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CHAPTER I.
ADDINGTON

When, early in March, 1801, Pitt resigned office, he was succeeded by Henry Addington, who had been speaker of the house of commons for over eleven years, and who now received the seals of office as first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer on March 14, 1801. He was able to retain the services of the Duke of Portland as home secretary, of Lord Chatham as president of the council, and of Lord Westmorland as lord privy seal. For the rest, his colleagues were, like himself, new to cabinet rank. Lord Hawkesbury (afterwards the second Earl of Liverpool) became foreign secretary, and Lord Hobart, son of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, secretary for war. Loughborough reaped the due reward of his treachery by being excluded from the ministry altogether; with a curious obstinacy he persisted in attending cabinet councils, until a letter from Addington informed him that his presence was not desired. He received some small consolation, however, in his elevation to the Earldom of Rosslyn. Lord Eldon was the new chancellor and was destined to hold the office uninterruptedly, except for the brief ministry of Fox and Grenville, till 1827. Lord St. Vincent became first lord of the admiralty, and Lord Lewisham president of the board of control. Cornwallis had resigned with Pitt, but it was not till June 16 that a successor was found for him as master general of the ordnance. It was then arranged that Chatham should take this office. Portland succeeded Chatham as lord president, and Lord Pelham, whose father had just been created Earl of Chichester, became home secretary instead of Portland. An important change was introduced into the distribution of work between the different secretaries of state, the administration of colonial affairs being transferred from the home to the war office, so that Hobart and his successors down to 1854 were known as secretaries of state for war and the colonies. Soon afterwards Lewisham succeeded his father as Earl of Dartmouth.

Though the Addington ministry has, not without justice, been derided for its weakness as compared with its immediate predecessor, it is interesting to observe that in it one of the greatest of English judges as well as a future premier, destined to display an unique power of holding his party together, first attained to cabinet rank; and in the following year it was reinforced by Castlereagh, who disputes with Canning the honour of being regarded as the ablest statesman of what was then the younger generation. The weakness of the ministry must therefore be attributed to a lack of experience rather than a lack of talent. It was unfortunate in succeeding a particularly strong administration, but is well able to bear comparison with most of the later ministries of George III. Addington himself was in more thorough sympathy with the king than any premier before or after. Conversation with Addington was, according to the king, like "thinking aloud"; and with a king who, like George III., still regarded himself as responsible for the national policy, hearty co-operation between king and premier was a matter of no slight importance.

In the early days of the new administration Pitt loyally kept his promise of friendly support, and it is to be deplored that Grenville and Canning did not adopt the same course. While the issue of peace and war was pending, domestic legislation inevitably remained in abeyance. In Ireland serious disappointment had been caused by the abandonment of catholic emancipation; but the

disappointment was borne quietly, and the Irish Roman catholics doubtless did not foresee to what a distance of time the removal of their disabilities had been postponed. The just and mild rule of the new lord lieutenant, Lord Hardwicke, contributed to the pacification of the country. But in reality the conduct of the movement for emancipation was only passing into new hands; when it reappeared it was no longer led by catholic lords and bishops, but was a peasant movement, headed by the unscrupulous demagogue O'Connell. In these circumstances it is to be regretted that the new administration neglected to carry that one of the half-promised concessions to the catholics which could not offend the king's conscience, namely, the commutation of tithe. Nothing in the protestant ascendency was so irritating to the catholic peasantry as the necessity of paying tithe to a protestant clergy, and its commutation, while benefiting the clergy themselves, would have removed the occasion of subsequent agitation. The spirit of disloyalty, however, was believed to be by no means extinct either in Ireland or in Great Britain, and two stringent acts were passed to repress it. The first, for the continuance of martial law in Ireland, was supported by almost all the Irish speakers in the house of commons, where it was carried without a division, and was adopted in the house of lords by an overwhelming majority, after an impressive speech from Lord Clare. The second, for the suspension of the *habeas corpus* act in the whole United Kingdom was framed to remain in force "during the continuance of the war, and for one month after the signing of a definitive treaty of peace".

THE HORNE TOOKE ACT.

The only other measure of permanent interest which became law in this session was the so-called "Horne Tooke act," occasioned by the return of Horne Tooke, who was in holy orders, for Old Sarum. Such a return was contrary to custom, but the precedents collected by a committee of the house of commons were inconclusive. It was accordingly enacted that in future clergymen of the established churches should be ineligible for seats in parliament, while Horne Tooke was deemed to have been validly elected, and retained his seat. The house of commons found time, however, for an important and well-sustained debate on India, in which among others Dundas, now no longer in office, showed a thorough knowledge of questions affecting Indian finance and trade.

The naval expedition which had been prepared in the last days of Pitt's administration sailed for Copenhagen on March 12, 1801, under Sir Hyde Parker, with Nelson as second in command. The admiral in chief was of a cautious temper, but was wise enough to allow himself to be guided by Nelson's judgment when planning an engagement, though not as to the general course of the expedition. The fleet consisted of sixteen ships of the line and thirty-four smaller vessels; all these with the exception of one ship of the line reached the Skaw on the 18th. A frigate was sent in advance with instructions to Vansittart, the British envoy at Copenhagen, to present an ultimatum to the Danish government,[1] demanding a favourable answer to the British demands within forty-eight hours. For three days Parker waited at anchor eighteen miles from Elsinore, and it was only when Vansittart brought an unfavourable reply on the 23rd that he took Nelson into his counsels. He readily adopted Nelson's plan of ignoring the Danish batteries at Kronborg and making a circuit so as to attack Copenhagen at the weak southern end of its defences, but set aside his project of masking Copenhagen and making straight for a Russian squadron of twelve ships of the line which was lying icebound at Revel. The fair weather of the 26th was wasted in irresolution, and it was not till the 30th that the fleet was able to weigh anchor. It passed Kronborg in safety and anchored five miles north of Copenhagen.

Parker placed under Nelson's immediate command twelve ships of the line and twenty-one smaller vessels, by far the greater part of the British fleet. With these he was to pass to the east of a shoal called the Middle Ground and attack the defences of Copenhagen from the south, while Parker with the remainder of the fleet was to make a demonstration against the more formidable northern

[1] So Vansittart himself, in Pellew, *Life of Sidmouth*, i., 371. Southey and Captain Mahan have erroneously supposed that Vansittart accompanied the naval expedition and was sent by Parker in the frigate from the Skaw.

defences. The wind could not of course favour both attacks simultaneously, and it was agreed that the attack should be made when the wind favoured Nelson. The nights of the 30th and 31st were spent in reconnoitring and laying buoys. On April 1 a north wind brought Nelson's squadron past the Middle Ground, and on the next day a south wind enabled him to attack the Danish fleet, if fleet it may be called. At the north end of the Danish position stood the only permanent battery, the Trekroner, with two hulks or blockships; the rest consisted of seven blockships and eleven floating batteries, drawn up along the shore. An attack on the south end of the line was also exposed to batteries on the island of Amager. Nelson's intention was to close with the whole Danish fleet, but three of his ships of the line were stranded and he was obliged to leave the assault on the northern end entirely to lighter vessels.

BATTLE OF THE BALTIC.

The Danish batteries proved more powerful than had been anticipated, and as time went on and the Danish resistance did not appear to lose in strength, Parker grew doubtful of the result of the battle and gave the order to cease action. The order was apparently not intended to be imperative, but it had the effect of inducing Riou, who commanded the frigate squadron, to sail away to the north. For the rest of the fleet obedience was out of the question. Nelson acknowledged, but refused to repeat the order, and, jocularly placing his glass to his blind eye, declared that he could not see the signal. At length the British cannonade told. Fischer, the Danish commander, had had to shift his flag twice, at the second time to the Trekroner, and all the ships south of that battery had either ceased fire or were practically helpless. The Trekroner, however, was still unsubdued and rendered it impossible for Nelson's squadron to retire, in the only direction which the wind would allow, without severe loss. He accordingly sent a message to the Danish Prince Regent, declaring that he would be compelled to burn the batteries he had taken, without saving their crews, unless firing ceased. If a truce were arranged until he could take his prisoners out of the prizes, he was prepared to land the wounded Danes, and burn or remove the prizes. A truce for twenty-four hours was accordingly arranged, which Nelson employed to remove his own fleet unmolested.

