaparte remained conqueror on the ground, standing across the enemy's line of retreat. The following day Mélas signed a convention abandoning all northern Italy, as far as the Mincio, behind which the Austrians were to withdraw. All the fortified places were given up to France, including the hardly won Genoa. While awaiting the Emperor's answer to propositions of peace, sent by the First Consul, there was to be in Italy a suspension of arms, during which neither army should send detachments to Germany. On the 2d of July Bonaparte re-entered Paris in triumph, after an absence of less than two months.

Meantime Moreau, after learning the successful crossing of the St. Bernard, had resumed the offensive. Moving to the eastward, he crossed the Danube below Ulm with part of his force on the 19th of June, threatening Kray's communications with Bohemia. A partial encounter on that day left five thousand prisoners in the hands of the French, who maintained the

position they had gained. The same night Kray evacuated Ulm, moving rapidly off by a road to the northward and so effecting his escape. Moreau, unable to intercept, followed for some distance and then stopped a pursuit which promised small results. He was still ignorant of the battle of Marengo, of which the Austrians now had news; and the latter, while concealing the victory, announced to him the suspension of arms, and suggested a similar arrangement in Germany. Convinced that events favorable to France lay behind this proposition, Moreau would come to no agreement; but on the contrary decided at once to secure for his victorious army the most advantageous conditions with which to enter upon negotiations. Closely investing the important fortresses of Ulm and Ingolstadt on the Danube, with part of his force, he recrossed the river with the remainder and advanced into Bavaria. On the 28th of June he entered Munich; and near there was signed on the 15th of July an armistice, closely corresponding with that concluded by Bonaparte in Italy just one month before. The two belligerents retired behind appointed lines, not again to engage in hostilities without twelve days' notice. During this suspension of arms the blockaded Austrian fortresses should receive every fortnight provisions proportioned to their consumption, so that in case of renewed operations they would be in the same condition as when the truce began. The two great French armies were now encamped in the fertile plains of Italy and Germany, living in quiet off districts external to France, which was thus relieved of the larger part of their expense.

The effect of this short and brilliant campaign of unbroken French successes was to dispose to peace both members of the coalition. Neither, however, was yet reduced to negotiate apart from its ally. On the very day the news of Marengo was received at Vienna, but before the last reverses in Germany, Austria had renewed her engagements with Great Britain, both powers stipulating not to treat singly. The first consul, on the other hand, was distinctly opposed to joint discussions, his constant policy in the cabinet as in the field being to separate his opponents. As Austria's great need was to gain time, she sent to Paris an envoy empowered to exchange views with the French government but to conclude nothing. The emperor also intimated his wish for a general pacification, and on the 9th of August the British minister at Vienna notified to that court the willingness of his own to enter into negotiations for a general peace.

With this began an encounter of wits, in which Bonaparte showed himself as astute at a bargain as he was wily in the field. Austria, if not given too much time, was at his mercy; but Great Britain held over him a like advantage in her control of the sea, which was strangling the colonial empire he passionately wished to restore. Haïti had escaped from all but nominal control; Martinique, the gem of the Antilles, was in British hands; Malta and Egypt, the trophies of his own enterprise, were slowly but surely expiring. For these he too needed time; for with it there was good prospect of soon playing a card which should reverse, or at least seriously modify, the state of the game, by bringing

Russia and the Baltic navies into the combination against Great Britain. In this support, and in the extremity to which he might reduce Austria, lay his only chances to check the great opponent of France; for, while almost supreme on the Continent, he could not from the coast project his power beyond the range of a cannon's ball. His correspondence throughout this period abounds with instructions and exhortations to fit out the fleets, to take the sea, to relieve Malta and Egypt, to seize Sardinia by an expedition from Corsica, and Mahon by a squadron from Brest. All fell fruitless before the exhaustion of French sea power, as did also his plan for an extensive cruise on a grand scale against British commerce in many quarters of the world. "I see with regret," wrote he to the minister of Marine, "that the armament of the fleet has been sacrificed to that of a great number of small vessels;" but in truth there was nothing else to do. His ablest admirals failed to equip ships from which every resource was cut off by the omnipresent cruisers of the enemy. "We can never take Mahon," he writes to the court of Spain, in the full swing of his triumphs after Marengo; "therefore make war on Portugal and take her provinces, so as to enter negotiations for peace with your hands as full as possible of equivalents."

The Czar Paul had joined the second coalition full of ardor against the French revolution and determined to restore the princes who had lost their thrones. He had been bitterly mortified by the reverses to his troops in 1799, and especially by the disaster to Suwarrow, for which he not unjustly blamed Austria.

He was also dissatisfied to find in his allies less of zeal for unfortunate sovereigns than of desire to reduce the power of France, to whose system they attributed the misfortunes of Europe. Disappointment in his unbalanced mind turned soon to coolness and was rapidly passing to hostility. The transition was assisted, and a pretext for a breach with Great Britain afforded, by a fresh outbreak of the old dispute between her and the Baltic powers concerning the rights of neutrals. Denmark in 1799 adopted the policy of convoying her merchant vessels by ships of war, and claimed that a statement from the senior naval officer, that the cargoes contained nothing forbidden by the law of nations, exempted the convoy from the belligerent right of search. British statesmen denied that this conceded belligerent right could be nullified by any rule adopted by a neutral; to which they were the more impelled as the Danes and themselves differed radically in the definition of contraband. Danish naval officers being instructed to resist the search of their convoys, two hostile encounters took place; one in December, 1799, and the other in July, 1800. In the latter several were killed on both sides, and the Danish frigate was carried into the Downs. Seeing the threatening character of affairs, the British ministry took immediate steps to bring them to an issue. An ambassador was sent to Copenhagen supported by nine ships-of-the-line and several bomb-vessels; and on the 29th of August, barely a month after the affray, a convention was signed by which the general subject of searching ships under convoy was referred to future

discussion, but Denmark consented to suspend her convoys until a definitive treaty was made. The Danish frigate was at once released.

It will be observed that this collision occurred in the very midst of the negotiations between Austria and France, to which Great Britain claimed the right to be a party. The whole vexed question of neutral and belligerent rights was thus violently raised, at a moment most inauspicious to the allies and most favorable to Bonaparte. The latter, crowned with victory upon the Continent, found every neutral commercial state disposed to side with him in contesting positions considered by Great Britain to be vital to her safety. It was for him to foster this disposition and combine the separate powers into one great effort, before which the Mistress of the Seas should be compelled to recede and submit. The occasion here arose, as it were spontaneously, to realize what became the great dream of his life and ultimately led him to his ruin,—to unite the Continent against the British Islands and, as he phrased it, "to conquer the sea by the land." Circumstances, partly anterior to his rise to power, and partly contrived by his sagacious policy during the previous few months, particularly favored at this moment such a league, for which the affair of the Danish convoy supplied an impulse, and the prostration of Great Britain's ally, Austria, an opportunity. Bonaparte underestimated the vitality and influence of a state upon which centred a far-reaching commercial system, and in valuing naval power he did not appreciate that a mere mass

of ships had not the weight he himself was able to impart to a mass of men. He never fully understood the maritime problems with which from time to time he had to deal; but he showed wonderful skill at this critical period in combining against his principal enemy an opposition, for which Prussia afforded the body and the hot temper of the Czar the animating soul.

Since 1795 Prussia had shut herself up to a rigorous neutrality, in which were embraced the North German states. Under this system, during the maritime war, the commerce of the larger part of the Continent poured in through these states—by the great German rivers, the Ems, the Weser, and the Elbe—and through the cities of Hamburg and Bremen. The tonnage clearing from Great Britain alone to North Germany increased from 120,000 in 1792 to 389,000 in 1800; a traffic of which Prussia took the lion's share. To these advantages of neutral territory it was desirable to join the utmost freedom for neutral navigation. Upon this Great Britain bore heavily; but so large a proportion of the trade was done through her, and the sea was so entirely under the power of her navy, that prudence had so far dictated acquiescence in her claims, even when not admitted. This was particularly the case while Russia, under Catherine II., and in the first years of her son, tacitly or openly supported Great Britain; and while Austria, though badly beaten in the field, remained unshaken in power. The weaker maritime countries, Sweden, Denmark, and the United States of America, were determined by similar motives. They groaned under the British exactions;

but the expansion of their commerce outweighed the injuries received, and submission was less hurtful than resistance in arms. Russia herself, though not strictly a maritime state, was a large producer of articles which were mainly carried by British ships and for which England was the chief customer. The material interests of Russia, and especially of the powerful nobles, were therefore bound up with peace with Great Britain; but an absolute monarch could disregard this fact, at least for a time. The furious, impulsive temper of Paul I., if aroused, was quite capable of overleaping all prudential considerations, of using the colossal power of his empire to support the other states, and even of compelling them to act in concert with him.

Such were the discordant elements which Bonaparte had to reconcile into a common effort: on the one hand, the strong though short-sighted mercantile interests, which to retain great present advantages would favor submission rather than resistance to the exactions of Great Britain. These were represented by the development of carrying trade in the neutral Baltic states, by the enlarged commerce of Prussia and North Germany,—which through their neutrality in a maritime war had become the highway of intercourse between the Continent and the outer world,—and by the productions of Russia, which formed the revenue of her great proprietors, and found their way to market wholly by sea. Bound together by the close relations which commerce breeds between states, and by the dependence of each upon the capital and mercantile system of Great Britain,

these interests constituted the prosperity of nations, and could by no rulers be lightly disregarded. On the other hand stood the dignity of neutral flags and their permanent interests,—always contrary to those of belligerents,—the ambition of Prussia and her jealousy of Austria, and finally the chivalrous, reckless, half-insane Paul I., seeking now with all the bitterness of personal feeling to gratify his resentment against his late allies.

Bonaparte had already begun to work upon the Czar as well as upon the neutral powers. Closely observing the political horizon from his first accession to office, he had noted every condition capable of raising embarrassments to Great Britain, whom his unerring military insight had long before recognized¹² as the key to a military situation, in which his own object was the predominance of France, not only on the Continent but throughout the world. Sagacious a statesman as he was, and clearly as he recognized the power of moral and political motives, his ideal of control was essentially forcible, based upon superior armies and superior fleets; and consequently every political problem was by him viewed much as a campaign, in which forces were to be moved, combined, and finally massed upon the vital points of an enemy's position. The power of Great Britain was sea power in its widest sense, commercial and naval; against it, therefore, he aimed to effect such a combination as would both destroy her commerce and cripple her navy. The impotence of France and Spain, united, to injure the one or the other had

¹² See ante, p, 251.

been clearly shown by repeated defeats, and by the failure of the commerce-destroying so industriously carried on during seven years of war. Far from decaying or languishing, the commerce of Great Britain thrived everywhere with redoubled vigor, and her fleets rode triumphant in all seas. There was, however, one quarter in which she had not hitherto been disturbed, except by the quickly extinguished efforts of the Dutch navy; and just there, in the Baltic and North Sea, was the point where, next to the British islands and seas themselves, she was most vulnerable. There was concentrated a great part of her shipping; there was the market for the colonial produce stored in her overflowing warehouses; there also were gathered three navies, whose united masses—manned by hardy seamen trained in a boisterous navigation and sheltered in an enclosed sea of perilous access—might overweight a force already strained to control the Mediterranean, to blockade the hostile arsenals, and to protect the merchant shipping which thronged over every ocean highway.

To close the north of Europe to British trade, and to combine the Baltic navies against that of Great Britain, became thenceforth the fixed ideas of Bonaparte's life. To conciliate Denmark he released a number of Danish ships, which had been arrested by the Directory for submitting to search by British cruisers. The extent of the czar's alienation from his former allies not being at first apparent, he next courted Prussia, the head of the North German neutrality, in whose power it was to arrest British trade both through her own territory and through

Hamburg. Prussia was ambitious to play a leading part in Europe. The five years spent by Austria, France, and Great Britain in exhausting warfare, she had used to consolidate her power and husband her resources. She wished now to pose as a mediator, and looked for the time when the prostration of the combatants and her own restored strength would cause them to bend to her influence, and yield her points, through the simple exhibition of her force. The advances and flatteries of the first consul were graciously received, but the path Prussia had traced for herself was to involve no risks—only gains; she wished much, but would venture naught. It was a dangerous part to play, this waiting on opportunity, against such a man as swayed the destinies of the Continent during the next twelve years. From it arose a hesitating, selfish, and timid policy, fluctuating with every breath of danger or hope of advantage, dishonoring the national name, until it ended in Jena and the agonies of humiliation through which the country passed between that disaster and the overthrow of Napoleon. Such a spirit is prone to side with a strong combination and to yield to a masterful external impulse.

Under this Bonaparte next sought to bring her. "We shall make nothing out of Prussia," he writes to Talleyrand on the first of June, 1800, on his way to Marengo; and he adds, "If the news from Egypt [apparently the defeat of the Turks by Kleber] is confirmed, it will become important to have some one in Russia. The Ottoman Empire cannot exist much longer, and if Paul I. turns his looks in that direction our interests become common."

¹³ Bonaparte was at no pains to reconcile this view with an assurance made a month later to Turkey that "no anxiety need be felt about Egypt, which will be restored as soon as the Porte shall resume its former relations with France." ¹⁴ On the 4th of June he recommends general and flattering overtures to the czar, accompanied by special marks of consideration. The latter was fully prepared to be won by compliments from the man for whose military glory he had come to feel a profound enthusiasm. On the 4th of July Bonaparte's general advances took form in a definite proposal to surrender to Russian troops Malta, whose speedy loss by himself he saw to be inevitable; an offer calculated not only to charm the Czar, who delighted to fancy himself the head and protector of an ancient order of knights, but also to sow discord between him and Great Britain, if, as was probable, the latter declined to yield her prey to a friend who at a critical moment had forsaken her. The letter sketched by the first consul was carefully worded to quicken the ready vanity of its recipient. "Desiring to give a proof of personal consideration to the emperor of Russia and to distinguish him from the other enemies of the republic, who fight from a vile love of gain, the first consul wishes, if the garrison of Malta is constrained by famine to evacuate the place, to restore it to the hands of the czar as grand master of the order; and although the first consul is certain that Malta has provisions

¹³ Corr. de Nap., vol. vi. p. 410.

¹⁴ Ibid., vol. vi. p. 497.

for several months, ¹⁵ he wishes his Majesty to inform him what conventions he would wish to make, and what measures to take, so that, if the case arise, his troops may enter that place." ¹⁶ This was shortly followed by the release of the Russian prisoners in France, in number between seven and eight thousand, whom Bonaparte clad and dismissed with their colors and their officers to return into Russia; suggesting that, if the czar thought proper, he "might demand of the English to release an equal number of French prisoners; but if not, the first consul hoped he would accept his troops as an especial mark of the esteem felt for the brave Russian armies." ¹⁷

Immediately after these transactions occurred the collision between British and Danish cruisers in the Channel, and the entrance of the Baltic by the British fleet, to support its ambassador in his negotiation with Denmark. Paul I. made of the latter a pretext for sequestering all British property in Russia, to be held as a guarantee against the future action of Great Britain. This order, dated August 29, 1800, was followed by another of September 10, announcing that "several political circumstances induced the emperor to think that a rupture of friendship with England may ensue," and directing a concentration of Russian troops. The cloud blew over for a moment, the sequestration

¹⁵ "Voyant bien," says M. Thiers, Bonaparte's panegyrist, "que Malta ne pouvait pas tenir longtemps." (Cons. et Emp., vol. ii. p. 92.)

¹⁶ Corr. de Nap., vol. vi. p. 498.

¹⁷ Corr. de Nap., vol. vi. p. 520.

being removed on the 22d of September; but the fall of Malta, which had surrendered on the 5th of the same month, brought matters to an issue. The czar had gladly accepted Bonaparte's adroit advances and designated a general to go to Paris, take command of the released prisoners and with them repair to Malta. The capitulation became known to him early in November; before which he had formally published his intention to revive the Armed Neutrality of 1780 against the maritime claims of Great Britain. It being very doubtful whether the latter would deliver the island after his unfriendly measures, a sequestration of British property was again decreed. Some three hundred ships were seized, their crews marched into the interior, and seals placed on all warehouses containing British property; the czar declaring that the embargo should not be removed until the acknowledgment of his rights to Malta, as grand master of the Order. The sequestered property was to be held by an imperial commission and applied to pay debts due to Russian subjects by private Englishmen.