The destruction of the southern batteries left Copenhagen exposed to bombardment, and the Danes, unable to resist, yet afraid to offend the tsar by submission, prolonged the time from day to day till news arrived which removed all occasion for hostility. Unknown to either of the combatants, the Tsar Paul, the life and soul of the northern confederacy, had been murdered on the night of March 23, ten days before the battle, and with his death the league was practically dissolved. When Nelson advanced further into the Baltic, he found no hostile fleet awaiting him, and the new tsar, Alexander, adopting an opposite policy, entered into a compromise on the subject of maritime rights. The battle of the Baltic is considered by some to have been Nelson's masterpiece. It won for him the title of viscount and for his second in command, Rear-Admiral Graves, the gift of the ribbon of the Bath, but the admiralty, for official reasons, declined to confer any public reward or honour on the officers concerned in it

At the same time, the French occupation of Egypt was drawing towards its inevitable close. Kléber, who was left in command by Bonaparte, perished by the hand of an assassin, and Menou, who succeeded to the command, was not only a weak general, but was prevented from receiving any reinforcements by the naval supremacy of Great Britain in the Mediterranean. On March 21, 1801, the French army was defeated at the battle of Alexandria by the British force sent out under Sir Ralph Abercromby, who was himself mortally wounded on the field. His successor, General Hutchinson, completed his work by taking Cairo, before the arrival of General Baird, who had led a mixed body of British soldiers and sepoys from the Red Sea across the desert to the Nile. The capitulation of Alexandria soon followed. In September the French evacuated Egypt, the remains of their army were conveyed to France in English ships, and Bonaparte's long-cherished dreams of eastern conquest faded away for ever – not from his own imagination, but from the calculations of practical statesmanship.

French arms, and French diplomacy supported by armed force, were more successful elsewhere. The treaty of Lunéville was only the first of a series of treaties, by which France secured to herself a political position commensurate with her military glory. By the treaty of Aranjuez between France and Spain, signed on March 21, Spain ceded Louisiana to France, reserving the right of pre-emption, and undertook to wage war on Portugal in order to detach it from the British alliance. Spain and Portugal were both lukewarm in this war, and on June 6 signed the treaty of Badajoz, by which Portugal agreed to close her ports to England, to pay an indemnity to Spain, and to cede the small district of Olivenza, south of Badajoz. Bonaparte was intensely irritated by this treaty, which deprived him of the hope of exchanging conquests in Portugal for British colonial conquests in any future negotiations; he declared that Spain would have to pay by the sacrifice of her colonies for the conquered French colonies which he still hoped to recover. A French army was despatched to Portugal and enabled Bonaparte to dictate the treaty of Madrid, signed on September 29, whereby Portugal ceded half Guiana to France and undertook, as at Badajoz, to close her ports against England.

INFLUENCES MAKING FOR PEACE.

This last condition was equally imposed on the King of the Two Sicilies by the treaty of Florence, concluded on March 28, and before the end of the year France had established friendly relations with the Sultan of Turkey and the new Tsar of Russia. More important still, as consolidating Bonaparte's power at home, was the concordat signed by him and the pope on July 15 recognising Roman Catholicism as the religion of the majority of Frenchmen, and of the consuls, guaranteeing stipends, though on an abjectly mean scale, to the clergy, and placing the entire patronage of the French Church in the hands of the first consul. Never since the French revolution had the Church been thus acknowledged as the auxiliary, or rather as the handmaid, of the state, and probably no one but the first consul could have brought about the reconciliation. After such exertions, even he may have sincerely desired an honourable peace, as the crown of his victories, or at least as a breathing time, to enable him to mature his vast designs for reorganising France. Perhaps he did not yet fully recognise that war was a necessity of his political ascendency, no less than of his own personal character. The French people still clung to republican institutions; and the consulate was a nominal republic, with all effective power vested in the first consul. Time was to show how largely this unique position depended on his unique capacity of conducting wars glorious to French arms; for the present, France was satisfied, and longed for peace.

The English ministry, too, was impelled by strong motives to enter upon the negotiations which resulted in the peace of Amiens. Not only was Great Britain crippled by the loss of nearly all her allies, but the high price of bread had roused grave disaffection,[2] and intensified among British merchants a desire for an unmolested extension of commerce; above all, English statesmen now recognised the consulate, under Bonaparte, as the first stable and non-revolutionary government since the fall of the French monarchy. Both countries, therefore, were predisposed to entertain pacific overtures, but the very fact that these were in contemplation stirred both sides to further endeavours in order to secure better terms of peace. A French squadron, commanded by Admiral Linois and containing three ships of the line besides smaller boats, was making a movement for the Straits of Gibraltar in order to strengthen the force at Cadiz. Sir James Saumarez with five ships of the line and two smaller vessels engaged Linois off Algeciras on July 5, but the French ships were supported by the land batteries, and one of the British ships, the *Hannibal* (74), ran aground, and Saumarez was eventually compelled to leave her in the hands of the enemy. This victory was hailed with delight throughout France, but it was fully retrieved a week later. The French squadron had in the meantime been reinforced by one

[2] *Annual Register*, xliii. (1801), chapter i. The average price of wheat in 1800 was 112s. 8d. the quarter, whereas the highest annual average in the half century before the war had been 64s. 6d. On March 5, 1801, the price of the quartern loaf stood as high as 1s. 10½d. On July 23 it was still 1s. 8d. The harvest of this year was, however, an excellent one. The price fell rapidly during August, and by November 12 was as low as 10½d.

French and five Spanish ships of the line, and on the 12th it made a fresh attempt to reach Cadiz; it was, however, engaged in the Straits by Saumarez with five ships of the line. In the ensuing battle two Spanish ships blew up, and the French *Saint Antoine* was captured. The remainder succeeded in reaching Cadiz, but Saumarez was able to resume the blockade a few weeks later.

Meanwhile there was no relaxation of French preparations for an invasion of England, or of naval activity on the part of Great Britain. No sooner had Nelson returned from the Baltic than he was, on July 24, placed in command of a "squadron on a particular service," charged with the defence of the coast from Beachy Head to Orfordness. With this he not only blockaded the northern French ports, but assumed the aggressive, and bombarded the vessels therein collected. A more daring attempt to cut out the flotilla moored at Boulogne by a boat attack was repelled with some loss on the night of August 15. But couriers under flags of truce were already passing between London and Paris, and hostilities ceased in the autumn of the year 1801.

THE QUESTION OF MALTA.

The history of the negotiations which ended in the peace of Amiens derives a special interest from the events which followed it. The earliest overtures for peace were made by Hawkesbury on March 21, 1801. At first Bonaparte refused to listen to them, but the destruction of the northern confederacy inclined him to more pacific counsels. On April 14 the British government stated its demands. They mark a distinct advance on those which had been made in vain at Lille in 1797. France was to evacuate Egypt, and Great Britain Minorca, but Great Britain claimed to retain Malta, Tobago, Martinique, Trinidad, Essequibo, Demerara, Berbice, and Ceylon. She was willing to surrender the Cape of Good Hope on condition that it became a free port, and stipulated that an indemnity should be provided for the Prince of Orange. At the outset, Bonaparte opposed all cessions by France and her allies, but the steady improvement in the fortunes of England in the north and in Egypt at last determined him to grant some of the British demands, and as the evacuation of Egypt became inevitable, he was resolved to gain something in exchange for it before it was too late. The preliminary treaty was accordingly signed by Bonaparte's agent Otto on behalf of France and Hawkesbury on behalf of Great Britain on October 1, the day before the news of the French capitulation in Egypt reached England. Great Britain had already consented to relinquish Malta, provided that it became independent. She now consented to relinquish all her conquests from France, and with the exception of Ceylon and Trinidad all her conquests from the French allies, requiring, however, that the Cape should be recognised as a free port. The French were to evacuate not only Egypt, but the Neapolitan and Roman States. Malta was to be restored to the knights of St. John under the guarantee of a third power. Prisoners of war were to be released on payment of their debts, and the question of the charge for their maintenance was to be settled by the definitive treaty in accordance with the law of nations and established usage.