Affairs had now reached a stage where Prussia felt encouraged to move. The breach between Great Britain and Russia had opened wide, while the relations of the czar and first consul had become so friendly as to assure their concert. The armistice between Austria and France still continued, pending the decision whether the latter would negotiate with the emperor and Great Britain conjointly; but Bonaparte was a close as well as a hard bargainer. He would not admit the joint negotiation,

nor postpone the renewal of hostilities beyond the 11th of September, except on condition of a maritime truce as favorable to France as he considered the land armistice to be to Austria. He proposed entire freedom of navigation to merchant vessels, the raising of the blockades of Brest, Cadiz, Toulon, and Flushing, and that Malta and Alexandria should be freely open to receive provisions by French or neutral vessels. The effect would be to allow the French dockyards to obtain naval stores, of which they were utterly destitute, and Malta and Egypt to receive undefined quantities of supplies and so prolong their resistance indefinitely. Great Britain was only willing to adopt for Egypt and Malta the literal terms of the armistice applied to the three Austrian fortresses blockaded by French troops. These were to receive every fortnight provisions proportioned to their consumption, and the British ministry offered to allow the same to Malta and Egypt. They also conceded free navigation, except in the articles of military and naval stores. Bonaparte refused. Austria's advantage in the armistice, he said, was not the mere retention of the fortresses, but the use she was making of her respite. Between these two extreme views no middle term could be found. In fact, great as were the results of Marengo, and of Moreau's more methodical advance into Germany, the material advantage of Great Britain over France still far exceeded that of France over Austria. The French had gained great successes, but they were now forcing the enemy back upon the centre of his power and they had not possession of his communications; whereas Great

Britain had shut off, not merely Egypt and Malta, but France herself from all fruitful intercourse with the outer world. The negotiation for a maritime truce was broken off on the 9th of October. Meanwhile Bonaparte, declining to await its issue, had given notice that hostilities would be resumed between the 5th and 10th of September; and Austria, not yet ready, was fain to purchase a further delay by surrendering the blockaded places, Ulm, Ingolstadt, and Philipsburg. A convention to this effect was concluded, and the renewal of the war postponed for forty-five days dating from September 21st.

In such conditions Prussia saw one of those opportunities which, under Bonaparte's manipulation, so often misled her. The prostration of her German rival would be hastened, and the support of the first consul in the approaching apportionment of indemnities to German states secured, by joining the concert of the Baltic powers against Great Britain. Without this accession to the northern league the quarrel would be mainly naval, and its issue, before the disciplined valor of British seamen, scarcely doubtful. Prussia alone was so situated as to deal the direct and heavy blow at British commerce of closing its accustomed access to the Continent; and the injury thus inflicted so far exceeded any she herself could incidentally receive, as to make this course less hazardous than that of offending the czar and the French government. The political connection of Hanover with Great Britain was a further motive, giving Prussia the hope, so often dangled before her eyes by Bonaparte, of permanently

annexing the German dominions of the British king. An occasion soon arose for showing her bias. In the latter part of October a British cruiser seized a Prussian merchantman trying to enter the Texel with a cargo of naval stores. The captor, through stress of weather, took his prize into Cuxhaven, a port at the mouth of the Elbe belonging to Hamburg, through which passed much of the British commerce with the Continent. Prussia demanded its release of the Hamburg senate, and upon refusal ordered two thousand troops to take possession of the port. The senate then bought the prize and delivered it to Prussia, and the British government also directed its restoration; a step of pure policy with which Fox taunted the ministry. It was, as he truly remarked, a concession of principle, dictated by the fact that Prussia, while capable of doing much harm to Great Britain, could not be reached by the British navy.

Whether it was wise to waive a point, in order to withhold an important member from the formidable combination of the North, may be argued; but the attempt met the usual fate of concessions attributed to weakness. The remonstrances of the British ambassador received the reply that the occupation, having been ordered, must be carried out; that the neutrality of Cuxhaven "being thus placed under the guarantee of the king will be more effectually out of the reach of all violation." Such reasoning indicated beyond doubt the stand Prussia was about to take; and her influence fixed the course of Denmark, which is said to have been averse from a step that threatened

to stop her trade and would probably make her the first victim of Great Britain's resentment. On the 16th of December a treaty renewing the Armed Neutrality of 1780 was signed at St. Petersburg by Russia and Sweden, and received the prompt adherence of Denmark and Prussia. Its leading affirmations were that neutral ships were free to carry on the coasting and colonial trade of states at war, that enemy's goods under the neutral flag were not subject to seizure, and that blockades, to be respected, must be supported by such a force of ships before the port as to make the attempt to enter hazardous. A definition of contraband was adopted excluding naval stores from that title; and the claim was affirmed that vessels under convoy of a ship of war were not liable to the belligerent right of search. Each of these assertions contested one of the maritime claims upon which Great Britain conceived her naval power, and consequently her place among the nations, to depend; but the consenting states bound themselves to maintain their positions by force, if necessary.

Thus was successfully formed the combination of the Northern powers against Great Britain, the first and most willing of those effected by Bonaparte. By a singular coincidence, which recalls the opportuneness of his departure from England in 1798 to check the yet undivined expedition against Egypt,¹⁸ Nelson, the man destined also to strike this coalition to the ground, was during its formation slowly journeying from the Mediterranean,

¹⁸ See vol. i. pp. 249, 256.

with which his name and his glory both before and after are most closely associated, to the North Sea; as though again drawn by some mysterious influence, to be at hand for unknown services which he alone could render. On the 11th of July, a week after Bonaparte made his first offer of Malta to the czar, Nelson left Leghorn for Trieste and Vienna. He passed through Hamburg at the very time that the affair of the Prussian prize was under discussion, and landed in England on the 6th of November. Finding his health entirely restored by the land journey, he applied for immediate service, and was assigned to command a division of the Channel fleet under Lord St. Vincent; but he did not go afloat until the 17th of January, 1801, when his flag was hoisted on board the "San Josef," the three-decker he had captured at the battle of Cape St. Vincent. Meanwhile, however, it had been settled between the Admiralty and himself that if a fleet were sent into the Baltic, he should go as second in command to Sir Hyde Parker; and when in the very act of reporting to St. Vincent, the day before he joined the San Josef, a letter arrived from Parker announcing his appointment.

By this time Austria had received a final blow, which forced her to treat alone, and postponed for nearly five years her reappearance in the field. The emperor had sent an envoy to Lunéville, who was met by Joseph Bonaparte as the representative of France; but refusing to make peace apart from Great Britain, hostilities were resumed on the 28th of November. On the 3d of December Moreau won the great battle

of Hohenlinden, and then advanced upon Vienna. On the 25th an armistice was signed at Steyer, within a hundred miles of the Austrian capital. Successes, less brilliant but decided, were obtained in Italy, resulting on the 16th of January, 1801, in an armistice between the armies there. At nearly the same moment with this last news the first consul received a letter from the czar, manifesting extremely friendly feelings towards France, while full of hatred towards England, and signifying his intention to send an ambassador to Paris. This filled Bonaparte with sanguine hopes, the expression of which shows how heavily sea power weighed in his estimation. "Peace with the emperor," he wrote to his brother at Lunéville, "is *nothing* in comparison with the alliance of the czar, which will *dominate England* and preserve Egypt for us;" ¹⁹ and he ordered him to prolong the negotiations until the arrival of the expected ambassador, that the engagements contracted with Germany might be made in concert with Russia. Upon a similar combined action he based extravagant expectations of naval results, dependent upon the impression, with which he so hardly parted, that one set of ships was equal to another. ²⁰ A courier was at once dispatched to Spain

¹⁹ Corr. de Nap., vol. vi. p. 738, Jan. 21, 1801.

²⁰ Contrast Bonaparte's reliance upon the aggregate numbers of Baltic navies with Nelson's professional opinion when about to fight them. "During the Council of War (March 31, 1801) certain difficulties were started by some of the members relative to each of the three Powers we should have to engage, either in succession or united, in those seas. The number of the Russians was in particular represented as formidable. Lord Nelson kept pacing the cabin, mortified at everything which savored either of

to arrange expeditions against Ireland, against Brazil and the East Indies, to the Caribbean Sea for the recovery of the French and Spanish islands, and to the Mediterranean to regain Minorca. "In the embarrassment about to come upon England, threatened in the Archipelago by the Russians and in the northern seas by the combined Powers, it will be impossible for her long to keep a strong squadron in the Mediterranean." ²¹

The Russian envoy not arriving, however, Joseph Bonaparte was instructed to bring matters to a conclusion; and on the 9th of February the Austrian minister at Lunéville, after a stubborn fight over the terms, signed a treaty of peace. The principal conditions were: 1. The definitive surrender of all German possessions west of the Rhine, so that the river became the frontier of France from Switzerland to Holland. 2. The cession of Belgium made at Campo Formio was confirmed. 3. In Italy,

alarm or irresolution. When the above remark was applied to the Swedes, he sharply observed, 'The more numerous the better;' and when to the Russians, he repeatedly said, 'So much the better; I wish they were twice as many,—the easier the victory depend on it.' He alluded, as he afterwards explained in private, to the total want of tactique among the Northern fleets." (Col. Stewart's Narrative; Nelson's Dispatches, vol. iv. p. 301.) James, who was a careful investigator, estimates the allied Russian, Swedish, and Danish navies in the Baltic at fifty-two sail, of which not over forty-one were in condition for service, instead of eighty-eight as represented by some writers. "It must have been a very happy combination of circumstances," he adds, "that could have assembled in one spot twenty-five of those forty-one; and against that twenty-five of three different nations, all mere novices in naval tactics, eighteen, or, with Nelson to command, fifteen British sail were more than a match." (Nav. Hist., vol. iii. p. 43; ed. 1878.)

²¹ Corr. de Nap., vol. vi. p. 747. To Talleyrand, Jan. 27, 1801.

Austria herself was confined to the east bank of the Adige, and the princes of that house having principalities west of the river were dispossessed; their territories going to the Cisalpine Republic and to an infante of Spain, who was established in Tuscany with the title of King of Etruria. The Cisalpine and Etruria being dependent for their political existence upon France, the latter, through its control of their territory, interposed between Austria and Naples and shut off the British from access to Leghorn. 4. The eleventh article of the treaty guaranteed the independence of the Dutch, Swiss, Cisalpine and Ligurian republics. In its influence upon the future course of events this was the most important of all the stipulations. It gave to the political status of the Continent a definition, upon which Great Britain reckoned in her own treaty with France a few months later; and its virtual violation by Bonaparte became ultimately both the reason and the excuse for her refusal to fulfil the engagements about Malta, which led to the renewal of the war and so finally to the downfall of Napoleon. 5. The German Empire was pledged to give to the princes dispossessed on the west of the Rhine, and in Italy, an indemnity within the empire itself. By this Prussia, which was among the losers, reaped through Bonaparte's influence an abundant recompense for the support already given to his policy in the North. This success induced her to continue the same time-serving opportunism, until, when no longer necessary to France, she was thrown over with a rudeness that roused her to an isolated, and therefore

speedily crushed resistance.

CHAPTER XIII

Events of 1801

British Expedition to the Baltic—Battle of Copenhagen
—Bonaparte's futile attempts to contest control of the Sea
—His Continental Policy—Preliminaries of Peace with
Great Britain, October, 1801—Influence of Sea Power so
far upon the Course of the Revolution.

BY the peace of Lunéville Great Britain was left alone, and for the moment against all Europe. The ministry met the emergency with vigor and firmness, though possibly with too much reliance upon diplomacy and too little upon the military genius of the great seaman whose services were at their disposal. Upon the Continent nothing could be effected, all resistance to France had been crushed by the genius of Bonaparte; but time had to be gained for the expedition then under way against Egypt and destined to compel its evacuation by the French. The combination in the North also must be quickly dissolved, if the country were to treat on anything like equal terms.

An armed negotiation with the Baltic powers, similar to that employed with Denmark the preceding August, was therefore determined; and a fleet of eighteen sail-of-the-line with thirty-

five smaller vessels was assembled at Yarmouth, on the east coast of England. Rapidity of movement was essential to secure the advantage from the ice, which, breaking up in the harbors less rapidly than in the open water, would delay the concentration of the hostile navies; and also to allow the Baltic powers the least possible time to prepare for hostilities which they had scarcely anticipated. Everything pointed to Nelson, the most energetic and daring of British admirals, for the chief command of an expedition in which so much depended upon the squadron, numerically inferior to the aggregate of forces arrayed against it, attacking separately each of the component parts before their junction; but Nelson was still among the junior flag-officers, and the rather erratic manner in which, while in the central Mediterranean and under the influence of Lady Hamilton, he had allowed his views of the political situation to affect his actions even in questions of military subordination, had probably excited in Earl Spencer, the First Lord, by whom the officers were selected, a distrust of his fitness for a charge requiring a certain delicacy of discretion as well as vigor of action. Whatever the reason, withholding the chief command from him was unquestionably a mistake,—which would not have been made by St. Vincent, who succeeded Spencer a few weeks later upon the fall of the Pitt ministry. The conditions did not promise a pacific solution when the expedition was planned, and the prospect was even worse when it sailed. The instructions given to Sir Hyde Parker allowed Denmark forty-eight hours to accept

Great Britain's terms and withdraw from her engagements with the other Powers. Whether she complied peaceably or not, after she was reduced to submission the division of the Russian fleet at Revel was to be attacked, before the melting ice allowed it to join the main body in Cronstadt; and Sweden was to be similarly dealt with. Under such orders diplomacy had a minor part to play, while in their directness and simplicity they were admirably suited to the fiery temper and prompt military action which distinguished Nelson; and, but for the opportune death of Paul I., Great Britain might have had reason to regret that the opportunity to give Russia a severe reminder of her sea power was allowed to slip through the lax grasp of a sluggish admiral.

The fleet sailed from Yarmouth on the 12th of March, 1801; and on the 19th, although there had been some scattering in a heavy gale, nearly all were collected off the Skaw, the northern point of Jutland at the entrance of the Kattegat. The wind being north-west was fair for going to Copenhagen, and Nelson, if in command, would have advanced at once with the ambassador on board. "While the negotiation is going on," he said, "the Dane should see our flag waving every moment he lifted his head." As it was, the envoy went forward with a frigate alone and the fleet waited. On the 12th it was off Elsineur, where the envoy rejoined, Denmark having rejected the British terms.

This amounted to an acceptance of hostilities, and it only remained to the commander-in-chief to act at once; for the wind was favorable, an advantage which at any moment might be lost.

On this day Nelson addressed Parker a letter, summing up in a luminous manner the features of the situation and the different methods of action. "Not a moment should be lost in attacking," he said; "we shall never be so good a match for them as at this moment." He next hinted, what he had probably already said, that the fleet ought to have been off Copenhagen, and not at Elsinour, when the negotiation failed. "Then you might instantly attack and there would be scarcely a doubt but the Danish fleet would be destroyed, and the capital made so hot that Denmark would listen to reason and its true interest." Since, however, the mistake of losing so much time had been made, he seeks to stir his superior to lose no more. "Almost the safety, certainly the honor, of England is more entrusted to you than ever yet fell to the lot of any British officer; ... never did our country depend so much on the success of any fleet as of this."

Having thus shown the necessity for celerity, Nelson next discussed the plan of operations. Copenhagen is on the east side of the island of Zealand, fronting the coast of Sweden, from which it is separated by the passage called the Sound. On the west the island is divided from the other parts of Denmark by the Great Belt. The navigation of the latter being much the more difficult, the preparations of the Danes had been made on the side of the Sound, and chiefly about Copenhagen itself. For half a mile from the shore in front of the city, flats extend, and in the Sound itself at a distance of little over a mile, is a long shoal called the Middle Ground. Between these two bodies of shallow

water is a channel, called the King's, through which a fleet of heavy ships could sail, and from whose northern end a deep pocket stretches toward Copenhagen, forming the harbor proper. The natural point of attack therefore appears to be at the north; and there the Danes had erected powerful works, rising on piles out of the shoal water off the harbor's mouth and known as the Three-Crown Batteries. Nelson, however, pointed out that not only was this head of the line exceedingly strong, but that the wind that was fair to attack would be foul to return; therefore a disabled ship would have no escape but by passing through the King's Channel. Doing so she would have to run the gantlet of a line of armed hulks, which the Danes had established as floating batteries along the inner edge of the channel—covering the front of Copenhagen—and would also be separated from her fleet. Nor was this difficulty, which may be called tactical, the only objection to a plan that he disparaged as "taking the bull by the horns." He remarked that so long as the British fleet remained in the Sound, without entering the Baltic, the way was left open for both the Swedes and the Russians, if released by the ice, to make a junction with the Danes. Consequently, he advised that a sufficiently strong force of the lighter ships-of-the-line should pass outside the Middle Ground, despite the difficulties of navigation, which were not insuperable, and come up in rear of the city. There they would interpose between the Danes and their allies, and be in position to assail the weaker part of the hostile order. He offered himself to lead this detachment.

BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN.

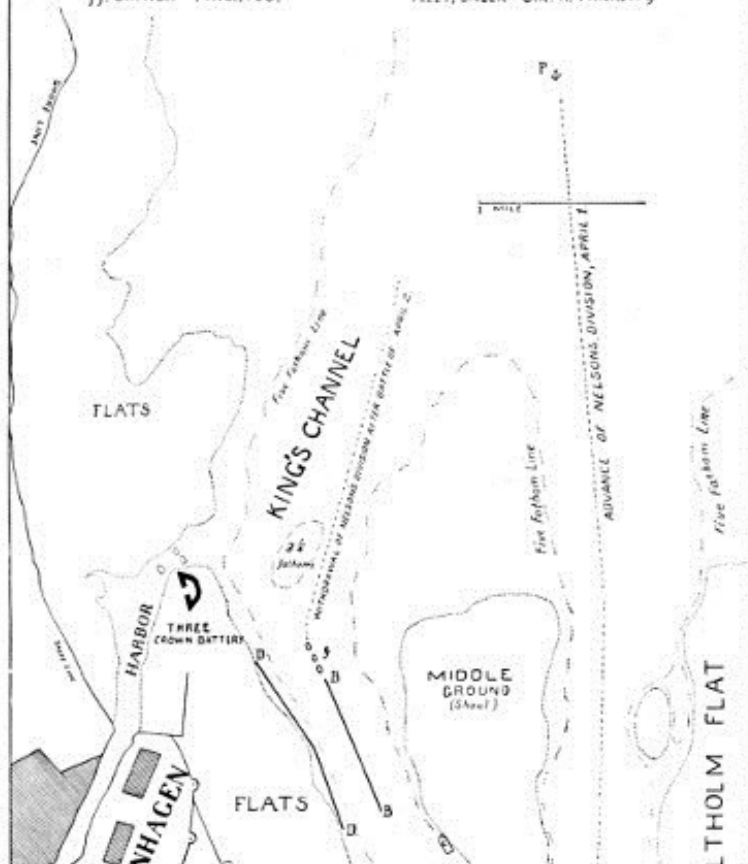
APRIL 2, 1801.

WIND  S.S.E.

REFERENCES.

A. AGAMEMNON AT ANCHOR.
BB. BRITISH LINE OF BATTLE.
CC. BRITISH SHIPS AROUND.
FF. BRITISH FRIGATES.

DD. DANISH LINE OF HULKS.
N. ANCHORAGE OF NELSON'S DIVISION, APRIL 1-2.
P. ANCHORAGE OF BRITISH MAIN FLEET, UNDER SIR H. PARKER.



Battle of Copenhagen.

This whole letter of March 24, 1801, ²² possesses peculiar interest; for it shows with a rare particularity, elicited by the need he felt of arousing and convincing his superior, Nelson's clear discernment of the decisive features of a military situation. The fame of this great admiral has depended less upon his conduct of campaigns than upon the renowned victories he won in the actual collision of fleet with fleet; and even then has been mutilated by the obstinacy with which, despite the perfectly evident facts, men have persisted in seeing in them nothing but dash,—heart, not head. ²³ Throughout his correspondence, it is true, there are frequent traces of the activity of his mental faculties and of the

²² Nelson's Letters and Dispatches, vol. iv. p. 295.

²³ While this work was going through the press, the author was gratified to find in the life of the late distinguished admiral Sir William Parker an anecdote of Nelson, which, as showing the military ideas of that great sea-officer, is worth a dozen of the "go straight at them" stories which pass current as embodying his precepts. "Throughout the month of October, 1804, Toulon was frequently reconnoitred, and the frigates 'Phoebe' and 'Amazon' were ordered to cruise together. Previous to their going away Lord Nelson gave to Captains Capel and Parker several injunctions, in case they should get an opportunity of attacking two of the French frigates, which now got under weigh more frequently. *The principal one* was that they should not each single out and attack an opponent, but 'that both should endeavor together to take *one frigate*; if successful, chase the other; but, if you do not take the second, still you have won a victory and your country will gain a frigate.' Then half laughing, and half snappishly, he said kindly to them as he wished them good-by, 'I daresay you consider yourselves a couple of fine fellows, and when you get away from me will do nothing of the sort, but think yourselves wiser than I am!'" ("The Last of Nelson's Captains," by Admiral Sir Augustus Phillimore, K. C. B., London, 1891, p. 122.)

general accuracy of his military conclusions; but ordinarily it is from his actions that his reasonings and principles must be deduced. In the present case we have the views he held and the course he evidently would have pursued clearly formulated by himself; and it cannot but be a subject of regret that the naval world should have lost so fine an illustration as he would there have given of the principles and conduct of naval warfare. He concluded his letter with a suggestion worthy of Napoleon himself, and which, if adopted, would have brought down the Baltic Confederacy with a crash that would have resounded throughout Europe. "Supposing us through the Belt with the wind first westerly, would it not be possible to go with the fleet, or detach ten ships of three and two decks, with one bomb and two fire-ships, to Revel, to destroy the Russian squadron at that place? I do not see the great risk of such a detachment, and with the remainder to attempt the business at Copenhagen. The measure may be thought bold, but I am of opinion the boldest are the safest; and our country demands a most vigorous exertion of her force, directed with judgment."

Committed as the Danes were to a stationary defence, this recommendation to strike at the soul of the confederacy evinced the clearest perception of the key to the situation, which Nelson himself summed up in the following words: "I look upon the Northern League to be like a tree, of which Paul was the trunk and Sweden and Denmark the branches. If I can get at the trunk and hew it down, the branches fall of course; but I may lop

the branches and yet not be able to fell the tree, and my power must be weaker when its greatest strength is required" ²⁴—that is, the Russians should have been attacked before the fleet was weakened, as it inevitably must be, by the battle with the Danes. "If we could have cut up the Russian fleet," he said again, "that was my object." Whatever Denmark's wishes about fighting, she was by her continental possessions tied to the policy of Russia and Prussia, either of whom could overwhelm her by land. She dared not disregard them. The course of both depended upon the czar; for the temporizing policy of Prussia would at once embrace his withdrawal from the league as an excuse for doing the same. At Revel were twelve Russian ships-of-the-line, fully half their Baltic fleet, whose destruction would have paralyzed the remainder and the naval power of the empire. To persuade Parker to such a step was, however, hopeless. "Our fleet would never have acted against Russia and Sweden," wrote Nelson afterwards, "although Copenhagen would have been burned; for Sir Hyde Parker was determined not to leave Denmark hostile in his rear;" ²⁵ a reason whose technical accuracy under all the circumstances was nothing short of pedantic, and illustrates the immense distance between a good and accomplished officer, which Parker was, and a genius whose comprehension of rules serves only to guide, not to fetter, his judgment.

²⁴ Nels. Disp., vol. iv. p. 355. See also a very emphatic statement of his views on the campaign, in a letter to Mr. Vansittart, p. 367.

²⁵ Nelson's Disp., April 9, 1801, vol. iv. pp. 339 and 341.

Although unable to rise equal to the great opportunity indicated by Nelson, Sir Hyde Parker adopted his suggestion as to the method and direction of the principal attack upon the defences of Copenhagen. For this, Nelson asked ten ships-of-the-line and a number of smaller vessels, with which he undertook to destroy the floating batteries covering the front of the city. These being reduced, the bomb vessels could be placed so as to play with effect upon the dockyard, arsenals, and the town, in case further resistance was made.

The nights of the 30th and 31st of March were employed sounding the channel. On the first of April the fleet moved up to the north end of the Middle Ground, about four miles from the city; and that afternoon Nelson's division, to which Parker had assigned two ships-of-the-line more than had been asked—or twelve altogether—got under way, passed through the outer channel and anchored towards sundown off the south-east end of the shoal, two miles from the head ²⁶ of the Danish line. Nelson announced his purpose to attack as soon as the wind served; and the night was passed by him in arranging the order of battle. The enterprise was perilous, not on account of the force to be engaged, but because of the great difficulties of navigation. The pilots were mostly mates of merchantmen trading with the Baltic; and their experience in vessels of three or four hundred tons did not fit them for the charge of heavy battle-ships. They betrayed throughout great indecision, and their

²⁶ The Danes were moored with their heads to the southward.

imperfect knowledge contributed to the principal mishaps of the day, as well as to a comparative incompleteness in the results of victory.

The next morning the wind came fair at south-south-east, and at eight A. M. the British captains were summoned to the flag-ship for their final instructions. The Danish line to be attacked extended in a north-west and south-east direction for somewhat over a mile. It was composed of hulks and floating batteries, eighteen to twenty in number and mounting 628 guns, of which about 375 would—fighting thus at anchor—be on the engaged side. The southern flank now to be assailed was partly supported by works on shore; but from the intervening shoal water these were too distant for thoroughly efficient fire. Being thus distinctly weaker than the northern extremity, which was covered by the Three-Crown Battery and a second line of heavy ships, this southern end was most properly chosen by the British as the point of their chief assault for tactical reasons, independently of the strategic advantage urged by Nelson in thus interposing between the enemy and his allies. At half-past nine signal was made to weigh. The ships were soon under sail; but the difficulties of pilotage, despite careful soundings made during the night by an experienced naval captain, were soon apparent. The "Agamemnon," of sixty-four guns, was unable to weather the point of the Middle Ground, and had to anchor out of range. She had no share in the battle. The "Bellona" and "Russell," seventy-fours, the fourth and fifth in the order, entered

the Channel; but keeping too far to the eastward they ran ashore on its farther side—upon the Middle Ground. They were not out of action, but beyond the range of the most efficient gunnery under the conditions of that period. Nelson's flag-ship following them passed clear, as did the rest of the heavy ships; but the loss of these three out of the line prevented by so much its extension to the northward. The result was to expose that part of the British order to a weight of fire quite disproportioned to its strength. A body of frigates very gallantly undertook to fill the gap, which they could do but inadequately, and suffered heavy loss in attempting.

The battle was at its height at half-past eleven. There was then no more manœuvring, but the simple question of efficient gunnery and endurance. At about two P. M. a great part of the Danish line had ceased to fire, and the flag-ship "Dannebrog" was in flames. During the action the Danish crews were frequently re-enforced from the shore; and the new-comers in several cases, reaching the ships after they had struck, renewed the fight, either through ignorance or indifference to the fact. The land batteries also fired on boats trying to take possession. Nelson seized on this circumstance to bring the affair to a conclusion. He wrote a letter addressed "To the brothers of Englishmen, the Danes," and sent it under flag of truce to the Crown Prince, who was in the city. "Lord Nelson has directions to spare Denmark when no longer resisting; but if the firing is continued on the part of Denmark, Lord Nelson will be obliged

to set on fire all the floating batteries he has taken, without having the power of saving the brave Danes who have defended them." The letter was sent on shore by a British officer who had served in the Russian navy and spoke Danish. The engagement continued until about three P. M., when the whole line of floating defences south-east of the Crown Batteries had either struck or been destroyed.

The fortifications were still unharmed, as were the ships west of them covering the harbor proper; but their fire was stopped by the bearer of a flag of truce who was bringing to Nelson the reply of the Crown Prince. The latter demanded the precise purport of the first message. Nelson took a high hand. He had destroyed the part of the enemy's line which he had attacked; but it was important now to withdraw his crippled ships, and with the existing wind that could only be done by passing the Crown Batteries. Had the three that ran aground been in the line, it is permissible to believe that that work would have been so far injured as to be practically harmless; but this was far from the case. The admiral in his second letter politically ignored this feature of the situation. He wrote, "Lord Nelson's object in sending on shore a flag of truce is humanity; ²⁷ he therefore

²⁷ If Nelson had an *arrière pensée* in sending the flag, he never admitted it, before or after, to friend or foe. "Many of my friends," he wrote a month after the battle, "thought it a *ruse de guerre* and not quite justifiable. Very few attribute it to the cause that I felt, and which I trust in God I shall retain to the last moment,—*humanity*." He then enlarges upon the situation, and says that the wounded Danes in the prizes were receiving half the shot fired by the shore batteries. (Nels. Disp., vol. iv., p. 360.)

consents that hostilities shall cease till Lord Nelson can take his prisoners out of the prizes, and he consents to land all the wounded Danes and to burn or remove his prizes. Lord Nelson, with humble duty to His Royal Highness, begs leave to say that he will ever esteem it the greatest victory he ever gained, if this flag of truce may be the happy forerunner of a lasting and happy union between my most gracious Sovereign and His Majesty the King of Denmark." Having written the letter, he referred the bearer for definite action to Sir Hyde Parker, who lay some four miles off in the "London;" foreseeing that the long pull there and back would give time for the leading ships, which were much crippled, to clear the shoals, though their course for so doing lay close under the Crown Batteries. Thus the exposed part of the British fleet was successfully removed from a dangerous position and rejoined Parker north of the Middle Ground. The advantage obtained by Nelson's presence of mind and promptness in gaining this respite was shown by the difficulties attending the withdrawal. Three out of five ships-of-the-line grounded, two of which remained fast for several hours a mile from the batteries, but protected by the truce.

The result of the battle of Copenhagen was to uncover the front of the city and lay it, with its dockyards and arsenals, open to bombardment. It was now safe to place the bomb vessels in the King's Channel. It became a question for Denmark to decide, whether fear of her powerful allies and zeal for the claims of neutrals should lead her to undergo further punishment,

or whether the suffering already endured and the danger still threatening were excuse sufficient for abandoning the coalition. On the other hand, Nelson, who was the brains as well as the backbone of the British power in the North, cared little, either now or before the battle, about the attitude of Denmark, except as it deterred Parker from advancing. Now, as before, his one idea was to get at the Russian division still locked in Revel by the ice. The negotiations were carried on by him and resulted in an armistice for fourteen weeks, after which hostilities could be resumed upon fourteen days' notice. Thus was assured to Parker for four months the entire immunity he desired for his communications. Fear of Russia long deterred the Danes from this concession, which Nelson frankly told them he must have, so as to be at liberty to act against the Russian fleet and return to them; and he made it the indispensable requisite to sparing the city. During the discussions, however, the Crown Prince received news of the czar's death. Paul I. had been murdered by a body of conspirators on the night of March 24. The Danish government concealed the tidings; but the departure of the soul of the confederacy relieved their worst fears and encouraged them to yield to Nelson's demands.

Denmark's part in the Armed Neutrality was suspended during the continuance of the armistice; but the British ministers showed as little appreciation of the military situation as did their commander-in-chief in the Baltic. "Upon a consideration of all

the circumstances," they wrote to Nelson, ²⁸ "His Majesty has thought fit to approve the armistice." Nelson was naturally and justly indignant at this absurdly inadequate understanding of the true nature of services, concerning whose military character a French naval critic has truly said that "they will always be in the eyes of seamen his fairest title to glory. He alone was capable of displaying such boldness and perseverance; he alone could confront the immense difficulties of that enterprise and overcome them." ²⁹ But his conduct at Copenhagen, brilliant as was the display of energy, of daring and of endurance, was far from exhausting the merits of his Baltic campaign. He had lifted and carried on his shoulders the dead weight of his superior, he had clearly read the political as well as the military situation, and he never for one moment lost sight of the key to both. To bombard Copenhagen was to his mind a useless piece of vandalism, which would embitter a nation that ought to be conciliated, and destroy the only hold Great Britain still had over Denmark. ³⁰ Except for the necessity of managing his lethargic and cautious commander-in-chief, we may believe he would never have contemplated it; but under the circumstances he used the threat as the one means by which he could extort truce from Denmark and induce Parker to move. With the latter

²⁸ April 20, 1801. *Nels. Disp.*, vol. iv. p. 355, note.

²⁹ Jurien de la Gravière, *Guerres Maritimes*, vol. ii. p. 43, 1st edition.

³⁰ Having destroyed Copenhagen, we had done our worst, and not much nearer being friends.—*Nels. Disp.*, vol. iv. p. 361.

to handle, the armistice slipped the knot of the military difficulty; it was the one important point, alongside which every other fell into insignificance. "My object," he said, "was to get at Revel before the frost broke up at Cronstadt, that the twelve sail-of-the-line might be destroyed." Well might St. Vincent write, "Your Lordship's whole conduct, from your first appointment to this hour, is the subject of our constant admiration. It does not become me to make comparisons; all agree there is but one Nelson."