No mention was made of the Prince of Orange, but Otto gave a verbal assurance that provision would be made to satisfy his claims. He also gave the British government to understand that France would be willing to cede Tobago in consideration of the expenses incurred in the maintenance of French and Dutch prisoners. The omission of all reference to the continental relations of France is conspicuous. In France it was interpreted as indicating that Great Britain renounced her interest in continental politics. The Batavian, Helvetian, Cisalpine, and Ligurian republics, the kingdom of Etruria, and the whole east bank of the Rhine were, however, supposed to be already protected against French encroachment by the treaty of Lunéville, and Great Britain had no wish to impose terms involving a recognition of these new creations. Again, no mention was made of commercial relations apart from the Newfoundland and St. Lawrence fisheries, for Great Britain was too ready to believe that a separate commercial treaty would be practicable, and was naturally loth to delay the conclusion of peace by a difficult negotiation.

CORNWALLIS AT AMIENS.

Cornwallis was appointed to negotiate the definitive treaty, and had some hope that he might arrive at an informal understanding with Bonaparte at Paris before he proceeded to Amiens. But he was offended by Bonaparte's manner, and, dreading to be pitted against so subtle a diplomatist as Talleyrand, he left Paris before anything was accomplished, and arrived at Amiens on November 30. There France was represented by Joseph Bonaparte, the first consul's elder brother, and the negotiator of Lunéville. At Amiens, the position of the British government was compromised from the first by its renewed insistence on a point which had been omitted from the preliminary treaty, namely, the compensation of the Prince of Orange. This demand was accompanied by an endeavour to obtain compensation for the King of Sardinia. Joseph Bonaparte, on the other hand, entrenched himself behind the letter of the treaty, and acknowledged no further obligation. Any additional concession to Great Britain could only be purchased by British concessions to France. Other difficulties arose over the question of Malta, the payment for the maintenance of prisoners, and the inclusion of allies as parties to the treaty.

On the first of these questions the French would appear to have aimed throughout at reducing the knights to as impotent a position as possible. The British, on the other hand, ostensibly desiring to see the strength of the order maintained, were chiefly interested in securing its neutrality. At the time of the signature of the preliminary treaty, Russia was the power that seemed to Great Britain the fittest guarantor of the independence of the knights. On the refusal of Russia to accept this position, Naples appeared to be the next best alternative, but it was eventually agreed to substitute for the guarantee of a third power the obviously futile guarantee of all the powers. Neither party foresaw that the impossibility of obtaining such a guarantee was destined to leave the whole clause about Malta inoperative. After much dispute over the future constitution of the order, France proposed to obviate the chief source of difficulty by the demolition of the forts. This plan commended itself to Cornwallis, but was rejected by the British government. By the end of December it was agreed that a Neapolitan garrison was to occupy the islands provisionally, until the new organisation should be established. Great Britain proposed that this garrison should be maintained at the joint expense of Great Britain and France. It did not occur to the British government to propose any guarantee for the preservation of the property of the order, and this omission ultimately proved material. The question of including allies in the treaty was less complicated. France preferred a number of separate treaties so as to keep the British interest in Europe at a minimum. Great Britain, on the other hand, wished to make France a party to the cessions made by her allies, and successfully insisted on the negotiation of a single comprehensive treaty. Joseph Bonaparte granted this point on December 11, but, as he had not full powers to negotiate with any power except Great Britain, he continued to interpose delays till the end of the year.

In the meantime France had failed in her attempts to meet the British claims on behalf of the Prince of Orange by demands for further privileges and territory in the oceans and colonies. On the whole, the first month's negotiations had contributed much to a settlement, without giving a decided advantage to either side. The lapse of time, however, turned the balance in favour of the negotiator who was the more independent of his country's desire for peace. On January 1, 1802, Hawkesbury wrote to Cornwallis, treating the acquisition of Tobago as unimportant; on the 2nd Addington expressed his readiness to accept a separate arrangement with the Batavian republic for the Prince of Orange. By the 16th Hawkesbury had yielded the claim of Portugal to be a party to the treaty. The refusal of the French to cede Tobago in lieu of payment for the French prisoners, and the difficulty of assessing the payment, opened a way to the evasion of compensation altogether. Cornwallis, preferring to sacrifice this claim rather than re-open the war, suggested to Joseph Bonaparte on the 22nd that the treaty should provide for commissioners to assess the payment, while it should be secretly provided that they should not be appointed. On the same day, Joseph Bonaparte communicated his brother's consent to a clause engaging France to find a suitable territorial possession in Germany for the Prince of Orange.

If Hawkesbury and Cornwallis imagined that they had made sure of an early peace by these extensive concessions, they were greatly mistaken. Napoleon, flushed with this unexpected success, was encouraged to make further trial of the pliability of the British diplomatists. Two events occurred at this stage of the negotiations which tried the temper of both sides to the uttermost. On January 26, Bonaparte was elected president of the Cisalpine republic, to be styled henceforth the Italian republic. This event seems to have taken the British government by surprise; they thought it a distinct indication that he still contemplated further aggressions in spite of the series of treaties by which he appeared to be securing peace, and were therefore much less inclined than formerly to make concessions. About the same time Bonaparte was not unreasonably enraged at the outrageous attacks made on him in the press conducted in London by French exiles, especially by Jean Peltier, the editor of a paper called *L'Ambigu*, and he blamed the British government for permitting their publication. He therefore instructed his brother Joseph to raise further difficulties over the garrison and permanent organisation of Malta, as well as over the proposed accession of the sultan to the treaty. Vain attempts were also made by Joseph to retain Otranto for France till the British should have evacuated Malta, and to secure the inclusion of the Ligurian republic in the treaty.

THE TREATY OF AMIENS.

At last on March 8 Napoleon agreed that no important difference remained, and urged his brother to conclude the treaty. A little more time was wasted in providing for a temporary occupation of Malta by Neapolitan troops, and a more marked division of opinion arose as to the compensation for the Prince of Orange. In spite of instructions to the contrary from Hawkesbury, Cornwallis accepted an engagement on the part of France to find a compensation, not defined, for the house of Nassau, instead of charging it on the Dutch government; and the treaty was finally concluded on March 25. It was signed by Great Britain, France, Spain, and the Batavian republic, while the Porte was admitted as an accessory power. It differed from the preliminary convention in no important respect, except in the illusory safeguards for the claims of the Prince of Orange, the secret arrangement for evading the cost of the French prisoners, and the provisions concerning Malta, pregnant with the seeds of future enmity. These provisions were as follows: Malta was to be restored to the knights of St. John, from whose order both French and British were hereafter to be excluded. The evacuation was to take place within three months of the ratification of the treaty, or sooner if possible. At that date Malta was to be given up, provided the grand master or commissaries of the order were present, and provided the Neapolitan garrison had arrived. Its independence was to be under the guarantee of France, Great Britain, Austria, Spain, Russia, and Prussia. Two thousand Neapolitan troops were to occupy it for one year, and until the order should have raised a force sufficient, in the judgment of the guaranteeing powers, for the defence of the islands.[3]

On October 29, 1801, parliament was opened with a speech from the throne briefly announcing the conclusion of a convention with the northern powers, and of preliminaries of peace with the French republic. General Lauriston, bearing the ratification of the preliminaries by the first consul, had reached London on the 10th, when he was received by the populace with tumultuous demonstrations of joy. Soon afterwards the "feast of the peace" was celebrated in Paris with equal enthusiasm. Short-lived as they proved to be, these pacific sentiments were doubtless genuine on both sides of the channel. The industrial, though not the military, resources of France were exhausted by her prodigious efforts during the last eight years; while England, suffering grievously from distress among the working-classes and financial difficulties, welcomed the prospect of cheaper provisions and easier times, as well as of emerging from the political difficulties originating in the French revolution.

[3] Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, iii., 382-487.

The preliminary treaty, however, did not escape hostile criticism in either house of parliament. It was the subject of discussion in the lords on November 3, and in the commons on the 3rd and 4th. Its most strenuous assailants were Lord Grenville, who had been foreign secretary under Pitt, and the whigs who had joined Pitt's ministry in 1794, among whom Lords Spencer and Fitzwilliam and above all Windham call for special notice. Windham's powerful and comprehensive speech contained more than one shrewd forecast of the future. For once, Pitt and Fox supported the same measure, and Pitt, dwelling on *security* as our grand object in the war, specially deprecated any attempt on the part of Great Britain "to settle the affairs of the continent". Fox, in advocating peace, fiercely denounced the war against the French republic, and gloated over the discomfiture of the Bourbons.[4] It was admitted on all sides that France was stronger than ever in a military and political sense. She had already made treaties with Austria, Naples, Spain, and Portugal; other treaties with Russia and Turkey were on the point of being signed; while the still more important concordat with the pope was already ratified. On the other hand, Great Britain had largely increased her colonial possessions, and the chief question now discussed was whether she would be the weaker for abandoning some of these recent conquests. The general feeling of the nation was fitly expressed by Sheridan in the phrase: "This is a peace which all men are glad of, but no man can be proud of". Malmesbury, the negotiator of Lille, was absent from the debates; but he has recorded in his diary his disapproval both of the peace and of the violent opposition to it The king told Malmesbury on November 26 that he considered it an experimental peace, but unavoidable.[5]

DEBATES ON TREATY OF AMIENS.

The debates on the definitive treaty of Amiens took place on May 13 and 14, 1802, and though vigorously sustained, were to some extent a repetition of those on the preliminaries of peace. The opposition to it was headed by Grenville in the lords and in the commons by Windham, who compared it unfavourably with the preliminaries; and the stipulations with respect to Malta were justly criticised as one of its weakest points. Strange to say, Pitt took no effective part in the discussion, which ended in overwhelming majorities for the government. As in the previous session, domestic affairs, except in their bearing on foreign policy, received comparatively little attention from parliament. The income tax was repealed, almost in silence, as the first fruits of peace, and Addington, as chancellor of the exchequer, delivered an emphatic eulogy on the sinking fund by means of which he calculated that in forty-five years the national debt, then amounting to £500,000,000, might be entirely paid off. The house of commons showed no want of economical zeal in scrutinising the claims of the king on the civil list, and those of the Prince of Wales on the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall. Nor did it neglect such abuses as the non-residence of the parochial clergy, and the cruel practice of bull-baiting, though it rejected a bill for the suppression of this practice, after a characteristic apology for it from Windham, in which he dwelt upon its superiority to horse-racing. In this session, too, a grant of £10,000 was voted to Jenner for his recent invention of vaccination. In supporting it, Wilberforce stated that the victims of small-pox, in London alone, numbered 4,000 annually.

The parliament, which had now lasted six years, was dissolved by the king in person on June 28, and a general election was held during the month of July. The new house of commons did not differ materially from the old, and even in Ireland the recent national opposition to the union did not lead to the unseating of a single member who had voted for it.[6] Meanwhile the ministry was strengthened by the admission to office of Lord Castlereagh, already distinguished for his share in the negotiations precedent to the union with Ireland. On July 6 he was appointed president of the board of control in succession to Dartmouth, and was admitted to a seat in the cabinet in October. The new parliament

[4] In a letter to Charles Carey, dated October 22, Fox went the length of expressing extreme pleasure in the triumph of the French government over the English (*Memorials of C. J. Fox*, iii., 349).

[5] Malmesbury, *Diaries*, iv., 60, 62.

[6] Lecky, *History Of Ireland*, v., 465.

did not meet till November 16. During the interval members of both houses, with vast numbers of their countrymen, flocked to Paris, which had been almost closed to English travellers since the early days of the revolution. Fox was presented to Napoleon, as Bonaparte, since the decree which made him consul for life, preferred to be styled. Napoleon conceived a great admiration for him, and afterwards persuaded himself that, had Fox survived, the friendly relations of England and France would not have been permanently interrupted. On the very day on which parliament assembled, a conspiracy was discovered, which, however insane it may now appear, attracted much attention at the time. A certain Colonel Despard with thirty-six followers, mainly labourers, had plotted to kill the king and seize all the government-buildings, with a view to the establishment of what he called the "constitutional independence of Ireland and Great Britain" and the "equalisation of all civic rights". The conspiracy had no wide ramifications, and the arrest of its leader and his companions brought it to an immediate end. Despard was found guilty of high treason and was executed on February 21, 1803.

When parliament met, the king's speech referred ominously to fresh disturbances in the balance of power on the continent; and votes were passed for large additions to the army and navy, in spite of Fox's declaration that he saw no reason why Napoleon, satisfied with military glory, should not henceforth devote himself to internal improvements in France. Nelson, on the contrary, speaking in the house of lords, while he professed himself a man of peace, insisted on the danger arising from "a restless and unjust ambition on the part of our neighbours," and Sheridan delivered a vigorous speech in a like spirit. On the whole, in January, 1803, the prospects of assured peace and prosperity were much gloomier than they had been in January, 1802, before the treaty of Amiens. The funds were going down, the bank restriction act was renewed, and Despard's conspiracy still agitated the public mind. In the month of February a strong anti-Gallican sentiment was roused by Mackintosh's powerful defence of the royalist Jean Peltier, accused and ultimately convicted of a gross libel on the first consul. On March 8 came the royal message calling out the militia, which heralded the rupture of the peace.

The renewal of the war, fraught with so much glory and misery to both nations, can have taken neither by surprise. The ink was scarcely dry on the treaty of Amiens when fresh causes of discord sprung up between France and Great Britain. More than one of these, indeed, had arisen between the signature of the preliminary convention and the actual conclusion of peace. During the negotiations, the first consul had, as we have seen, never ceased to protest against the violent attacks upon himself in the English press, while Cornwallis persistently warned his own government against the menacing attitude of France in Italy and elsewhere. The proclamation of the concordat in April, 1802, and the recognition of Napoleon as first consul for life in August, however they may have strengthened his position in France, were no legitimate subjects for resentment in England; but his acceptance of the presidency of the "Italian" republic in January, followed by his annexation of Piedmont in September, revived in all its intensity the British mistrust of his aggressive policy.

FRENCH AGGRESSIONS.

The month of October witnessed a renewed aggression on Switzerland. A French army, commanded by Ney, advanced into the interior of the country, and forced the Swiss, who were in the midst of a civil war, to accept the mediation of Napoleon. The new constitution which he framed attempted, by weakening the federal government, to place the direction of Helvetian external relations in the hands of the French first consul. Our government vainly endeavoured to resist this interference by sending agents with money and promises. In Germany the redistribution of territory necessitated by the peace of Lunéville was carried out professedly under the joint mediation of France and Russia, but really at the dictation of Napoleon. The final project, which destroyed all except three of the spiritual principalities and all except six of the free cities, was proposed by France on February 23, 1803, and accepted by the Emperor Francis on April 27.

Against these rearrangements, Great Britain could have nothing to say; their importance is that while the negotiations were pending, Austria, Prussia, and Russia all had a strong motive for standing well with France. Bonaparte's attitude towards Switzerland was, in so far as it was backed by force, an infringement of the treaty of Lunéville, to which, however, Great Britain was not a party. The neutrality of Piedmont had not been safeguarded either at Lunéville or at Amiens; it had already been occupied by France before the treaty was signed, and Napoleon claimed to have as much right to annex territory in Europe without the consent of Great Britain as Great Britain had to annex territory in India without the consent of France.

Napoleon's schemes of colonial expansion, though equally within the letter of the treaty, were not less disconcerting. The reconquest of San Domingo appeared necessary in order to obtain a base for the effective occupation of the new French possession, Louisiana. The despatch of an expedition for this purpose in December, 1801, had excited grave suspicion, and when two-thirds of the army had died of yellow fever and the remainder had returned home, fresh troops were sent out to take their place. A new naval expedition was prepared in the Dutch port of Helvoetsluis, but it was impossible to persuade British public opinion that its real destination was San Domingo. Finally, on the eve of hostilities, in the spring of 1803 Napoleon, despairing of advance in this direction and disregarding the Spanish right of pre-emption, sold Louisiana to the United States for 80,000,000 francs. Still more embarrassing was Bonaparte's eastern policy. In September, 1802, Colonel Sébastiani was sent as "commercial agent" to the Levant. He was instructed to inspect the condition of ports and arsenals, to assure the sheykhs of French favour, and to report on the military resources of Syria, Egypt, and the north African coast. His report, which was published in the *Moniteur* of January 30, 1803, set forth the opportunities that France would possess in the event of an immediate return to hostilities, and was naturally interpreted as disclosing an intention to renew the war on the first opportunity. Six thousand French would, he said, be enough to reconquer Egypt; the country was in favour of France. In March, 1803, Decaen left France with open instructions to receive the surrender of the five towns in India restored to France, but with secret orders to invite the alliance of Indian sovereigns opposed to Great Britain. On his appearance at Pondicherri, the British commander prepared to seize him, but he escaped to the Mauritius, which he put in a state of defence, and made a basis for attacks on British commerce which lasted from 1803 to 1811.