Meantime, while the British fleet had been dallying in the approaches to the Baltic, important events had occurred, furthering the projects of Bonaparte in the North and seriously complicating the position of Great Britain. No formal declaration of war was at any time issued by the latter country; but its government had not unjustly regarded as an act of direct hostility the combination of Denmark, Sweden, and Prussia, to support the czar in a course first undertaken to assure his claim upon Malta, and in furtherance of which he had seized as pledges three hundred British merchant vessels with their crews.³¹ As an offset to the British interests thus foreclosed upon by Russia,

³¹ The second embargo was laid on Nov. 7, 1800, for the sole purpose of enforcing the surrender of Malta to Russia. (Annual Register, 1800; State Papers, p. 253.) It antedated by six weeks the declaration of Armed Neutrality, by which the other powers, on the plea of neutral rights, agreed to arm. (Ibid., p. 260.) In fact, the other powers urged upon Great Britain that the Russian sequestration being on account of Malta, they had no share in it, and so were not subjects for retaliation; ignoring that they had chosen that moment to come to Russia's support.

and to negotiate upon somewhat equal terms, the government, on the 14th of January, 1801, ordered an embargo laid upon Russian, Danish, and Swedish vessels in British ports, and the seizure of merchant ships of these powers at sea. Of four hundred and fifty Swedish vessels then abroad, two hundred were detained or brought into British harbors. They were not, however, condemned as prizes, but held inviolable to await the issue of the existing difficulties. To the remonstrances of Sweden and Denmark, supported by Prussia, the British ministry replied definitely, on the 7th of March, that the embargo would not be revoked so long as the Powers affected "continued to form part of a confederacy which had for its object to impose by force on his Majesty a new system of maritime law, inconsistent with the dignity and independence of his crown, and the rights and interests of his people."³² In consequence of this and of the entrance of the Sound by Parker's fleet, Prussia, on the 30th of March, and as a measure of retaliation, closed the mouths of the Elbe, the Weser, and the Ems—in other words, the ports of North Germany—against British commerce, and took possession of the German states belonging to the king of Great Britain. On the same day a corps of Danish troops occupied Hamburg, more certainly to stop British trade therewith.

Thus Bonaparte's conception was completely realized. There was not only a naval combination against Great Britain, but also an exclusion of her trade from one of its chief markets.

³² Annual Register, 1801; State Papers, p. 246.

The danger, however, was much less than it seemed. On the one hand, while the annoyances to neutral navigation were indisputable, the advantages it drew from the war were far greater; its interests really demanded peace, even at the price set by Great Britain. On the other hand, the more important claims of the great Sea Power, however judged by standards of natural right, had prescription on their side; and in the case of contraband, whatever may be thought of classifying naval stores as such, there was for it a colorable pretext in the fact that France then had no merchant shipping, except coasters; that naval stores entering her ports were almost certainly for ships of war; and that it was in part to the exclusion of such articles that Great Britain owed the maritime supremacy, which alone among armed forces had successfully defied Bonaparte. In short, the interest of the Northern states was to yield the points in dispute, while that of Great Britain was not to yield; a truth not only asserted by the ministry but conceded in the main by the opposition. There needed therefore only to throw a little weight into one scale, or to take a little from the other, to turn the balance; while the coalition would dissolve entirely either upon decisive naval operations by Great Britain, or upon the death of Paul I. The czar was the only person embarked heart and soul in the Northern quarrel, because the only one deaf to the call of clear interest. Herein is apparent the crying mistake of intrusting the conduct of the naval campaign to another than Nelson. The time placidly consumed by Parker in deliberations and talking would have sufficed his

lieutenant to scour the Baltic, to destroy the Russians at Revel as he did the Danish line at Copenhagen, and to convince the neutral states of the hopelessness of the struggle. Fortunately for Great Britain, the interests of Russian proprietors, which were bound up with British commerce, and hardly yielded eight years later to restrictions imposed by the popular Alexander I., rebelled against the measures of a ruler whose insanity was no longer doubtful. The murder of Paul opened the way for peace.

Among the first measures of the new czar was the release of the British seamen imprisoned by his father. This order was dated April 7. On the 12th the British ships entered the Baltic,—much to the surprise of the Northern Powers, who thought their heavy draught would prevent. The three-deckers had to remove their guns to pass some shoal ground ten miles above Copenhagen. After an excursion to intercept a Swedish fleet said to be at sea, Parker anchored his ships in Kiøge Bay,—off the coast of Zealand just within the entrance to the Baltic,—and there awaited further instructions from home; the Russian minister at Copenhagen having informed him that the new czar would not go to war.³³ Nelson entirely disapproved of this inactive attitude. Russia might yield the conditions of Great Britain, but she would be more likely to do so if the British fleet lay off the harbor of Revel. This seems also to have been the view of the ministry. It received news of the battle of Copenhagen on April 15, and at about the same date learned the death of Paul I. Advantage was

³³ Nels. Disp., vol. iv., pp. 349, 352.

very properly taken of the latter to adopt a policy of conciliation. On the 17th orders were issued to Parker modifying his first instructions. If Alexander removed the embargo and released the seamen, all hostile movements were to be suspended. If not, a cessation of hostilities was to be offered, if Russia were willing to treat; *but upon condition that, until these ships and men were released, the Revel division should not join that in Cronstadt, nor vice versa*.³⁴ This presumed a position of the British fleet very different from Kiøge Bay, over four hundred miles from Revel.

Four days later, orders were issued relieving Parker and leaving Nelson in command. Taken as this step was, only a week after the news of a victory, it can scarcely be construed otherwise than as an implied censure. To this view an expression of Nelson's lends color. "They are not Sir Hyde Parker's real friends who wish for an inquiry," he wrote to a confidential correspondent. "His friends in the fleet wish everything of this fleet to be forgot, for we all respect and love Sir Hyde; but the dearer his friends, the more uneasy they have been at his *idleness*, for that is the truth—no criminality."³⁵ The orders were received on May 5. Nelson's first signal was to hoist the boats aboard and prepare to weigh. "If Sir Hyde were gone," he wrote the same afternoon, "I would now be under sail." On the 7th the fleet left Kiøge Bay and on the 12th appeared off Revel. The Russian division had sailed three days before and

³⁴ Ibid., p. 349; also see p. 379.

³⁵ Ibid., vol. iv. p. 416.

was now safe under the guns of Cronstadt. From Revel Nelson dispatched very complimentary letters to the Russian minister of foreign affairs, but received in reply the message that "the only proof of the loyalty of his intentions that the czar could accept was the prompt withdrawal of his fleet; and that until then no negotiation could proceed." "I do not believe he would have written such a letter," said Nelson, "if the Russian fleet had been in Revel;" ³⁶ but the bird was flown, and with a civil explanation he withdrew from the port. He still remained in the Baltic, awaiting the issue of the negotiations; but Russia meant peace, and on the 17th of May the czar ordered the release of the embargoed British ships. On the 4th of June Great Britain also released the Danes and Swedes detained in her ports. Russia and Prussia had already agreed, on the 27th of April, that hostile measures against England should cease, Hamburg and Hanover be evacuated, and the free navigation of the rivers restored.

On the 17th of June was signed at St. Petersburg a convention between Russia and Great Britain, settling the points that had been in dispute. The question of Malta was tacitly dropped. As regards neutral claims Russia conceded that the neutral flag should not cover enemy's goods; and while she obtained the formal admission that articles of hostile origin which had become *bonâ fide* neutral property were exempt from seizure, she yielded the very important exception of colonial produce. This, no matter who the owner, could not by a neutral be carried direct from

³⁶ Nels. Disp., vol. iv. p. 373.

the colony to the mother country of a nation at war.³⁷ Great Britain, on the other hand, conceded the right of neutrals to carry on the coasting trade of a belligerent; and that naval stores should not be classed as contraband of war. The latter was an important concession, the former probably not, coasting trade being ordinarily done by small craft especially adapted to the local conditions. As regards searching merchant vessels under convoy of a ship of war, Russia yielded the principle and Great Britain accepted methods which would make the process less offensive. Privateers in such case could not search. The question was unimportant; for neutral merchant ships will not lightly submit to the restraint and delays of convoy, and so lose the chief advantage, that of speed, which they have over belligerents. When a neutral sees necessary to convoy her merchantmen, the very fact shows relations already strained.

Sweden and Denmark necessarily followed the course of Russia and acceded to all the terms of the convention between that court and Great Britain; Sweden on the 23d of October, 1801, and Denmark on the 30th of the following March. The claim to carry colonial produce to Europe, thus abandoned, was of importance to them, though not to Russia. At the same time the Baltic states renewed among themselves the engagements, which they had relinquished in their convention with Great

³⁷ For the important bearings of this stipulation, which was made as an additional and explanatory declaration to the main convention (Annual Register, 1801; State Papers, p. 217), see *post*, Chapter XVI. It was a matter in which Russia, not being a carrier, had no interest.

Britain, that the neutral flag should cover enemy's property on board and that the convoy of a ship of war should exempt merchant vessels from search. These principles were in point of fact modifications sought to be introduced into international law, and not prescriptive rights, as commonly implied by French historians ³⁸ dealing with this question. For this reason both the United States and the Baltic powers, while favoring the new rule, were little disposed to attempt by arms to compel the surrender by Great Britain of a claim sanctioned by long custom.

Thus had fallen resultless, as far as the objects of the first consul were concerned, the vast combination against Great Britain which he had fostered in the North. During its short existence he had actively pursued in the south of Europe, against Naples and Portugal, other measures intended further to embarrass, isolate, and cripple the great Sea Power, and to facilitate throwing much needed supplies and re-enforcements into Egypt. "The ambassador of the republic," he wrote in February, 1801, "will make the Spanish ministry understand that we must at whatsoever cost become masters of the Mediterranean.... France will have fifteen ships-of-the-line in the Mediterranean before the equinox; and, if Spain will join to them fifteen others, the English, who are about to have the ports of Lisbon, Sicily, and Naples closed to them, will not be able to keep thirty ships in the Mediterranean. That being so, I doubt not

³⁸ For instance, Thiers, H. Martin, and Lanfrey.

they will evacuate Mahon, being unable to remain in that sea." ³⁹

For the closure of the ports Bonaparte relied with good reason upon his armies; but in the concurrent expectation of uniting thirty French and Spanish ships he reckoned without his host, as he did also upon the Russian Black Sea fleet, and the numbers the British must keep in the Baltic and off Brest. After the armistice with Austria in Italy, a corps under Murat was pushed toward Naples; and on the same day that the treaty of Lunéville was concluded, February 9, a truce for thirty days was signed with the Two Sicilies. This was followed on the 28th of March by a definitive treaty of peace. Naples engaged to exclude from all her ports, including those of Sicily, the ships both of war and commerce belonging to Great Britain and Turkey; while those of France and her allies, as well as of the Northern powers, should have free access. She also suffered some slight territorial loss; but the most significant article was kept secret. The boot of Italy was to be occupied by a division of twelve or fifteen thousand French, whom Naples was to pay and support, and to whom were to be delivered all the maritime fortresses south of the river Ofanto and east of the Bradano, including the ports of Taranto and Brindisi. "This occupation," wrote Bonaparte to his war-minister, "is only in order to facilitate the communications of the army of Egypt with France." ⁴⁰ The Neapolitan ports became a refuge for French squadrons; while the army of occupation

³⁹ Corr. de Nap. vol. vii. p. 25.

⁴⁰ Corr. de Nap. vol. vii. p. 47.

stood ready to embark, if any body of ships found their way to those shores. Unfortunately, the combined British and Turkish armies had already landed in Egypt, and had won the battle of Alexandria a week before the treaty with Naples was signed. As a speedy result the French in Egypt were divided; part being forced back upon Cairo and part shut up in Alexandria,—while the fleet of Admiral Keith cruised off the coast.

No French squadron succeeded in carrying to Egypt the desired re-enforcements, notwithstanding the numerous efforts made by the first consul. The failure arose from two causes: the penury of the French arsenals, and the difficulty of a large body of ships escaping together, or of several small bodies effecting a combination, in face of the watchfulness of the British. Both troubles were due mainly to the rigid and methodical system introduced by Earl St. Vincent; who, fortunately for Great Britain, assumed command of the Channel fleet at the same time that Bonaparte sought to impress upon the French navy a more sagacious direction and greater energy of action. His instructions to Admiral Bruix in February, 1800,⁴¹ were to sail from Brest with over thirty French and Spanish sail-of-the-line, to drive the British blockaders from before the port, to relieve Malta, send a light squadron to Egypt, and then bring his fleet to Toulon, where it would be favorably placed to control the Mediterranean. Delay

⁴¹ For full particulars of Bonaparte's views for the ships in Brest, which then contained the large body of Spaniards brought back by Bruix the previous August, see *Corr. de Nap.* vol. vi. pp. 181, 186. It must be remembered that there was then practically no French line-of-battle force in the Mediterranean.

ensuing, owing to lack of supplies and the unwillingness of the Spaniards, he wrote again at the end of March, "If the equinox passes without the British fleet dispersing, then, great as is our interest in raising the blockade of Malta and carrying help to Egypt, they must be abandoned;" ⁴² and throughout the summer months he confined his action to the unremitting efforts, already noticed, to keep a stream of small vessels constantly moving towards Egypt.

After the autumn equinox Bonaparte again prepared for a grand naval operation. Admiral Ganteaume was detailed to sail from Brest with seven ships-of-the-line, carrying besides their crews four thousand troops and an immense amount of material. "Admiral Ganteaume," wrote he to Menou, commander-in-chief in Egypt, "brings to your army the succor we have not before been able to send. He will hand you this letter." The letter was dated October 29, 1800, but it never reached its destination. Ganteaume could not get out from Brest till nearly three months later, when, on January 23d, 1801, a terrible north-east gale drove off the British squadron and enabled him to put to sea. "A great imprudence," says Thiers, "but what could be done in presence of an enemy's fleet which incessantly blockaded Brest in all weathers, and only retired when cruising became impossible. It was necessary either never to go out, or to do so in a tempest which should remove the British squadron." The incident of the sortie, as well as Ganteaume's subsequent experiences,

⁴² Corr. de Nap., vol. vi. pp. 262, 263.

illustrates precisely the deterrent effect exercised by St. Vincent's blockades.⁴³ They could not prevent occasional escapes, but they did throw obstacles nearly insuperable in the way of combining and executing any of the major operations of war. Owing to the weather which had to be chosen for starting, the squadron was at once dispersed and underwent considerable damage.⁴⁴ It was not all reunited till a week later. On the 9th of February it passed Gibraltar; but news of its escape had already reached the British admiral Warren cruising off Cadiz, who followed quickly, entering Gibraltar only twenty-hours after the French went by. On the 13th of January Ganteaume captured a British frigate, from which he learned that the Mediterranean fleet under Lord Keith was then convoying an army of fifteen thousand British troops against Egypt. He expected that Warren also would soon be after him, and the injuries received in the gale weighed upon his mind. Considering all the circumstances, he decided to abandon Egypt and go to Toulon. Warren remained cruising in the Mediterranean watching for the French admiral, who twice again started for his destination. The first time he was obliged to return by a collision between two ships. The second, an outbreak

⁴³ The advantage of the close watch is also shown by the perplexity arising when an enemy's squadron did escape. In this case, seven ships-of-the-line were detached from the Channel fleet in chase of Ganteaume, but "owing to lack of information" they were sent to the West Indies instead of the Mediterranean. (James, vol. iii. p. 73.) The latter was sufficiently controlled by Keith with seven sail-of-the-line in the Levant, and Warren with five before Cadiz, to which he joined two more at Minorca.

⁴⁴ See *ante*, vol. i. p. 68, for particulars.

of disease compelled him to send back three of the squadron. The other four reached the African coast some distance west of Alexandria, where they undertook to land the troops; but Keith's fleet appeared on the horizon, and, cutting their cables, they made a hasty retreat, without having effected their object.

Similar misfortune attended Bonaparte's attempt to collect an efficient force in Cadiz, where Spain had been induced or compelled to yield to him six ships-of-the-line, and where she herself had some vessels. To these he intended to send a large detachment from Rochefort under Admiral Bruix, who was to command the whole, when combined. To concentrations at any point, however, British squadrons before the ports whence the divisions were to sail imposed obstacles, which, even if occasionally evaded, were fatal to the final great design. The advantage of the central position was consistently realized. On the other hand, where a great number of ships happened to be together, as at Brest in 1801, the want of supplies, caused by the same close watch and by the seizure of naval stores as contraband, paralyzed their equipment. Finding himself baffled at Brest for these reasons, the first consul appointed Rochefort for the first concentration. When the second was effected at Cadiz, Bruix was to hold himself ready for further operations. If Egypt could not be directly assisted, it might be indirectly by harassing the British communications. "Every day," wrote Bonaparte, "a hundred sails pass the straits under weak convoy, to supply Malta and the English fleet." If this route were flanked

at Cadiz, by a squadron like that of Bruix, much exertion would be needed to protect it. But the concentration at Rochefort failed, the ships from Brest could not get there, and the Rochefort ships themselves never sailed.