CAUSES OF MISTRUST AFTER AMIENS.

Ireland also was visited by political spies, passing as commercial agents. It may not be easy to say how far Emmet's rebellion, to be recorded hereafter, was the result of these visits. At all events a letter fell into the hands of the British government, addressed by Talleyrand to a French agent at Dublin, called Fauvelet, directing him to obtain answers to a series of questions about the military and naval circumstances of the district, and "to procure a plan of the ports, with the soundings and moorings, and to state the draught of water, and the wind best suited for ingress and egress". The British government naturally complained of these instructions, but Talleyrand persistently maintained that they were of a purely commercial character.[7] It is, of course, true that these preparations in view of a possible recurrence of hostilities, however obvious their intention, were not in themselves hostile acts. Still, they were just grounds for suspicion, and, with our retrospective knowledge of Napoleon's later career, we may seek in vain for the grounds of confidence which had made the conclusion of a treaty possible. Great Britain was guilty of more direct breaches of the peace of Amiens. Russia refused her guarantee for the independence of Malta, and the British government was therefore technically justified in retaining it. No similar justification could, however, be alleged for the retention of Alexandria and the French towns in India. These measures were, as will be seen, defended on broader grounds of public policy. Not the least of the causes of discontent with the new

[7] Lanfrey, *Napoleon I.* (English edition), ii., 202; Pellew, *Life of Sidmouth*, ii., 164.

situation was the refusal of Napoleon to follow up the treaty of peace with a commercial treaty. He had even retained French troops in Holland, and thus shown that he meant to close its ports against British commerce. The hope of a renewal of trade with France had been a main cause of the popular desire for peace, and had reconciled the British public to the sacrifices with which the treaty of Amiens had been purchased. It soon became clear that further concessions would be made the price of a commercial treaty, and it was felt in consequence that the sacrifices already made were made in vain.

In September, 1802, Lord Whitworth was sent as ambassador extraordinary to the French Republic. The instructions which he carried with him from Hawkesbury fully reflect the prevailing spirit of mistrust. He was to watch for any new leagues which might prejudice England or disturb Europe; he was to discover any secret designs that might be formed against the East or West Indies; he was to maintain the closest surveillance over the internal politics of France, but especially over the dispositions of influential personages in the confidence of the first consul, as well as over the financial resources and armaments of the republic.[8] Two months later, he was expressly warned in a secret despatch not in any way to commit His Majesty to a restoration of Malta, even if the provisions made at Amiens for this purpose could be completely executed; and the principle was laid down, from which the British government never swerved, that Great Britain was entitled to compensation for any acquisitions made by France since the treaty was signed. Accordingly, the retention of Malta was justified as a counterpoise to French extensions of territory in Italy, the invasion of Switzerland, and the continued occupation of the Batavian republic.[9] This resolution was naturally confirmed by the publication of Sébastiani's report.

NAPOLEON AND WHITWORTH.

The long negotiations between Whitworth and the French government, during the winter of 1802 and the spring of 1803, only bring into stronger relief the importance of the issues thus raised, and the hopelessness of a pacific solution. Napoleon firmly took his stand throughout on the simple letter of the treaty, which pledged Great Britain, upon certain conditions, to place the knights of St. John in possession of Malta, but did not contemplate the case of further accessions of French territory on the continent. Although the conditions specified were never fully satisfied, it is abundantly clear that the British ministers, having at last grasped the value of Malta, created all the difficulties in their power, and determined to cancel this article of the treaty. They alleged, in self-defence, that the spirit of the treaty had been constantly violated by Napoleon, in repeated acts of hostility to British subjects, in the refusal of all redress for such grievances, and, above all, in that series of aggressions on the continent which he declared to be outside the treaty and beyond the province of Great Britain.[10] None of the compromises laboriously discussed in the winter of 1802 betoken any desire on the part of either government to retreat from its main position, though it does not follow that either sought to bring about a renewal of the war. Whitworth constantly reported that no formidable armaments were being prepared, and clung for months to a belief that Napoleon, knowing the instability of his own power and the ruinous state of his finances, would ultimately give way. On the other hand, Talleyrand and Joseph Bonaparte never ceased to hope that Great Britain would make concessions which might be accepted.

Such hopes were rudely dispelled by the king's message to parliament on March 8, 1803, complaining of aggressive preparations in the ports of France and Holland, and recommending immediate measures for the security of his dominions. This message, with the consequent embodiment of the militia, startled the whole continent, and was followed five days later by the famous scene in which the first consul addressed Whitworth in phrases little short of insult. During a public audience at the Tuileries on the 13th, Napoleon, after inquiring whether the British ambassador

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[8] Browning, *England and Napoleon in 1803*, pp. 1-6.

[9] Browning, *ibid.*, pp. 6-10.

[10] See especially Hawkesbury's despatch in Browning, *ibid.*, pp. 65-68, and Whitworth's despatches, *ibid.*, pp. 73-75, 78-85.

had received any news from home, broke out with the words: "And so you are determined to go to war". The altercation which ensued is best told in Whitworth's own words[11]: —

"'No, first consul,' I replied, 'we are too sensible of the advantages of peace.' 'We have,' said he, 'been fighting these fifteen years.' As he seemed to wait for an answer, I observed only, 'That is already too long'. 'But,' said he, 'you desire to fight for fifteen years more, and you are forcing me to it,' I told him that was very far from his majesty's intentions. He then proceeded to Count Marcoff and the Chevalier Azzara, who were standing together at a little distance from me, and said to them, 'The English are bent on war, but if they are the first to draw the sword, I shall be the last to put it back into the scabbard. They do not respect treaties. They must be covered with black crape.' I suppose he meant the treaties. He then went his round, and was thought by all those to whom he addressed himself to betray great signs of irritation. In a few minutes he came back to me, to my great annoyance, and resumed the conversation, if such it can be called, by something personally civil to me. He then began again, 'Why these armaments? Against whom these measures of precaution? I have not a single ship of the line in the French ports; but if you wish to arm, I will arm also; if you wish to fight, I will fight also. You may perhaps kill France, but will never intimidate her.' 'We wish,' said I, 'neither the one nor the other. We wish to live on good terms with her.' 'You must respect treaties then,' replied he; 'woe to those who do not respect treaties; they shall answer for it to all Europe.'"

Too much stress has been laid upon this incident, so characteristic of Napoleon's studied impetuosity. Little more than a fortnight later he received the British ambassador with courtesy. Overtures now succeeded overtures, and much was expected on both sides from the influence of the Tsar Alexander, to whom France suggested that Malta might be ceded.[12] At the last moment, a somewhat more conciliatory disposition was shown by the French diplomatists; and the British government was blamed by its opponents, alike for having failed to break off the negotiations earlier on the broadest grounds, and for breaking them off too abruptly on grounds of doubtful validity. But we now see that national enmity, fostered by the press on both sides, rendered friendly relations impossible, and that, even had Napoleon been willing to refrain from aggressions, peace was impossible. On May 12, two months after the king's message, Whitworth, having presented an ultimatum, finally quitted Paris. A few days later an order was issued for the detention of all British subjects then resident in France, and justified on the ground that French seamen (but not passengers) were liable to capture at sea. On June 10 Talleyrand announced the occupation of Hanover and the treatment as enemies of Hanoverian soldiers serving under the King of Great Britain. Meanwhile, on May 16, the rupture of peaceful relations was announced to both houses of parliament; on May 18 war was declared, and in June volunteers were already mustering to resist invasion.

[11] Whitworth's despatch of March 14, in Browning, *England and Napoleon*, p. 116.

[12] Browning, *England and Napoleon*, p. 218.

CHAPTER II.
THE RETURN OF PITT

The period following the rupture of the peace of Amiens, though crowded with military events of the highest importance, was inevitably barren in social and political interest. Disappointed in its hopes of returning prosperity, the nation girded itself up with rare unanimity for a renewed contest. In July the income-tax was reinstituted and a bill was actually carried authorising a levy *en masse* in case of invasion. Pending its enforcement, the navy was vigorously recruited by means of the press-gang; the yeomanry were called out, and a force of infantry volunteers was enrolled, which reached a total of 300,000 in August, and of nearly 400,000 at the beginning of the next session. Pitt himself, as warden of the Cinque Ports, took command of 3,000 volunteers in Kent, and contrasted in parliament the warlike enthusiasm of the country with the alleged apathy of the ministry. On July 23 a rebellion broke out in Ireland, instigated by French agents and headed by a young man named Robert Emmet. The conspiracy was ill planned and in itself insignificant, but the recklessness of the conspirators was equalled by the weakness of the civil and military authorities, who neglected to take any precautions in spite of the plainest warnings. The rebels had intended to attack Dublin Castle and seize the person of the lord lieutenant, who was to be held as a hostage; but they dared not make the attempt, and after parading the streets for a few hours were dispersed by the spontaneous action of a few determined officers with a handful of troops, but not before Lord Kilwarden, the chief justice, and several other persons, had been cruelly murdered by Emmet's followers. Futile as the rising was, it sufficed to show that union was not a sovereign remedy for Irish disaffection.

Meanwhile the relations between the prime minister and his predecessor had been growing less and less cordial. Throughout the year 1801 Pitt was still the friend and informal adviser of the ministry, and it is difficult to overrate the value of his support as a ground of confidence in an administration, personally popular, but known to be deficient in intellectual brilliance. In 1802 he generally stood aloof, and though in June of that year he corrected the draft of the king's speech, he absented himself from parliament, for he was dissatisfied with the measures adopted by government. His dissatisfaction was known to his friends, and in November a movement was set on foot by Canning to induce Addington to withdraw in Pitt's favour; but Pitt, though willing to resume office, refused to allow the ministry to be approached on the subject. He preferred to wait till a general wish for his return to power should be manifested. In December he visited Grenville at Dropmore, and expressed a certain discontent with the government.[13] It was his intention still to treat the ministers with tenderness, but to return to parliament and criticise their policy. It is easy to see that his object at this date was not to drive the government from office, but to give rise to a desire to re-enlist his own talents in the service of the country, and thus prepare the way for a peaceable resumption of the position he had abandoned in the preceding year.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR PITT'S RETURN.

No sooner had rumours of Pitt's willingness to resume office reached Addington in the last days of December, than he opened negotiations with Pitt with a view to effecting this object. Pitt did not receive his overtures very warmly. He doubtless wished to be brought back because he was felt to be indispensable, without any appearance of intrigue. Time was in his favour, and he allowed the negotiations to proceed slowly. As the proposals took shape, it became clear that Addington did not wish to be openly superseded by Pitt, but preferred that they should serve together as secretaries of state under a third person; and Addington even suggested Pitt's brother, the Earl of Chatham, then

[13] Buckingham, *Court and Cabinets*, iii., 242; Lewis, *Administrations of Great Britain*, p. 225.

master-general of the ordnance, as a suitable prime minister. Pitt's reply, communicated to Addington by Dundas, now Viscount Melville, in a letter dated March 22, 1803, was to the effect that Pitt would not accept any position in the government except that of prime minister, with which was to be coupled the office of chancellor of the exchequer. Addington readily acceded to Pitt's claim to this position, but Grenville refused to serve in a ministry where Addington and Hawkesbury held "any efficient offices of real business," and Addington declined to abandon ministerial office for a speakership of the house of lords, which Pitt proposed to create for him. Finally, on April 10, Pitt at a private conference with Addington proposed as an indispensable condition of his own return to office that Melville, Spencer, Grenville, and Windham should become members of his cabinet. This meant a reconstruction of the whole ministry, and Pitt stipulated that the changes should be made by the king's desire and on the recommendation of the existing ministry.

The situation had become an impossible one. Nothing was more reasonable than that Pitt, the friend and protector of the existing ministry, should assume the direction of affairs now that the nation appeared to be on the brink of war. But Pitt could not honourably desert those former colleagues, who had resigned with him on the catholic question. Two of these, however, Grenville and Windham, though doubtless men of the highest capacity, had bitterly attacked the existing ministry; and it was not to be expected that that ministry, supported as it still was by overwhelming majorities in both houses of parliament, supported as it had hitherto been by Pitt himself, should consent to admit its opponents to a share of office. It is highly improbable that Grenville and Windham would then have co-operated with Addington and Hawkesbury, and their admission to office would have ruined the cohesion of the cabinet, unless it had been accompanied by the retirement of the leading members of the existing ministry which Pitt's previous attitude, together with the actual balance of parties in parliament, rendered it impossible to demand. How difficult it was to induce Grenville and Windham to enter into any combination future years were to prove. For the present the ministry took not merely the wisest, but the only course open to it. Addington, after vainly endeavouring to induce Pitt to modify his terms, laid them before a cabinet council on April 13; they were immediately rejected, though the cabinet declared itself ready to admit to office Pitt himself and those of his colleagues who had hitherto acted with the Addington ministry. Pitt could hardly have expected any other reply. No ministry could have granted such terms except on the supposition that Pitt was indispensable, and Pitt for the present hardly claimed such a position.[14]

But if Pitt did not consider himself indispensable, his friends did, and both he and others came gradually to adopt their view. The rejection of his terms left him free to adopt the line of policy that he had sketched to Grenville in the previous December. He had not to wait long for an opportunity, but in the opinion of Pitt's friends at least the first provocation came from Addington. Unable to strengthen his ministry by any accession from Pitt and his followers, he had turned to the "old opposition," the whigs who, under the leadership of Fox, had consistently advocated a pacific policy. These had recently supported the ministry against the "new opposition," as the followers of Grenville and Windham were called. But since 1797 Fox and the majority of the "old opposition" had generally absented themselves from parliament, and George Tierney, member for Southwark, had led what was left of their party.[15] He now received and accepted the offer of the treasurership of the navy, one of the most important of the offices below cabinet rank. As a speaker Tierney was a valuable addition to the government which was sadly deficient in debating power; he had, however, been particularly bitter in his attacks on Pitt, with whom he had fought a duel in 1798, and had provoked the sarcastic wit of Canning, in whose well-known parody, "The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-grinder" (1798), the original illustration by Gillray depicted the friend of humanity with the features of Tierney and laid the scene in the borough of Southwark.

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[14] Buckingham, *Court and Cabinets*, iii., 282-90; Pellew, *Life of Sidmouth*, ii., 113-31; Stanhope, *Life of Pitt*, iv., 20-39.

[15] See vol. x., p. 399.

CHANGES IN ADDINGTON'S MINISTRY.

The appointment, which Pitt himself does not appear to have resented, was announced on June 1, and Tierney took his place on the treasury bench on the 3rd. On the same evening Colonel Patten moved a series of resolutions condemning, in extravagant terms, the conduct of the ministry in the negotiation with France. Pitt seized the opportunity to move the orders of the day. In other words, he proposed that the question should be left undecided. He expressed the opinion that the ministry was not free from blame, but declared himself unable to concur in all the charges against it. He considered further that to drive the existing ministers out of office would only throw the country into confusion, and that it was therefore inadvisable to pursue the question. To this the ministerial speakers replied by demanding a direct censure or a total acquittal, and the consequent division served only to display the weakness of the opposition. The Addington, Fox, and Grenville parties combined to oppose Pitt's motion, which was rejected by 333 votes against 56. Pitt and Fox, and their respective followers then left the house, leaving the ministerial party and the Grenville party to decide the fate of Patten's resolutions, which were negatived by 275 votes against 34. A comparison of the figures of the two divisions, allowing for tellers, gives as the voting strength of Pitt's party 58, of Grenville's 36, of Fox's 22, and of Addington's 277. Of these the Grenville party alone desired to eject the ministers from office, while Fox's party openly professed a preference for Addington over Pitt.