Coincidentally with this attempt, another effort was made to strengthen the force at Cadiz.⁴⁵ The three vessels sent back by Ganteaume, after his second sailing from Toulon, were also ordered to proceed there, under command of Rear Admiral Linois. Linois successfully reached the Straits of Gibraltar, but there learned from a prize that seven British ships were cruising off his destination. These had been sent with Admiral Saumarez from the Channel fleet, to replace Warren, when the admiralty learned the active preparations making in Cadiz and the French ports. Not venturing to proceed against so superior an enemy, Linois put into Gibraltar Bay, anchoring on the Spanish side under the guns of Algeiras. Word was speedily sent to Saumarez; and on July 6, two days after Linois anchored, six British ships were seen rounding the west point of the bay. They attacked at once; but the wind was baffling, they could not get their positions, and both flanks of the French line were supported by shore batteries, which were efficiently worked by soldiers landed from the squadron. The attack was repulsed, and one British seventy-four that grounded under a battery was forced

⁴⁵ In the above the attempt has been merely to summarize the rapid succession of events, and the orders issuing from Bonaparte's intensely active mind to meet the varying situations. Reference may be made by the student to his correspondence, vol. vi. pp. 719, 729, 745; vol. vii. pp. 4, 24-26, 69-73, 125, 144, 164, 197, 198.

to strike. Saumarez withdrew under Gibraltar and proceeded to refit; the crews working all day and by watches at night to gain the opportunity to revenge their defeat. Linois sent to Cadiz for the help he needed, and on the 10th five Spanish ships-of-the-line and one French ⁴⁶ from there anchored off Algeiras. On the 12th they got under way with Linois's three, and at the same time Saumarez with his six hauled out from Gibraltar. The allies retreated upon Cadiz, the British following. During the night the van of the pursuers brought the hostile rear to action, and a terrible scene ensued. A Spanish three-decker caught fire, and in the confusion was taken for an enemy by one of her own fleet of the same class. The two ships, of one hundred and twelve guns each and among the largest in the world, ran foul of each other and perished miserably in a common conflagration. The French "St. Antoine" was captured.

The incident of Saumarez's meeting with Linois has a particular value, because of the repulse and disaster to the British vessels on the first occasion. Unvarying success accounts, or seems to account, for itself; but in this case the advantage of the squadron's position before Cadiz transpires through a failure on the battle-field. To that position was due, first, that Linois's detachment could not make its junction; second, that it was attacked separately and very severely handled; third, that in the retreat to Cadiz the three French ships were not in proper condition to engage, although one of them when brought to action

⁴⁶ This ship, the "St. Antoine," was one of those ceded to France by Spain.

made a very dogged resistance to, and escaped from, an inferior ship. Consequently, the six British that pursued had only six enemies instead of nine to encounter. After making allowance for the very superior quality of the British officers and crews over the Spanish, it is evident the distinguishing feature in these operations was that the British squadron brought the enemies' divisions to action separately. It was able to do so because it had been kept before the hostile port, interposing between them.

Saumarez had wrung success out of considerable difficulty. The failure of the wind greatly increased the disadvantage to his vessels, coming under sail into action with others already drawn up at anchor, and to whom the loss of spars for the moment meant little. These circumstances, added to the support of the French by land batteries and some gunboats, went far to neutralize tactically the superior numbers of the British. With all deductions, however, the fight at Algesiras was extremely creditable to Linois. He was a man not only distinguished for courage, but also of a cautious temper peculiarly fitted to secure every advantage offered by a defensive position. Despite his success there, the broad result was decisively in favor of his opponents. "Sir James Saumarez's action," wrote Lord St. Vincent, "has put us upon velvet." Seven British had worsted nine enemy's ships, as distinctly superior, for the most part, in individual force as they were in numbers. Not only had the Spaniards three of ninety guns and over, and one of eighty, but two of Linois's were of the latter class, of which Saumarez had

but one. The difference between such and the seventy-fours was not only in number of pieces, but in weight also. The substantial issue, however, can be distinguished from the simple victory, and it was secured not only by superior efficiency but also by strategic disposition.

Brilliant as was Saumarez's achievement, which Nelson, then in England, warmly extolled in the House of Lords, the claim made by his biographer, that to these operations alone was wholly due the defeat of Bonaparte's plan, is exaggerated. It was arranged, he says, that when the junction was made, the Cadiz ships should proceed off Lisbon, sack that place, and destroy British merchantmen lying there; "then, being re-enforced by the Brest fleet, they were to pass the Straits of Gibraltar, steer direct for Alexandria, and there land such a body of troops as would raise the siege and drive the English out of Egypt. *This would certainly have succeeded* had the squadron under Linois not encountered that of Sir James, which led to the total defeat of their combined fleets and to the abandonment of the grand plan." ⁴⁷ This might be allowed to stand as a harmless exhibition of a biographer's zeal, did it not tend to obscure the true lesson to be derived from this whole naval period, by attributing to a single encounter, however brilliant, results due to an extensive, well-conceived general system. Sir James Saumarez's operations were but an epitome of an action going on everywhere from the Baltic to Egypt. By this command of the sea the British fleets, after they

⁴⁷ Ross's Life of Saumarez, vol. ii. p. 21.

had adopted the plan of close-watching the enemy's ports, held everywhere interior positions, which, by interposing between the hostile detachments, facilitated beating them in detail. For the most part this advantage of position resulted in quietly detaining the enemy in port, and so frustrating his combinations. It was Saumarez's good fortune to illustrate how it could also enable a compact body of highly disciplined ships to meet in rapid succession two parts of a force numerically very superior, and by the injuries inflicted on each neutralize the whole for a definite time. But, had he never seen Linois, Bonaparte's plan still required the junctions from Rochefort and Brest which were never effected.

By naval combinations and by holding the Neapolitan ports Bonaparte sought to preserve Egypt and force Great Britain to peace. "The question of maritime peace," he wrote to Ganteaume, ⁴⁸ "hangs now upon the English expedition to Egypt." Portugal, the ancient ally of Great Britain, was designed to serve other purposes of his policy,—to furnish equivalents, with which to wrest from his chief enemy the conquests that the sea power of France and her allies could not touch. "Notify our minister at Madrid," wrote he to Talleyrand, September 30, 1800, "that the Spanish troops must be masters of Portugal before October 15. This is the only means by which we can have an equivalent for Malta, Mahon, and Trinidad. Besides, the danger of Portugal will be keenly felt in England, and will by so

⁴⁸ March 2, 1801. *Corr. de Nap.*, vol. vii. p. 72.

much quicken her disposition to peace."

A secret treaty ceding Louisiana to France, in return for Tuscany to the Spanish infante, had been signed the month before; and Spain at the same time undertook to bring Portugal to break with Great Britain. Solicitation proving ineffectual, Bonaparte in the spring again demanded the stronger measure of an armed occupation of the little kingdom; growing more urgent as it became evident that Egypt was slipping from his grasp. Spain finally agreed to invade Portugal, and accepted the co-operation of a French corps. The first consul purposed to occupy at least three of the Portuguese provinces; but he was outwitted by the adroitness of the Spanish government, unwillingly submissive to his pressure, and by the compliance of his brother Lucien, French minister to Madrid. Portugal made no efficient resistance; and the two peninsular courts quickly reached an agreement, by which the weaker closed her ports to Great Britain, paid twenty million francs to France, and ceded a small strip of territory to Spain.

Bonaparte was enraged at this treaty, which was ratified without giving him a chance to interfere; ⁴⁹ but in the summer of 1801 his diplomatic game reached a stage where further delay was impossible. He saw that the loss of Egypt was only a question of time; but so long as any French troops held out there it was a card in his hand, too valuable to risk for the trifling gain of a

⁴⁹ The treaty was signed June 6, and ratified June 16. (Ann. Reg. 1801; State Papers, p. 351.) Bonaparte received his copy June 15. (Corr. de Nap., vol. vii. p. 215.)

foothold in Portugal. "The English are not masters of Egypt," he writes boldly on the 23d of July to the French agent in London. "We have certain news that Alexandria can hold out a year, and Lord Hawkesbury knows that Egypt is in Alexandria;" ⁵⁰ but four days later he sends the hopeless message to Murat, "There is no longer any question of embarking" ⁵¹ the troops about Taranto, sent there for the sole purpose of being nearer to Egypt. ⁵² He continues, in sharp contrast with his former expectation, "The station of the troops upon the Adriatic is intended to impose upon the Turks and the English, and to serve as material for compensation to the latter by evacuating those provinces." Both Naples and Portugal were too distant, too ex-centric, and thrust too far into contact with the British dominion of the sea to be profitably, or even safely, held by France in her condition of naval debility; a truth abundantly witnessed by the later events of Napoleon's reign, by the disastrous occupation of Portugal in 1807, by the reverses of Soult and Masséna in 1809 and 1811, and by the failure even to attempt the conquest of Sicily.

Russia and Prussia had grown less friendly since the death of Paul. Even their agreement that Hanover should be evacuated, disposed as they now were to please Great Britain, was to be postponed until "it was ascertained that a certain power would

⁵⁰ Corr. de Nap., vol. vii. p. 256.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 266.

⁵² See ante, p. [60](#).

not occupy that country;" ⁵³ a stipulation which betrayed the distrust felt by both. Since then each had experienced evasions and rebuffs showing the unwillingness of the first consul to meet their wishes in his treatment of the smaller states; and they suspected, although they did not yet certainly know, the steps already taken to incorporate with France regions to whose independence they held.⁵⁴ Both were responding to the call of their interests, beneficially and vitally connected with the sea power of Great Britain, and threatened on the Continent by the encroaching course of the French ruler. Bonaparte felt that the attempt to make further gains in Europe, with which to traffic against those of Great Britain abroad, might arouse resistance in these great powers, not yet exhausted like Austria, and so indefinitely postpone the maritime peace essential to

⁵³ Ann. Reg. 1801; State Papers, p. 257.

⁵⁴ Paul I. had particularly held to the preservation of Naples and the restitution of Piedmont to the king of Sardinia. On April 12 the first consul heard of Paul's death, and the same day issued an order making Piedmont a military division of France. This was purposely antedated to April 2. (Corr. de Nap., vol. vii. p. 147.) Talleyrand was notified that this was a first, though tentative, step to incorporation. If the Prussian minister remonstrated, he was to reply that France had not discussed the affairs of Italy with the king of Prussia. (Ibid., p. 153.) Alexander was civilly told that Paul's interest in the Italian princes was considered to be personal, not political. (Ibid., p. 169.) The Russian ambassador, however, a month later haughtily reminded Talleyrand that his mission depended upon the "kings of Sardinia and the Two Sicilies being again put in possession of the states which they possessed before the irruption of the French troops into Italy." (Ann. Reg., 1801; State Papers, pp. 340-342) Liguria (Genoa) was also made a military division of France by order dated April 18. (Corr. de Nap., vol. vii. p. 162.)

the revival of the French navy and the re-establishment of the colonial system; both at this time objects of prime importance in his eyes. Thus it was that, beginning the year 1801 without a single ally, in face of the triumphant march of the French armies and of a formidable maritime combination, the Sea Power of Great Britain had dispersed the Northern coalition, commanded the friendship of the great states, retained control of the Mediterranean, reduced Egypt to submission, and forced even the invincible Bonaparte to wish a speedy cessation of hostilities.

The great aim of the first consul now was to bring Great Britain to terms before news of the evacuation of Alexandria could come to hand. Negotiations had been slowly progressing for nearly six months; the first advances having been made on the 21st of March by the new ministry which came into power upon Pitt's resignation. Both parties being inclined to peace, the advantage necessarily belonged to the man who, untrammelled by associates in administration, held in absolute control the direction of his country. The Addington ministry, hampered by its own intrinsic weakness and by the eagerness of the nation, necessarily yielded before the iron will of one who was never more firm in outward bearing than in the most critical moments. He threatened them with the occupation of Hanover; he intimated great designs for which troops were embarked at Rochefort, Brest, Toulon, Cadiz, and ready to embark in Holland; he boasted that Alexandria could hold out yet

a year. Nevertheless, although the terms were incontestably more advantageous to France than to Great Britain, the government of the latter insisted upon and obtained one concession, that of Trinidad, which Bonaparte at first withheld.⁵⁵ His eagerness to conclude was in truth as great as their own, though better concealed. Finally, he sent on the 17th of September an ultimatum, and added, "If preliminaries are not signed by the 10th of Vendémiaire (October 2), the negotiations will be broken." "You will appreciate the importance of this clause," he wrote confidentially to the French envoy, "when you reflect that Menou may possibly not be able to hold in Alexandria beyond the first of Vendémiaire, that at this season the winds are fair to come from Egypt, and ships reach Italy and Trieste in very few days. Thus it is essential to push them to a finish before Vendémiaire 10;" that is, before they learn the fall of Alexandria. The question of terms, as he had said before, hinged on Egypt. The envoy, however, was furnished with a different but plausible reason. "Otto can give them to understand that from our inferiority at sea and our superiority on land the campaign begins for us in winter, and therefore I do not wish to remain longer in this stagnation."⁵⁶ Whatever motives influenced the British ministry, it is evident that Bonaparte was himself in a hurry for peace. The preliminaries were signed in London on the first of October,

⁵⁵ While refusing this in his instructions to the French negotiator, the latter was informed he might yield it, if necessary. (Corr. de Nap., vol. vii., pp. 255-258.)

⁵⁶ Corr. de Nap., vol. vii. p. 323.

The conditions are easily stated. Of all her conquests, Great Britain retained only the islands of Ceylon in the East Indies and Trinidad in the West. How great this concession, will be realized by enumerating the chief territories thus restored to their former owners. These were, in the Mediterranean, Elba, Malta, Minorca; in the West Indies, Tobago, Santa Lucia, Martinique, and the extensive Dutch possessions in Guiana; in Africa, the Cape of Good Hope; and in India, the French and Dutch stations in the peninsula. France consented to leave to Portugal her possessions entire, to withdraw her troops from the kingdom of Naples and the Roman territory, and to acknowledge the independence of the Republic of the Seven Islands. Under this name the former Venetian islands, Corfu and others—given to France by the treaty of Campo Formio—had, after their conquest in 1799 by the fleets of Russia and Turkey, been constituted into an independent state under the guarantee of those two powers. Their deliverance from France was considered an important security to the Turkish Empire. The capitulation of the French troops in Alexandria was not yet known in England; and the preliminaries merely stipulated the return of Egypt to the Porte, whose dominions were to be preserved as they existed before the war. Malta, restored to the Knights of St. John, was to be freed from all French or British influence and placed under the guarantee of a third Power. Owing to the decay of the Order, the disposition of this important naval station, secretly

coveted by both parties, was the most difficult matter to arrange satisfactorily. In the definitive treaty its status was sought to be secured by a cumbrous set of provisions, occupying one third of the entire text; and the final refusal of Great Britain to evacuate, until satisfaction was obtained for what she claimed to be violations of the spirit of the engagements between the two countries, became the test question upon which hinged the rupture of this short-lived peace.

As the first article of the preliminaries stipulated that upon their ratification hostilities in all parts of the world, by sea and land, should cease, they were regarded in both Great Britain and France as equivalent to a definitive treaty; the postponement of the latter being only to allow the negotiators time to settle the details of the intricate agreements, thus broadly outlined, without prolonging the sufferings of war. To France they could not but be acceptable. She regained much, and gave up nothing that she could have held without undue and often useless exertion. In Great Britain the general joy was marred by the severe, yet accurate, condemnation passed upon the terms by a body of exceptionally able men, drawn mainly from the ranks of the Pitt cabinet, although their leader gave his own approval. They pointed out, clearly and indisputably, that the disparity between the material gains of Great Britain and France was enormous, disproportionate to their relative advantages at the time of signature, and not to be reconciled with that security which had been the professed object of the struggle. They asserted with little

exaggeration that the conditions were for France to hold what she had, and for Great Britain to recede to her possessions before the war. They predicted with fatal accuracy the speedy renewal of hostilities, under the disadvantage of having lost by the peace important positions not easy to be regained. The ministry had little to reply. To this or that item of criticism exception might be taken; but in the main their defence was that by the failure of their allies no hope remained of contesting the power of France on the Continent, and that Trinidad and Ceylon were very valuable acquisitions. Being insular, they were controlled by the nation ruling the sea, while, from their nearness to the mainlands of South America and of India, they were important as depots of trade, as well as for strategic reasons. The most assuring argument was put forward by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had negotiated the preliminaries. At the beginning of the war Great Britain had 135 ships-of-the-line and 133 frigates; at its close she had 202 of the former and 277 of the latter. France had begun with 80 of the line and 66 frigates, and ended with 39 and 35 respectively. However the first consul might exert himself, Lord Hawkesbury justly urged that the British might allow him many years labor and then be willing to chance a maritime war.⁵⁷

Material advantages such as had thus been given up undoubtedly contribute to security. In surrendering as much as she did abroad, while France retained such extensive gains

⁵⁷ Parliamentary History, vol. xxxvi. p. 47.

upon the Continent and acquired there such a preponderating influence, Great Britain, which had so large a stake in the European commonwealth, undoubtedly incurred a serious risk. The shortness of the peace, and the disquieting disputes which arose throughout it, sufficiently prove this. Nevertheless, could contemporaries accurately read the signs of their times, Englishmen of that day need not have been dissatisfied with the general results of the war. A long stage had been successfully traversed towards the final solution of a great difficulty. In 1792 the spirit of propagating revolution by violence had taken possession of the French nation as a whole. As Napoleon has strikingly remarked, "It was part of the political religion of the France of that day to make war in the name of principles."⁵⁸ "The Montagnards and the Jacobins," says the republican historian Henri Martin, the bitter censurer of Bonaparte, "were resolved, like the Girondists, to propagate afar, by arms, the principles of the Revolution; and they hoped, by hurling a defiance at all kings, to put France in the impossibility of recoiling or stopping herself."⁵⁹ Such a design could be checked only by raising up against it a barrier of physical armed opposition. This had been effected and maintained chiefly by the Sea Power of Great Britain, the prime agent and moving spirit, directly through her navy, indirectly through the subsidies drawn from her commerce; and the latter had nearly doubled while carrying on this arduous

⁵⁸ *Commentaires de Napoléon*, vol. iii. p. 377.