During the remainder of the session Pitt seldom took any part in parliamentary business, and never opposed the ministry on any question of importance. On August 12 parliament was prorogued after a session lasting nearly nine months, and the prime minister embraced the opportunity of making some slight reconstructions in the ministry. Pelham, who was removed from the home office, resigned his place in the cabinet, and was shortly afterwards consoled with the chancellorship of the duchy of Lancaster, an office which was not yet definitely recognised as political. Charles Philip Yorke, son of the chancellor who died in 1770 and half-brother of the third Earl of Hardwicke, resigned the office of secretary at war and succeeded to the home office on the 17th. It was also considered advisable to strengthen the ministry in the upper house, where Grenville's oratory gave the opposition a decided advantage in debating power, and Hawkesbury was accordingly summoned to the lords on November 16 in his father's barony of Hawkesbury. After this rearrangement the cabinet contained eight peers and three commoners, no illiberal allowance of commoners according to the ideas of the age. The recess was further marked by a violent war of pamphlets between the followers of Addington and Pitt, which began early in September, and which, although no politician of the first order took any direct part in it, did much to embitter the relations of their respective parties.[16] Not less irritating were the *jeux d'esprit* with which Canning continued to assail the ministry in the newspaper press.[17] The most famous of these is the couplet: —

> Pitt is to Addington
> As London is to Paddington.

A more openly abusive poem, entitled "Good Intentions," described the prime minister as "Happy Britain's guardian gander". The following verses refer to the appointment of Addington's brother, John Hiley Addington, to be paymaster-general of the forces, and of his brother-in-law, Charles Bragge, afterwards succeeded by Tierney, to be treasurer of the navy: —

> How blest, how firm the statesman stands
> (Him no low intrigue can move)

[16] Pellew, *Life of Sidmouth*, ii., 145-47; Stanhope, *Life of Pitt*, iv., 88-93.

[17] For a list of Canning's squibs, belonging to this period, see Lewis, *Administrations*, p. 249, note.

Circled by faithful kindred bands
And propped by fond fraternal love.

When his speeches hobble vilely,
What "Hear him's" burst from Brother Hiley;
When his faltering periods lag,
Hark to the cheers of Brother Bragge.

Each a gentleman at large,
Lodged and fed at public charge,
Paying (with a grace to charm ye)
This the Fleet, and that the Army.[18]

THE KING'S ILLNESS.

When parliament reassembled on November 22 the opposition was still disunited, and, though Windham severely condemned the inadequacy of the provision made for national defence, he did not venture to divide against the government. But during the Christmas recess a distinct step was made towards the consolidation of the opposition by the reunion of the two sections of the whig party. Grenville had conceived a chimerical project of replacing the existing administration by one which should include all statesmen possessed of real political talent, whatever their differences in the past might have been. True to this policy, he persuaded Fox in January, 1804, to join him in attempting to expel the Addington administration from office as an essential preliminary to any further action. Sheridan, however, with some of the Prince of Wales's friends, still refused to enter into any combination which might result in the return of Pitt to power. The parliamentary session was resumed on February 1, but the course of events was complicated by a recurrence of the king's malady. Symptoms of this were observed towards the end of January; the disease took a turn for the worse about February 12, and on the 14th it was made known to the public. For a short time the king's life appeared to be in danger; his reason was affected during a longer interval, but the attack was in every way milder than in 1789, and on March 7 Dr. Simmons reported to Addington that "the king was competent to perform any act of government".[19] It is true that for many months the king's health did not allow him to give his full attention to public business, but there was nothing to prevent him from attending to such routine work as was absolutely necessary. There could, however, be no question of a change of ministers till there should be a marked improvement in the king's health.

The king's illness was made the occasion on February 27 of a motion by Sir Robert Lawley for the adjournment of the house of commons. This was parried by Addington with the statement that there was no necessary suspension of such royal functions as it might be necessary for His Majesty to discharge at the present moment.[20] The emphasis here obviously lay on the word "necessary". A still bolder course was adopted shortly afterwards by the lord chancellor. When on March 9 the king's assent to several bills was given by commission, Fitzwilliam raised not unreasonable doubts as to whether the king was capable of resuming the functions of government. Eldon, however, declared that, as the result of a private interview with the king, he had come to the conclusion that the royal commissioners were warranted in assenting to the bills in question. Whether the chancellor was justified in assuming this responsibility must remain doubtful; at all events Pitt seems to have

[18] It was not fair to hold Addington entirely responsible for the promotion of his brother, who had been a junior lord of the treasury under Pitt. The taunt came with a particularly bad grace from Canning, who had himself been paymaster-general in the last administration.

[19] Pellew, *Life of Sidmouth*, ii., 250.

[20] *Annual Register*, xlvi. (1804), p. 34.

determined that the time was now ripe for a ministerial crisis. He had on February 27 criticised both the military and naval defences of the country, but he would not directly attack the government till the king's health was in a better condition. At last, on March 15, the first attack was made. Pitt selected the weak point in the administration. St. Vincent's obstinacy in refusing to believe in the possibility of a renewal of hostility and his excessive economy had brought about a marked deterioration in the strength and quality of the fleet. Pitt accordingly moved for an inquiry into the administration of the navy. Fox dissociated himself from Pitt's attacks on the first lord of the admiralty, but supported the motion on the ground that an inquiry would clear St. Vincent's character. On a division the government had a majority of 201 against 130. On the 19th, however, Pitt refused to join the Grenvilles in supporting Fox's motion for the re-committal of the volunteer consolidation bill. On the following day Eldon made overtures to Pitt, and on the 23rd Pitt dined *tête-à-tête* with the chancellor, but no record has been preserved of the nature of their negotiations.

On the 29th Pitt, in a letter to Melville, explained his position at length. He intended, as soon after the Easter recess as the king's health should permit, to write to the king explaining the dangers which, in his opinion, threatened the crown and people from the continuance of the existing government, and representing the urgent necessity of a speedy change; he would prefer an administration from which no political party should be excluded, but was unwilling, especially in view of the king's state of health, to force any minister upon him; if, therefore, he should be invited by the king to form a ministry from which the partisans of Fox and Grenville were to be excluded, he was prepared to form one from his own followers united with the more capable members of the existing government, excluding Addington himself and St. Vincent; should this measure fail of success, he would "have no hesitation in taking such ground in Parliament as would be most likely to attain the object".[21] As it happened, the parliamentary assault preceded the correspondence with the king. Immediately after the recess the ministry laid before parliament military proposals which Pitt felt bound to resist. On April 16 Pitt, supported by Windham, opposed the third reading of a bill for augmenting the Irish militia, and expressed a preference for the army of reserve. He was defeated by the narrow majority of 128 against 107. On the 23rd Fox proposed to refer the question of national defence to a committee of the whole house. He was supported by Pitt and Windham, and defeated by 256 votes only against 204. The division which sealed the fate of the ministry was taken two days later on a motion that the house should go into committee on a bill for the suspension of the army of reserve. This was opposed by Pitt, who expounded a rival plan for the diminution of the militia and increase of the army of reserve. Fox and Windham demanded for Pitt's scheme a right to consideration, and on a division the motion was carried by no more than 240 against 203. The division of April 16 had convinced Addington that a reconciliation with Pitt was necessary. On Pitt's refusing to confer with him, he agreed to recommend the king to charge Eldon with the task of discovering Pitt's views as to the formation of a new ministry, in case the king wished to learn them.

ADDINGTON'S RESIGNATION.

The king, however, expressed no such wish, and on April 22 Pitt sent an unsealed letter to Eldon to be laid before the king; announcing his dissatisfaction with the ministry and his intention of declaring this dissatisfaction in parliament.[22] It was not till the 27th that Eldon found a suitable opportunity of communicating Pitt's letter to the king. Before that date Addington, who considered that he could no longer remain in office with dignity after the divisions of the 23rd and 25th, had on the 26th informed the king of his intention to resign. The king reluctantly consented to his resignation, which was announced to the cabinet on the 29th. On the following day Eldon called on Pitt with a request from the king for a plan of a new administration. Pitt replied in a letter, setting forth at

[21] Stanhope, *Life of Pitt*, iv., 135-44.

[22] See the letter in Stanhope, *Life of Pitt*, iv., appendix, pp. i. – iii.

great length the arguments in favour of a combined administration, and requesting permission to confer with Fox and Grenville about the construction of the ministry.[23] The letter irritated the king, who demanded a renewed pledge against catholic emancipation, with which Grenville was specially associated in his mind, and refused to admit Pitt to office if he persevered in his purpose of consulting Fox and Grenville. Pitt then declared his adherence to the pledge given in 1801[24] and requested an interview with the king. The interview, which took place on May 7, lasted three hours, and ended in a compromise. The king agreed to admit Grenville and his friends to office, but, while ready to accept the friends of Fox, he refused, as much on personal as on political grounds, to give Fox a place in the cabinet. At the same time he declared himself ready to grant him a diplomatic appointment. At a later date the king went the length of declaring that, rather than accept Fox, he would have incurred the risk of civil war.