⁵⁹ *Hist. de France depuis 1789*, vol. i. p. 396.

and extensive war. In 1801 the aggressive tendencies of the French nation, as a whole, were exhausted. So far as they still survived, they were now embodied in and dependent upon a single man, in which shape they were at once more distinctly to be recognized and more odious. They were also less dangerous, because the power of one man, however eminent for genius, is far less for good or evil than the impulse of a great people.

The British statesmen of that day did not clearly distinguish this real nature of their gains, though they did intuitively discern the true character of the struggle in which they were engaged. As is not infrequent with intuitions, the reasoning by which they were supported was often faulty; but Pitt's formulation of the objects of Great Britain in the one word "security" was substantially correct. Security was her just and necessary aim, forced upon her by the circumstances of the Revolution,—security not for herself alone, but for the community of states of which she was an important member. This was threatened with anarchy through the lawless spirit with which the French leaders proposed to force the spread of principles and methods, many of them good as well as many bad, but for whose healthful development were demanded both time and freedom of choice, which they in their impatience were unwilling to give. "Security," said Pitt in his speech upon the preliminaries, "was our great object; there were different means of accomplishing it, with better or worse prospects of success; and according to the different variations of policy occasioned by a change of

circumstances, we still pursued our great object, Security. In order to obtain it we certainly did look for the subversion of that government founded upon revolutionary principles.... We have the satisfaction of knowing that we have survived the violence of the revolutionary fever, and we have seen the extent of its principles abated. We have seen Jacobinism deprived of its fascination; we have seen it stripped of the name and pretext of liberty; it has shown itself to be capable only of destroying, not of building, and that it must necessarily end in a military despotism." ⁶⁰ Such, in truth, was the gain of the first war of Great Britain with the French Revolution. It was, however, but a stage in the progress; there remained still another, of warfare longer, more bitter, more furious,—a struggle for the mastery, whose end was not to be seen by the chief leaders of the one preceding it.

⁶⁰ Speech of Nov. 3, 1801.

CHAPTER XIV

Outline of Events from the Signature of the Preliminaries to the Rupture of the Peace of Amiens

October, 1801.-May, 1803

THE preliminaries of peace between Great Britain and France, signed on the first of October, 1801, were regarded by both parties, at least ostensibly, as settling their relative status and acquisitions. In their broad outlines no change would be worked by the definitive treaty, destined merely to regulate details whose adjustment would demand time and so prolong the distress of war. This expectation, that the basis of a durable peace had been reached, proved delusive. A series of unpleasant surprises awaited first one party and then the other, producing in Great Britain a feeling of insecurity, which gave point and added vigor to the declamations of those who from the first had scoffed at the idea of any peace proving permanent, if it rested upon the good faith of the French government and surrendered those material guarantees which alone, they asserted, could curb the ambition and enforce the respect of a man like Bonaparte. Bitter indeed

must have been the unspoken thoughts of the ministry, as the revolving months brought with them an unceasing succession of events which justified their opponents' prophecies while proving themselves to be outwitted; and which, by the increase given to French influence and power in Europe, necessitated the maintenance of large military establishments, and converted the peace from first to last into a condition of armed truce.

The day after the signature of the preliminaries news reached London ⁶¹ of the surrender of Alexandria, which completed the loss of Egypt by the French. It was believed that Bonaparte had, at the time of signing, possessed this information, which would have materially affected the footing upon which he was treating. However that was, he was undoubtedly assured of the issue, ⁶² and therefore precipitated a conclusion by which to France, and not to Great Britain, was attributed the gracious act of restoring its dominion to the Porte. Concealing the fact from the Turkish plenipotentiary in Paris, the French government on the 9th of October signed with him a treaty, by which it undertook to evacuate the province it no longer held. In return, Turkey conceded to France, her recent enemy, commercial privileges equal to those allowed Great Britain, to whose sea power alone she owed the recovery of Syria and Egypt. This bargain, concluded without the knowledge of the British ministry, was not made public until after the ratification of the preliminaries.

⁶¹ Annual Register 1801, p. 280.

⁶² See ante, p. [70](#).

At the same time became known a treaty with Portugal, signed at Madrid on the 29th of September. By the preliminaries with Great Britain, Portuguese territory was to remain intact; but by the treaty of Madrid so much of Brazil was added to French Guiana as to give the latter control of the northern outlet of the Amazon.

These events were surprises, and disagreeable surprises, to the British ministers. On the other hand, the existence of the secret treaty of March 21, 1801, by which Spain ceded to France the colony of Louisiana, was known to them,⁶³ though unavowed at the time of signing. While impressed with the importance of this transaction, following as it did the cession of the Spanish half of San Domingo, the ministry allowed the veil of mystery, with which Bonaparte had been pleased to shroud it, to remain unlifted. The United States minister to London had procured and forwarded to his government on the 20th of November a copy of this treaty,⁶⁴ which so closely affected his fellow countrymen; but it was not until January, 1802, that the fact became generally known in England. Gloomy prophecies of French colonial aggrandizement were uttered by the partisans of the Opposition, who pictured the hereditary enemy of Great Britain planted by the Spanish treaty at the mouth of the great river of North America, and by the Portuguese at that of the artery of the southern continent; while the vast

⁶³ Am. State Papers, vol. ii. pp. 509, 511.

⁶⁴ Am. State Papers, vol. ii. p. 511.

and rich colonies of Spain, lying between these two extremes, would be controlled by the supremacy of France in the councils of the Peninsular courts. In a generation which still retained the convictions of the eighteenth century on the subject of colonial expansion, these predictions of evil struck heavily home,—enforced as they were by the knowledge that full one fourth of the trade which made the strength of Great Britain rested then upon that Caribbean America, into which France was now making a colossal intrusion. Faithful to the sagacious principle by which he ever proportioned the extent of his military preparation to the vastness of the end in view, the expedition sent by Bonaparte to reassert in Haïti the long dormant authority of the mother-country was calculated on a scale which aroused intense alarm in London. On the 4th of December, 1801, only ten weeks after the preliminaries were signed, and long before the conclusion of the definitive treaty, fifteen ships-of-the-line and six frigates sailed from Brest for Haïti; and these were rapidly followed by other divisions, so that the whole force dispatched much exceeded twenty ships-of-the-line, and carried over twenty thousand troops. The number was none too great for the arduous task,—indeed experience proved it to be far from adequate to meet the waste due to climatic causes; but to Great Britain it was portentous. Distrusting Bonaparte's purposes, a large division of British ships was ordered to re-enforce the squadron at Jamaica. Weary of a nine-years war and expecting their discharge, the crews of some of the vessels mutinied; and the execution of

several of these poor seamen was one of the first results of Bonaparte's ill-fated attempt to restore the colonial system of France.

The apprehensions shown concerning these distant undertakings partook more of panic than of reasonable fear. They overlooked the long period that must pass between possession and development, as well as the hopeless inferiority of France in that sea power upon which the tenure of colonies must depend. They ignored the evident enormous difficulties to be overcome, and were blind to the tottering condition of the Spanish colonial system, then rapidly approaching its fall. But if there was exaggeration in an anticipation of danger, which the whole history of her maritime past entitled Great Britain to reject with scorn, there was no question that each month was revealing unexpected and serious changes in the relative positions of the two powers, which, if not wilfully concealed by France, had certainly not been realized by the British ministers when the preliminaries were signed. Whether they had been cheated or merely out-maneuvred, it became daily more plain that the balance of power in Europe, of which Great Britain was so important a factor, was no longer what it had been when she made such heavy sacrifices of her maritime conquests to secure the status of the Continent.

At the same time was unaccountably delayed the work of the plenipotentiaries, who were to settle at Amiens the terms of the definitive treaty. The British ambassador left London on

the first of November, and after some stop in Paris reached Amiens on the first of December. The French and Dutch envoys arrived shortly after; but the Spanish failed to appear, and on different pretexts negotiations were spun out. That this was contrary to the wishes of the British ministers scarcely admits of doubt. They had already made every sacrifice they could afford; and the position of a popular government, under the free criticism of a people impatient for a settled condition of affairs, and forced to temporizing expedients for carrying on the state business during a period of uncertainty, was too unpleasant to suggest bad faith on their part. While this suspense still lasted, a startling event occurred, greatly affecting the balance of power. The Cisalpine Republic, whose independence was guaranteed by the treaty of Lunéville, adopted toward the end of 1801 a new constitution, drawn up under the inspection of Bonaparte himself. Delegates of the republic, to the number of several hundred, were summoned to Lyon to confer with the first consul on the permanent organization of their state; and there, under his influence, as was alleged, offered to him the presidency, with functions even more extensive than those he enjoyed as ruler of France. The offer was accepted by him on the 26th of January, 1802; and thus the power of the Cisalpine, with its four million inhabitants, was wielded by the same man who already held that of the French republic. A few days later for the name Cisalpine was substituted Italian,—a change thought to indicate an aggressive attitude towards the remaining states of Italy.

These proceedings at Lyon caused great alarm in England, and many persons before pacifically disposed now wished to renew the war. The ministers nevertheless ignored what had passed so publicly, and continued the effort for peace, despite the delays and tergiversations of which their envoy, Lord Cornwallis, bitterly complained; but by the beginning of March, when negotiations had lasted three months, their patience began to give way. A number of ships were ordered into commission, and extensive naval preparations begun. At the same time an ultimatum was sent forward, and Cornwallis instructed to leave Amiens in eight days if it were not accepted. The first consul had too much at stake on the seas to risk a rupture,⁶⁵ when he had already gained so much by the protraction of negotiations and by his astute diplomacy. The definitive treaty was signed on the 25th of March, 1802. The terms did not materially differ from those of the preliminaries, except in the article of Malta. The boundary of French Guiana obtained from Portugal was indeed pushed back off the Amazon, but no mention was made of the now notorious cession of Louisiana.

The provisions touching the little island of Malta and its dependencies, Gozo and Comino, were long and elaborate. The object of each country was to secure the exclusion of the other from a position so important for controlling the Mediterranean

⁶⁵ The slightest delay under these circumstances is very prejudicial, and may be of great consequence to our squadrons and naval expeditions.—*Corr. de Nap.*, March 11, 1802.

and the approaches thereby to Egypt and India. The Order of Knights was to be restored, with the provision that no citizen either of Great Britain or France was thereafter to be a member. The independence and neutrality of the Order and of the island were proclaimed. The British forces were to evacuate within three months after the exchange of ratifications; but this stipulation was qualified by the proviso that there should then be on the spot a Grand Master to receive possession, and also two thousand Neapolitan troops which the king of Naples was to be invited to send as a garrison. These were to remain for one year after its restitution to the Grand Master; or longer, if the Order had not then provided the necessary force. Naples was thus selected as guardian of the coveted position, because its weakness could arouse no jealousy. The independence of the islands was placed under the guarantee of Great Britain, France, Austria, Spain, Russia, and Prussia; the last four being also invited to accede to the long list of stipulations. The presence of a grand master and the guarantee of the four powers—whose acquiescence was not first obtained—were thus integral parts of the agreement; and upon their failure Great Britain afterwards justified the delays which left Malta still a pledge in her hands, when she demanded from France explanations and indemnities for subsequent actions, injurious, as she claimed, to her security and to her dignity.

By another clause of the treaty Great Britain consented to evacuate Porto Ferrajo, the principal port in Elba, which she had

up to that time held by force of arms. It was then known that this was in effect to abandon the island to France, who had obtained its cession from Naples and Tuscany, formerly joint owners, by conventions first made known some time after the signature of the preliminaries. Elba was by its position fitted seriously to embarrass the trade of Great Britain with Northern Italy, under the restrictions laid wherever Bonaparte's power extended; but the most important feature of the transaction was the impression produced by the long concealment of treaties thus unexpectedly divulged. These sudden, unforeseen changes imparted an air of illusion to all existing conditions, and undermined the feeling of security essential to the permanent relations of states.

Despite the shocks caused by these various revelations, the treaty of Amiens was received in Great Britain with satisfaction, though not with the unmeasured demonstrations that followed the announcement of the preliminaries. In France the general joy was no less profound. "It was believed," writes M. Thiers, "that the true peace, the peace of the seas, was secured,—that peace which was the certain and necessary condition of peace on the Continent." The enthusiasm of the nation was poured out at the feet of the first consul, to whose genius for war and for diplomacy were not unjustly attributed the brilliant, as well as apparently solid, results. Statesmen might murmur that France had lost her colonial empire and failed to hold Egypt and Malta, while Great Britain had extended and consolidated her Indian empire by overthrowing the Sultan of Mysore, the ancient ally

of France and her own most formidable foe in the peninsula; but the mass even of intelligent Frenchmen stopped not to regard the wreck of their sea power, of which those disastrous events were but the sign. Facts so remote, and whose significance was not immediately apparent, were lost to sight in the glare of dazzling deeds wrought close at hand. All eyes were held by the splendid succession of victories in Italy and Germany, by the extension of the republic to her natural limits at the Rhine and the Alps, by the restoration of internal order, and by the proudly dominant position accorded their ruler in the councils of the Continent. To these was now added free access to the sea, wrung by the same mighty hand—as was fondly believed—from the weakening of the great Sea Power. At an extraordinary session of the Legislature, convoked to give legal sanction to the treaties and measures of the government, the Treaty of Amiens was presented last, as the crowning work of the first consul; and it was used as the occasion for conferring upon him a striking mark of public acknowledgment. After some hesitations, the question was submitted to the nation whether his tenure of office should be for life. The majority of votes cast were affirmative; and on the 3d of August, 1802, the senate formally presented to him a *senatus-consultum*, setting forth that "the French people names, and the senate proclaims. Napoleon Bonaparte consul for life."

Bonaparte had not waited for this exaltation to continue his restless political activity, destined soon to make waste paper of the Treaty of Amiens. Great Britain having steadfastly refused

to recognize the new states set up by him in Italy, he argued she had forfeited all right to interfere thenceforth in their concerns. From this he seems to have advanced to the position that she had no further claim to mingle in the affairs of the Continent at large. The consequent indifference shown by him to British sentiment and interests, in continental matters, was increased by his conviction that "in the existing state of Europe England cannot reasonably make war, alone, against us;" ⁶⁶ an opinion whose open avowal in more offensive terms afterwards became the spark to kindle the final great conflagration.

The treaty of Lunéville had provided that the German princes, who by it lost territory on the west bank of the Rhine and in Italy, should receive compensation elsewhere in the German empire; and it was agreed that these indemnities should be made mainly at the expense of the ecclesiastical principalities, where, the tenure being for life only, least hardship would be involved. The difficulties attending these distributions, and the fixed animosity between Prussia and Austria, gave Bonaparte a fair pretext to intervene as mediator, and to guide the final settlement upon lines which should diminish the relative power and prestige of France's traditional enemy, Austria, and exalt her rivals. In doing this he adroitly obtained the imposing support of Russia, whose young sovereign readily accepted the nattering offer of joint intervention; the more so that the princes allied to his family might thus receive a disproportionate share of the

⁶⁶ Corr. de Nap., March 12, 1802, vol. vii. p. 522.

spoils. Under Bonaparte's skilful handling, the acquisitions of Prussia were so far greater than those of Austria as to fulfil his prediction, that "the empire of Germany should be really divided into two empires, since its affairs will be arranged at two different centres." ⁶⁷ After the settlement he boasted that "the affairs of Germany had been arranged entirely to the advantage of France and of her allies." ⁶⁸ Great Britain was not consulted; and her people, though silent, saw with displeasure the weakening of their ally and the aggrandizement of a state they held to be faithless as well as hostile. At the same time bad feeling was further excited by the peremptory demands of Bonaparte for the expulsion from England of certain French royalists, and for the repression of the freedom of the British press in its attacks upon himself. To these demands the British government declined to yield.

The reclamations of Bonaparte against the press, and his intervention in German affairs, preceded the proclamation of the consulate for life. It was followed at a short interval by the formal incorporation with France of Piedmont and Elba, by decree dated September 11, 1802. Piedmont had been organized as a French military department in April, 1801; ⁶⁹ and Bonaparte had then secretly avowed the measure to be a first step to annexation. The significance of the present action was that it changed a condition which was *de facto* only, and presumably temporary,

⁶⁷ Ibid., April 3, 1802, vol. vii. p. 543.

⁶⁸ Corr. de Nap., July 1, 1802, vol. vii. p. 641.

⁶⁹ Ibid., April 13, 1801, vol. vii. p. 153.

to one that was claimed to be *de jure* and permanent. As such, it was a distinct encroachment by France, much affecting the states of the Continent, and especially Austria, against whose Italian possessions Piedmont was meant to serve as a base of operations. The adjacent Republic of Liguria, as the Genoese territory was then styled, was also organized as a French military division,⁷⁰ and no security existed against similar action there,—most injurious to British commerce, and adding another to the transformation scenes passing before the eyes of Europe. Nor was the material gain to France alone considered; for, no compensation being given to the King of Sardinia for the loss of his most important state, this consummated injury was felt as a slight by both Great Britain and Russia, which had earnestly sought some reparation for him. For the time, however, no remonstrance was made by the ministry.

New offence was soon given, which, if not greater in degree, produced all the effect of cumulative grievance. The little canton of Valais, in south-western Switzerland, had in the spring of 1802 been forcibly detached from the confederation and proclaimed independent, in order to secure to the French the Simplon route passing through it to Italy; a measure which, wrote Bonaparte, "joined to the exclusive right of France to send her armies by that road, has changed the system of war to be adopted in Italy."⁷¹ No further open step was then taken

⁷⁰ Ibid., April 18, 1801, vol. vii. p. 162.

⁷¹ Corr. de Nap., August 2, 1802, vol. vii. p. 696.

to control the affairs of Switzerland; but the French minister was instructed to support secretly the party in sympathy with the Revolution,⁷² and an ominous sentence appeared in the message of the first consul to the Legislature, May 6, 1802, that "the counsels of the French government to the factions in Switzerland had so far been ineffective. It is still hoped that the voice of wisdom and moderation will command attention, and that the powers adjoining Helvetia will not be forced to intervene to stifle troubles whose continuance would threaten their own tranquillity."⁷³

In Switzerland, perhaps more than in any other part of Europe, had been realized the purpose, announced by the National Convention in the celebrated decrees of November 19 and December 15, 1792, to propagate by force changes in the government of countries where the French armies could penetrate. Vast changes had indeed been made in Belgium, Holland, and Italy; but these when first invaded were in open war with France. The interference in Switzerland in 1798 had no characteristic of serious war, for no means of opposition existed in the invaded cantons. It was an armed intervention, undertaken by the Directory under the impulsion of Bonaparte, avowedly to support citizens of a foreign state "wishing to recover their liberty."⁷⁴ As soon as the signal was given by the entrance of

⁷² Ibid., vol. vii. pp. 528, 544.

⁷³ Ibid., vol. vii. p. 578.

⁷⁴ Decree of Nov. 19, 1792.

the French armies in 1798 the rising was prompt and general;"⁷⁵ and was followed by the adoption of a highly centralized constitution, for which the country was unprepared. From that time forward agitation was incessant. Two parties strove for the mastery; the one favoring the new order, known as the Unitarians, whose sympathies were with the French Revolution, the other the Aristocratic, which sought to return towards the former Constitution, and looked for countenance and support to the older governments of Europe. Between the two there was a central party of more moderate opinions.

Having secured the Valais for France, Bonaparte in August, 1802, withdrew the French troops till then maintained in Switzerland; a politic measure tending to show Europe that he respected the independence of the country guaranteed at Lunéville. The opposing parties soon came to blows; and the nominal government of moderates, which had obtained its authority by extra-constitutional action,⁷⁶ found that it had on its side "neither the ardent patriots, who wished absolute unity, nor the peaceable masses sufficiently well disposed to the revolution, but who knew it only by the horrors of war and the presence of foreign troops."⁷⁷ The aristocratic party got the upper hand and established itself in the capital, whence the government was driven. The latter appealed to Bonaparte to intervene; and

⁷⁵ Thiers, *Cons. et Emp.*, livre xv. p. 38.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, livre xv. pp. 50, 51.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, xvi. p. 234.

after a moment's refusal he decided to do so. "I will not," he said, "deliver the formidable bastions of the Alps to fifteen hundred mercenaries paid by England." A French colonel was sent as special envoy bearing a proclamation, dated September 30, 1802, to command the oligarchic government to dissolve and all armed assemblies to disperse. To support this order, thirty thousand French soldiers, under General Ney, were massed on the frontiers and soon entered the country. Before this show of force all opposition in Switzerland at once ceased.

The emotion of Europe was profound; but of the great powers none save Great Britain spoke. What to Bonaparte was a step necessary to the supremacy of France, even though a violation of the treaty of Lunéville, was, in the eyes of Englishmen, not only among the ministry but among the most strenuous of the opposition, an oppressive interference with "the lawful efforts of a brave and generous people to recover their ancient laws and government, and to procure the re-establishment of a system which experience has demonstrated not only to be favorable to the maintenance of their domestic happiness, but to be perfectly consistent with the tranquillity and security of other powers." The British cabinet expressed an unwillingness to believe that there "would be any further attempt to control that independent nation in the exercise of its undoubted rights."⁷⁸

Despite this avowed confidence, the ministry on the same

⁷⁸ Note Verbale. Remonstrance addressed to the French government. (Ann. Reg. 1802; State Papers, p. 675.)

day, October 10, that this vigorous remonstrance was penned, dispatched a special envoy with orders to station himself on the frontiers of Switzerland, ascertain the disposition of the people, and assure them that, if they were disposed to resist the French advance, Great Britain would furnish them pecuniary succors. The envoy was carefully to refrain from promoting resistance, if the Swiss did not spontaneously offer it; but if they did, he was to give them every facility to obtain arms and supplies. Being thus committed to a course which could scarcely fail to lead to hostilities, the British ministry next bethought itself to secure some conquests of the late war, for whose restitution, in compliance with the treaty, orders had already gone forward. On the 17th of October dispatches were sent to the West Indies, to Dutch Guiana, and to the Cape of Good Hope, directing that the French and Dutch colonies ordered to be restored should be retained until further instructions.

Upon receiving the British remonstrance, Bonaparte broke into furious words mingled with threats. On the 23d of October he dictated instructions to M. Otto, the French minister in London, which are characterized even by M. Thiers as truly extraordinary. "He would not deliver the Alps to fifteen hundred mercenaries paid by England. If the British ministry, to support its parliamentary influence, should intimate that there was anything the first consul had not done, because he was prevented from doing it, that instant he would do it." He scouted the danger to France from maritime war, and said plainly that,

if it arose, the coasts of Europe from Hanover to Taranto would be occupied by French troops and closed to British commerce. "Liguria, Lombardy, Switzerland and Holland would be converted into French provinces, realizing the Empire of the Gauls." Great Britain herself was threatened with invasion by a hundred thousand soldiers; and if, to avert the danger, she succeeded in arousing another continental war, "it would be England that forced us to conquer Europe. The first consul was but thirty-three. He had as yet destroyed only states of the second order. Who knows how long it would take him, if forced thereto, to change again the face of Europe and revive the Empire of the West?" The minister was directed to state to the British government that the policy of France towards England was "the whole treaty of Amiens; nothing but the treaty of Amiens." A week later the same phrase was repeated in the *Moniteur*, the official journal, in an article which expressly denied Great Britain's right to appeal to the treaty of Lunéville, because she had refused to recognize the new states constituted by it. M. Otto wisely withheld the provoking language of the dispatch, but necessarily communicated the demand for the whole treaty of Amiens and the refusal of aught not therein found. To this the British minister of foreign affairs replied with the pregnant words, "The state of the Continent when the treaty of Amiens was signed, and nothing but that state." The two declarations created a dead-lock, unless one party would recede.

Despite these explicit formulas both governments were

somewhat in the dark as to the extent of the dangers. The British ministry had not heard all that Bonaparte said, and he was ignorant of the orders sent to retain the captured colonies. Meanwhile, Swiss opposition having failed, the British envoy to them was recalled; and on the 15th of November new instructions were sent to the Cape of Good Hope and the West Indies, revoking those of the previous month to stop the restitutions. It remained, however, a question whether the second vessel would overtake the first. If she did not, the action of the British ministry would transpire in an offensive way. Accordingly, when Parliament met on the 23d of November, the king's speech took the color of this perplexity, alluding somewhat enigmatically to the necessity of watching the European situation and providing for security as well as for peace. The debates which followed were tinged with the same hue of uncertainty. The ministry could only say that its policy was to preserve peace, if possible; but that, in view of recent events, it must call upon the House and the country to entertain a spirit of watchfulness.⁷⁹

The Swiss affair was the turning-point in the relations of the two countries. The first consul's vigilance had been lulled by the seeming easy acquiescence of the British ministry in previous encroachments, and the readiness with which, notwithstanding these, they had surrendered their conquests and continued to fulfil the terms of the treaty. Their present action not only exasperated, but aroused him. The remonstrance ended in words;

⁷⁹ Lord Hawkesbury's speech; Parl. Hist., vol. xxxvi. p. 971.

but, like the little trickle which betrays the fissure in a dam, it betokened danger and gave warning that the waters of strife were ready to burst through the untempered barrier put together to restrain them, and again pour their desolating flood over Europe. Bonaparte began to look carefully at the existing situation, and found that the British troops had not yet quitted Egypt nor surrendered Malta to the Order of St. John. Representations were made on both these subjects, and the British government was pressed to evacuate Malta.⁸⁰

The ministry, however, were also alive to the gravity of the situation, increased as it was by the orders, not yet known, to stop the restitutions. To abandon Egypt to Turkey they had no objection; and to the French ambassador's demand replied, on November 30, that the failure to do so had resulted from a misunderstanding on the part of the British commander-in-chief, to whom explicit instructions were now sent. Regarding Malta, their feeling was very different. Honestly intending to carry out the treaty, they had admitted the Neapolitan garrison to the island, though not yet to the fortifications; and their ambassadors to the Great Powers had been early directed to ask their guarantee for the independence of the Order. The French government did not instruct its representatives to do the same. Whether this was due, as Thiers says, to the negligence of Talleyrand, or whether the first consul preferred not to be troubled by the resistance of other powers in case he again

⁸⁰ Parl. Hist., vol. xxxvi. p. 1380.

seized the island, the failure of France to join in the application caused Russia and Prussia to defer their answer to the British ambassadors. The joint request was not made to Prussia until September, nor to the czar until November 3. By this time the Swiss incident had come and gone, leaving behind it the state of tension already described. Not till the 25th of the month did the czar reply; and then, before giving his acquiescence, he required in the organization of the island changes seriously affecting the object of the treaty, which aimed to base its independence upon its own people as well as upon guarantees. At Amiens it had been agreed that the Order should be open to native Maltese, by whom also at least half the government offices should be filled. Half the garrison likewise was to be composed of natives. To these provisions the czar excepted. All such points of interior organization were to be left to the decision of the legal government of the Order; ⁸¹ i. e., of the Order as before constituted.

The record of the ministry in the matter of Malta was so clear that it could well afford to protract discussion on the points raised by Russia. No cession made by the treaty had been more generally lamented by Englishmen, keenly sensitive to all that affected their position in the Mediterranean or threatened the approaches to India. In case the peace which was its sole achievement failed, the ministry could save from the wreck of its hopes no more welcome prize with which to

⁸¹ Annual Register, 1803, p. 681.

meet a disappointed people. Other valid objections to restoration were not wanting. No Grand Master had yet accepted. Spain, notoriously under Bonaparte's influence, had suppressed the revenues of the Order within her limits. Similar action had followed elsewhere, and it was argued that the income of the Order would not suffice to maintain the defence of the island, nor consequently its independence. But, while thus keeping its hold on Malta by diplomatic pleas, the ministry took broader ground in its discussions with France. Its envoy there was replaced by an ambassador of the highest rank, Lord Whitworth; who was instructed to affirm explicitly Great Britain's right to interfere in continental affairs, whenever in her judgment required by her own interests, or those of Europe in general. He was also to point out the various encroachments which had added to the influence and power of France, and to intimate that these changes in the conditions since the treaty had been concluded entitled Great Britain to compensations. The annexation of Piedmont, the renunciation of the Grand Duke of Parma in favor of France, the invasion of Switzerland, were specifically named as making a most material alteration in the state of engagements since the conclusion of the definitive treaty. Attention was also called to the fact that although, by a convention signed in August, 1801, French troops were to remain in Holland only until the conclusion of peace between Great Britain and France, they had not yet been withdrawn, thus violating the independence of the Batavian republic guaranteed at Lunéville. The ambassador was

warned, however, not to commit the government to any specific determinations, and especially on the subject of Malta.⁸²

The ministers, therefore, were still undecided. They had climbed upon the fence, but were prepared to get down again on the side whence they had started, if a fair opportunity were given. Unfortunately for the interests of peace, Bonaparte, in the madness of his strength, either exaggerating the weakness of the ministry or underestimating the impulsion it could receive from popular feeling, proceeded deliberately to arouse the spirit which he was never again able to lay. On the 30th of January, 1803, was published in the "Moniteur" Colonel Sébastiani's famous report of his mission to the Levant. Sébastiani had been dispatched in a frigate the previous September, to visit Tripoli, Egypt, Syria, and the Ionian islands, and ascertain the political and military conditions. His report was in the main a fulsome narrative of the reverence in which the first consul was said to be held by the Eastern peoples; but, upon the very detailed account of the indifference to military preparations, followed the startling statement that "six thousand French troops would now suffice to conquer Egypt." The Ionian islands were also pronounced ready to declare themselves French at the first opportunity. Finally, General Stuart, commanding the British troops in Alexandria, was accused of seeking to compass Sébastiani's murder by sending to the Pasha a copy of a general order issued by

⁸² Secret Instructions to Lord Whitworth; Yonge's Life of Lord Liverpool, vol. i. p. 93.

Bonaparte when in Egypt.

The exasperation such a paper would excite in Great Britain was so obvious, that its publication has been attributed to the deliberate design to provoke a maritime war; under cover of which the first consul could, without open humiliation, abandon the enterprise against Haïti.⁸³ The first and general success of the French troops in that colony had been followed by a frightful pestilence of yellow fever; after which the negroes in every quarter again rose and defied the weakened bands of their enemies. On the 8th of January the "Moniteur" published the death of Leclerc, the commander-in-chief, with an account of the ravages of the disease. It was indeed painfully apparent that the colony could not be regained, and utilized, without an expenditure of life impossible to afford;⁸⁴ but the fever itself was an excuse even more potent than the British navy for abandoning the attempt without military dishonor. To penetrate the real motives of a spirit so subtle and unscrupulous as Bonaparte's is hopeless; nor can dependence be placed upon the statements of his brothers Lucien and Joseph, who are the sole authorities for the purpose thus alleged for the publication. There seems little cause to seek another reason than the same truculent arrogance manifested in his instructions to Otto of October 23, and the success which his past experience had taught him to expect

⁸³ Adams, Hist. of the United States, 1801-1817, vol. ii. pp. 13-21.

⁸⁴ The San Domingo expedition cost the lives of over twenty-five thousand French soldiers.

from bluster. The secret mission to Prussia of his confidential aid, Duroc, six weeks later, clearly indicates that the result had disappointed him and that he did not want war,—at least as yet.⁸⁵ Duroc was instructed to see the king personally and say that, if war broke out, French troops would occupy Hanover, a step known to be particularly obnoxious to Prussia, who wished herself to absorb it. Her repugnance was to be used as a lever, to induce intervention with Great Britain to evacuate Malta.⁸⁶

Bonaparte in truth was less interested in the West than in the East, whose vast populations, vivid history, and fabled riches struck his imagination far more forcibly than the unpeopled wildernesses of America. Access to the East, as to the West, was perforce by water, and so controlled by the power that ruled the sea; but the way by the Levant was shorter, evasion therefore easier. Malta, Taranto, the Ionian islands, the Morea were gateways to the East. The last three, as practically continental,⁸⁷

⁸⁵ The British ambassador in Paris reached the same conclusion from the instructions sent by Talleyrand to the French envoy in London. "It appears from this note that this government is not desirous to proceed to extremities; that is to say, it is not prepared to do so." (March 18; *Parl. Hist.*, vol. xxxvi. p. 1315.) The United States minister in Paris also wrote, March 24, "Here there is an earnest and sincere desire to avoid war, as well in the government as the people." (*Am. State Papers*, ii. 549.)

⁸⁶ Instructions to Duroc, March 12, 1803, *Corr. de Nap.*, vol. viii. pp. 307-311. It is noteworthy that these instructions were issued the same day that was received in Paris information of the king's message to Parliament of March 8, that "in consequence of military preparations in the ports of France and Holland he had adopted additional measures of precaution." Two days later the militia was called out.

⁸⁷ *Corr. de Nap.*, vol. viii. p. 308.

he considered to be within his own grasp; the first alone could be readily and securely held by the Power of the Seas. From it therefore he sought to hasten her. On the 27th of January Talleyrand, "with great solemnity and by express order of the first consul," required of Lord Whitworth to inform him what were his Majesty's intentions regarding the evacuation of Malta. No reply was given, except a promise to report the conversation.⁸⁸ On the 30th was issued Sébastiani's report, whose scarcely veiled threats against British interests in the East might perhaps induce a weak government to propitiate the first consul by compliance.

If so meant, the attempt was miscalculated. The British ministry replied that, despite his just claim for compensation, the king would have withdrawn his force from Malta, when the clauses of the treaty affecting it were fulfilled; but that, in view of Sébastiani's report, he would not do so until substantial security was provided against the purposes therein revealed. From that time forward letters and interviews followed in rapid succession, the British ministry gradually stiffening in its attitude concerning the island. On the 20th of February Bonaparte gave a fresh provocation which deeply stirred the British people, although no notice was taken of it by the ministry. In a message sent that day to the legislature, he declared the certainty of continental peace; but concerning Great Britain he continued: "Two parties there strive for power. One has made peace and wishes to keep it;

⁸⁸ Parl. Hist., vol. xxxvi. p. 1293.

the other has sworn implacable hatred to France.... Whatever the success of intrigue in London, it will not drag other nations into new leagues, and this government says with just pride: 'England, alone, cannot to-day contend against France.'"

On March 8 the British government sent a message to Parliament, that, in consequence of military preparations going on in the ports of France and Holland, the king judged expedient to adopt additional measures of precaution for the security of his dominions. It is fair to say that these preparations were not on a scale by themselves to warrant the proposed action; which was asserted by critics of the ministry to be due to information of transactions at the Cape of Good Hope. This had already been delivered to the Dutch authorities when the orders countermanding the restitution arrived; but the British commander had adroitly repossessed himself of the works. This news reached London early in March; and the proposed armaments were thought to be precautions rather against Bonaparte's action, when he too heard it, than against the existing movements in French or Dutch ports.

From this time forward Great Britain rather than France was aggressive. Receiving no explanation upon the grievances advanced, Lord Whitworth was on the 4th of April instructed to say that, if the French government continued to evade discussion about compensations due for its aggressions on the Continent and satisfaction for Sébastiani's report, and yet demanded the evacuation of Malta, he should declare that relations of amity

could not continue to exist, and that he must leave Paris within a certain time. If they were willing to discuss, he was instructed to propose the cession of Malta in perpetuity to Great Britain and the evacuation of Holland and Switzerland by French troops; in return for which Great Britain would confirm Elba to France and acknowledge the kingdom of Etruria. If a satisfactory arrangement were made in Italy for the king of Sardinia, she would further acknowledge the Italian and Ligurian republics. The first consul replied that he would sooner see the British on the heights of Montmartre than in the possession of Malta. Some futile efforts were made to find a middle term; but the ministry having insisted, as its ultimatum, upon occupying the island for at least ten years, the ambassador demanded his passports and left Paris on the 12th of May. On the 16th Great Britain declared war against France. The following day Admiral Cornwallis sailed from Plymouth with ten ships-of-the-line, and two days later appeared off Brest, resuming the watch of that port. On the afternoon of the 18th Nelson hoisted his flag on board the "Victory" at Portsmouth, and on the 20th sailed for the Mediterranean, there to take the chief command.

Thus again, after a brief intermission, began the strife between Great Britain and France, destined during its twelve years' course to involve successively all the powers of Europe, from Portugal to Russia, from Turkey to Sweden. On the land, state after state went down before the great soldier who wielded the armies of France and the auxiliary legions of subject countries, added to

her standards by his policy. Victory after victory graced his eagles, city after city and province after province were embodied in his empire, peace after peace was wrested from the conquered; but one enemy remained ever erect, unsubdued, defiant; and on the ocean there was neither peace nor truce, until the day when he himself fell under the hosts of foes, aroused by his vain attempt to overthrow, through their sufferings, the power that rested upon the seas.

The debates in the House of Commons revealed an agreement of sentiment unparalleled in the former war. Differences of opinion there were. A very few thought that hostilities might even yet be averted, while others argued bitterly that, had Bonaparte's first encroachments been resisted, the nation might have been spared, if not war, at least humiliation. But, while both groups condemned the administration, the one for precipitation, the other for pusillanimous and protracted submission, both agreed that just occasion for war had been given. As usual, opposition took the form of an amendment to the address, which, while carefully excluding any approval of the ministry, still "assured his Majesty of our firm determination to co-operate with his Majesty in calling forth the resources of the United Kingdom for the vigorous prosecution of the war in which we are involved." The proposer, Mr. Grey—one of the most strenuous opponents of the former war—was careful to say that, though he objected to some points of the late negotiation, he acknowledged the necessity of resisting the spirit of encroachment shown by France. Even for

this very qualified disapproval of a ministry in whose capacity none had confidence, there could in this grave crisis be found only 67 votes, against 398 who preferred not to weaken, by an apparent discord, the unanimous voice. Having regard to the reasons for their dissent urged by the various speakers, the result disposes forever of the vain assertion that Great Britain feared to meet France alone. The solemn decision was not taken blindfold nor in haste. The exorbitant power of Bonaparte, the impossibility of allies, the burden that must be borne, were all quoted and faced; and Mr. Pitt, who then spoke for the first time in many months, while fully supporting the war, warned the members in his stately periods of the arduous struggle before them. "In giving their assurances he trusted that other gentlemen felt impressed with the same sense which he did of the awful importance of the engagement into which they were preparing to enter; and that they considered those assurances, not as formal words of ceremony or custom, but as a solemn and deliberate pledge, on behalf of themselves and of the nation whom they represented,—knowing and feeling to their full extent the real difficulties and dangers of their situation, and being prepared to meet those difficulties and dangers with every exertion and every sacrifice which the unexampled circumstances of the times rendered indispensable for the public safety.... The scale of our exertions could not be measured by those of former times, or confined within the limits even of the great, and till then

unexampled, efforts of the last war." ⁸⁹

In the same speech Pitt correctly and explicitly indicated the two methods by which France might seek to subdue Great Britain. "If they indulge themselves in any expectation of success in the present contest, it is built chiefly on the supposition (1) that they can either break the spirit and shake the determination of the country by harassing us with perpetual apprehension of descent upon our coasts, or (2) that they can impair our resources and undermine our credit, by the effects of an expensive and protracted contest." Not to one only, but to both of these means did Bonaparte resort, on a scale proportioned to his comprehensive genius and his mighty resources. For the invasion of England preparations were at once begun, so extensive and so thorough as to indicate not a mere threat, but a fixed purpose; and at the same time measures were taken to close to Great Britain the markets of the Continent, as well as to harass her commerce by the ordinary operations of maritime war. Trafalgar marked the term when all thought of invasion disappeared, and was succeeded by the vast combinations of the Continental System, itself but an expansion of the former measures of exclusion. Framed to impair the resources and sap the credit of Great Britain, this stupendous fabric, upheld, not by the cohesion of its parts, but by the dextrous balancing of an ever watchful policy, overtaxed the skill and strength of its designer, and crushed him in its fall.

⁸⁹ Speech of May 23, 1803.

CHAPTER XV

The Trafalgar Campaign to the Spanish Declaration of War. May, 1803—December, 1804

Preparations for the Invasion of England.—The Great Flotilla.—Napoleon's Military and Naval Combinations and British Naval Strategy.—Essential Unity of Napoleon's Purpose.—Causes of Spanish War.

ALTHOUGH Great Britain and France had each, up to the last moment, hoped to retain peace upon its own terms, preparations for war had gone on rapidly ever since the king's message of March 8. Immediately upon issuing this, couriers were dispatched to the various sea-ports, with orders to impress seamen for the numerous ships hastily ordered into commission. Some details have come down giving a vivid presentment of that lawless proceeding known as a "hot press," at this period when it was on the point of disappearing. "About 7 P. M. yesterday," says the Plymouth report of March 10, "the town was alarmed with the marching of several bodies of Royal Marines in parties of twelve or fourteen each, with their officers and a naval officer, armed. So secret were the orders kept that they did not know the nature of the service on which they were going, until they

boarded the tier of colliers at the new quay, and other gangs the ships at Catwater, the Pool and the gin-shops. A great number of prime seamen were taken out and sent on board the admiral's ship. In other parts of the town, and in all the receiving and gin-shops at Dock, several hundreds of seamen and landsmen were picked up. By returns this morning it appears that upwards of four hundred useful hands were pressed last night. One gang entered the Dock theatre and cleared the whole gallery except the women." Parties of seamen and marines were placed across all roads leading out of the towns, to intercept fugitives. In Portsmouth the colliers were stripped so clean of men that they could not put to sea; while frigates and smaller vessels swept the Channel and other sea-approaches to the kingdom, stopping all merchant ships, and taking from them a part of their crews. The whole flotilla of trawl-boats fishing off the Eddystone, forty in number, were searched, and two hands taken from each. Six East India ships, wind-bound off Plymouth on their outward voyage, were boarded by armed boats and robbed of three hundred seamen, till then unaware that a rupture with France was near.⁹⁰

Bonaparte on his side had been no less active, although he sought by the secrecy of his movements to avert alarm and postpone, if possible, the war which for his aims was premature. Orders were given that re-enforcements for the colonies should go forward rapidly, ere peace was broken. No ships-of-the-line or frigates should henceforth go with them; and those already

⁹⁰ Naval Chronicle, vol. ix. pp. 243, 247, 329, 330, 332, 491.

abroad were for the most part at once recalled. Troops were concentrated on the coasts of Holland and Flanders; and the flat-boats built in the last war with a view to invading England were assembled quietly in the Scheldt and the Channel ports. Plans were studied for the harassment of British commerce. On the 9th of April was commanded the armament of the shores, from the Scheldt westward to the Somme, a distance of one hundred and twenty miles, which afterwards became, to use Marmont's vivid expression, "a coast of iron and bronze." A few days later Elba and all the coasts and islands of France were ordered fortified; and the first consul's aides-de-camp sped north and east and west, to see and report the state of preparation in all quarters.

One affair of great importance still remained to arrange. The smaller French islands in the East and West Indies could be held in subjection by a moderate number of troops, who could also resist for a considerable time any attempt of the British, unless on a very large scale. This was not the case with Haïti or Louisiana. In the former the French, reduced by the fever, were now shut up in a few sea-ports; communication between which, being only by water, must cease when the maritime war broke out. Between the blacks within and the British without, the loss of the island was therefore certain. Louisiana had not yet been occupied. Whatever its unknown possibilities, the immediate value to France of this possession, so lately regained, was as a source of supplies to Haïti, dependent for many essentials upon the American continent. With the fall of the island the colony

on the mainland became useless. Its cession by Spain to France had at once aroused the jealousy, with which, from colonial days, the people of the United States have viewed any political interference by European nations on the American continent, even when involving only a transfer from one power to another. In the dire straits of the Revolution, when the need of help from abroad was so great, they had been careful to insert in the Treaty of Alliance with France an express stipulation, that she would not acquire for herself any of the possessions of Great Britain on the mainland; having then in view Canada and the Floridas. This feeling was intensified when, as now, the change of ownership was from a weak and inert state like Spain to one so powerful as France, with the reputation for aggressiveness that was fast gathering around the name of Bonaparte.

The fear and anger of the American people increased with the reserve shown by the French government, in replying to the questions of their minister in Paris, who asked repeatedly, but in vain, for assurances as to the navigation of the Mississippi; and the excitement reached a climax when in November, 1802, news was received that the Spanish authorities in New Orleans had refused to American citizens the right of deposit, conceded by the treaty of 1795 with Spain. This was naturally attributed to Bonaparte's influence, and the inhabitants of the upper Mississippi valley were ready to resort to arms to enforce their rights.

Such was the threatening state of affairs in America, while

war with Great Britain was fast drawing on. Bonaparte was not the man to recede before a mere menace of hostilities in the distant wilderness of Louisiana; but it was plain that, in case of rupture with Great Britain, any possessions of France on the Gulf of Mexico were sure to fall either to her or to the Americans, if he incurred the enmity of the latter. It was then believed in Washington that France had also acquired from Spain the Floridas, which contained naval ports essential to the defence of Louisiana. On the 12th of April, 1803, arrived in Paris Mr. Monroe, sent by Jefferson as envoy extraordinary, to treat, in conjunction with the regular minister to France, for the cession of the Floridas and of the island of New Orleans to the United States; the object of the latter being to secure the Mississippi down to its mouth as their western boundary. Monroe's arrival was most opportune. Lord Whitworth had five days before communicated the message of the British cabinet that, unless the French government was prepared to enter into the required explanations, relations of amity could not exist, and at the same time the London papers were discussing a proposition to raise fifty thousand men to take New Orleans.⁹¹ Three days later, April 10, the first consul decided to sell Louisiana;⁹² and Monroe upon his arrival had only to settle the terms of the bargain, which did not indeed realize the precise object of his mission, but which gave to his country control of the west bank of the Mississippi

⁹¹ Am. State Papers, vol. ii. p. 553.

⁹² Ibid.

throughout its course, and of both banks from its mouth nearly to Baton Rouge, a distance of over two hundred miles. The treaty, signed April 30, 1803, gave to the United States "the whole of Louisiana as Spain had possessed it," for the sum of eighty million francs. Thus the fear of Great Britain's sea power was the determining factor ⁹³ to sweep the vast region known as Louisiana, stretching from the Gulf toward Canada, and from the Mississippi toward Mexico, with ill-defined boundaries in either direction, into the hands of the United States, and started the latter on that course of expansion to the westward which has brought her to the shores of the Pacific.

Having thus relinquished a position he could not defend, and, as far as in him lay, secured the French possessions beyond the sea, Bonaparte could now give his whole attention to the plans for subjugating the British Islands which had long been ripening in his fertile brain.

It was from the first evident that Great Britain, having in the three kingdoms but fifteen million inhabitants, could not invade the territory of France with its population of over twenty-five millions. This was the more true because the demands of her navy, of her great mercantile shipping, and of a manufacturing and industrial system not only vast but complex, so that interference with parts would seriously derange the whole, left

⁹³ In case of war, it was the purpose of the British government to send an expedition to occupy New Orleans, as it did afterwards in 1814. (Am. State papers, vol. ii. pp. 551, 557.)

for recruiting the British armies a fraction, insignificant when compared with the resources in men of France; where capital and manufactures, commerce and shipping, had disappeared, leaving only an agricultural peasantry, upon which the conscription could freely draw without materially increasing the poverty of the country, or deranging a social system essentially simple.

This seeming inability to injure France gave rise to the sarcastic remark, that it was hardly worth while for a country to go to war in order to show that it could put itself in a good posture for defence. This, however, was a very superficial view of the matter. Great Britain's avowed reason for war was the necessity—forced upon a reluctant ministry and conceded by a bitter opposition—of resisting encroachments by a neighboring state. Of these, on the Continent, part had already occurred and were, for the time at least, irremediable; but there had also been clearly revealed the purpose of continuing similar encroachments, in regions whose tenure by an enemy would seriously compromise her colonial empire. To prevent this, Great Britain, by declaring war, regained her belligerent rights, and so resumed at once that control of the sea which needed only them to complete. She pushed her sway up to every point of her enemy's long coast-line; and following the strategy of the previous war, under the administration of the veteran seaman who had imparted to it such vigor, she prevented her enemy from combining any great operation, by which her world-wide dominion could be shaken or vital injury be inflicted at any point. The British squadrons,

hugging the French coasts and blocking the French arsenals, were the first line of the defence, covering British interests from the Baltic to Egypt, the British colonies in the four quarters of the globe, and the British merchantmen which whitened every sea.

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