PITT'S RETURN TO OFFICE.

Fox readily agreed to his own exclusion, which he had fully expected, and urged his followers to join Pitt, but Grenville and his friends refused to serve without Fox, while the friends of Fox and the more immediate followers of Addington refused to serve without their respective leaders. Addington always considered that Pitt had treated him ungenerously in driving him from office, when it was open to him to return to the head of affairs with the full consent of the existing ministers. More recently it has been the fashion to blame Pitt for bringing too little pressure to bear upon the king and thus losing the support of Fox and Grenville. Neither charge appears to be justified. Through the whole length of the Addington administration Pitt showed himself fully sensitive of what was due to the king, with whom he had worked cordially for eighteen years, to Grenville who had resigned in his cause, and to Addington who had assumed office under his protection. There was no trace of faction in Pitt's attitude towards the ministry. He merely opposed what he believed to be dangerous to the country, and when he was convinced of the necessity of removing Addington from a share in public business, he endeavoured to effect his purpose in such a way as to give the minimum of offence.

On the other hand, Pitt's intended combination in a supreme crisis of his country's destiny with his life-long antagonist, Fox, was a heroic experiment, perhaps, but still only an experiment. The failure of the ministry of "All the Talents" renders it exceedingly doubtful whether such an alliance would have proved successful, and Fox's lukewarm patriotism would have been dearly purchased at the expense of the alienation of the king, perhaps even of his relapse into insanity. Nor is it certain that the strongest pressure would have induced George III. to accept Fox at this date. Addington was still undefeated and might have remained in office if Pitt had refused to assume the reins of government without Fox. Grenville is undoubtedly more responsible than any one else for the weakness of Pitt's second administration. It was from a sense of loyalty to Grenville that Pitt had suffered the negotiations for his return to office in 1803 to fall through, and now when the two statesmen could return together, and when, if ever, a strong government was needed, either a quixotic sense of honour or a wounded pride induced Grenville not only to stand aloof from the new administration himself, but to do his utmost to prevent others from giving it their support.[25] The new cabinet was quickly formed. Pitt received the seals of office on May 10, and took his seat in parliament after re-election on the 18th, the very day on which Napoleon was declared emperor by the French senate.

This event, long foreseen, was doubtless hastened by the disclosure of the plot formed by Moreau, Pichegru, and Georges Cadoudal against the first consul. There was no proof of Moreau's complicity in designs on Napoleon's life, and the mysterious death of Pichegru in prison left the

[23] There is preserved a sketch in Pitt's handwriting of a combined administration with Melville, Fox, and Fitzwilliam as secretaries of state, and Grenville as lord president.

[24] Stanhope, *Life of Pitt*, iv., appendix, pp. xi., xii.

[25] The best account of Pitt's return to power is to be found in Stanhope, *Life of Pitt*, iv., 113-95; appendix, pp. i. – xiii. The story is told in a very spirited manner by Lord Rosebery, *Pitt*, pp. 238-44.

extent of his complicity among the insoluble problems of history, but there can be no doubt that Cadoudal was justly executed for plotting assassination. Unfortunately some of the under-secretaries in the Addington administration had not only shared the plans of the conspirators so far as they aimed at a rising in France, but had procured for them material assistance. They appear, however, to have been innocent of any attempt on Napoleon's life. Drake, the British envoy at Munich, was, however, deeper in the plot. The evidence of British complicity naturally received the very worst construction in Paris.[26] Napoleon himself certainly believed in an Anglo-Bourbon conspiracy, organised by the Count of Artois and other French royalists, when he caused the Duke of Enghien to be kidnapped in Baden territory and hurried off to the castle of Vincennes. He was, however, already aware of his prisoner's innocence when on March 21 he had him shot there by torch-light after a mock trial before a military commission. All Europe was shocked by this atrocious assassination, and though Napoleon sometimes attempted to shift the guilt of it upon Talleyrand, he justified it at other times as a measure of self-defence, and left on record his deliberate approval of it, for the consideration of posterity. Two months later he became Emperor of the French.

When Pitt resumed office on May 10, 1804, he was no longer the heaven-born and buoyant young minister of 1783, strong in the confidence of the king and the anticipated confidence of the nation, with a minority of followers in the house of commons, but with the brightest prospects of political success before him. Nor was he the leader of a devoted majority, as when he resigned in 1801 rather than abandon his convictions on the catholic question. He had been compelled to waive these convictions, without fully regaining the confidence of the king, and, while the adherents of Fox retained their deep-seated hatred of a war-policy, the adherents of Addington and Grenville were in no mood to give him a loyal support. Windham and Spencer were no longer at his side, and his ministry was essentially the same as that of Addington, with the substitution of Dudley Ryder, now Lord Harrowby, for Hawkesbury as foreign secretary, Melville for St. Vincent as first lord of the admiralty, Earl Camden for Hobart as secretary for war and the colonies, and the Duke of Montrose for Auckland as president of the board of trade. Hawkesbury was transferred to the home office, vacated by Yorke, and the new chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, Lord Mulgrave, was given a seat in the cabinet. Of Pitt's eleven colleagues in the cabinet Castlereagh alone, who remained president of the board of control – a wretched speaker though an able administrator – had a seat in the lower house.

PITT'S RECONCILIATION WITH ADDINGTON.

Military exigencies now engrossed all thoughts, and the king's speech, in proroguing parliament on July 31, foreshadowed a new coalition, for which the murder of the Duke of Enghien had paved the way. The preparations for an invasion of England had been resumed, and Napoleon celebrated his birthday in great state at Boulogne, still postponing his final stroke until he should be crowned, on December 2, at Paris by the helpless pope, brought from Italy for the purpose.[27] A month later he personally addressed another pacific letter to the King of England, who replied in his speech from the throne on January 15, 1805, that he could not entertain overtures except in concert with Russia and the other powers. Meanwhile, Pitt, conscious as he was of failing powers, retained his undaunted courage, and while he was organising a third coalition, did not shrink from a bold measure which could hardly be justified by international law. This was the seizure on October 5, 1804, of three Spanish treasure-ships on the high seas, without a previous declaration of war against Spain, though not without a previous notice that hostilities might be opened at any moment unless Spain ceased to give underhand assistance to France. The excuse was that Spain had long been the obsequious ally of France, and, as the alliance now became open, Pitt's act was sanctioned by a large majority in both houses of parliament in January, 1805. The parliamentary session which opened in this month

[26] Rose, *Life of Napoleon I.*, i., 450-53.

[27] Napoleon actually crowned himself, although he had originally intended to be crowned by the pope.

found Pitt's ministry apparently stronger than it had been at the beginning of the recess. Despairing of any help from Grenville, except in a vigorous prosecution of the war, he had sought a reconciliation with Addington, who became Viscount Sidmouth on January 12 and president of the council on the 14th. Along with Sidmouth his former colleague Hobart, now Earl of Buckinghamshire, returned to office as chancellor of the duchy. To make room for these new allies, Portland had consented to resign the presidency of the council, though he remained a member of the cabinet, while Mulgrave was appointed to the foreign office, in place of Harrowby, who was compelled by ill-health to retire.

But this new accession of strength was soon followed by a terrible mortification which probably contributed to shorten Pitt's life. Melville, his tried supporter and intimate friend, was charged on the report of a commission with having misapplied public money as treasurer of the navy in Pitt's former ministry. It appeared that he had been culpably careless, and had not prevented the paymaster, Trotter, from engaging in private speculations with the naval balances. Although Trotter's speculations involved no loss to the state they were, nevertheless, a contravention of an act of 1785. Melville had also supplied other departments of government with naval money, but was personally innocent of fraud. There was a divergence of feeling in the cabinet as to the attitude to be adopted towards Melville. Sidmouth, himself a man of the highest integrity, was a friend of St. Vincent, the late first lord of the admiralty, and had not forgiven Melville for his part in the expulsion of himself and St. Vincent from office. He had therefore both public and private grounds to incline him against Melville. On April 8, Samuel Whitbread moved a formal censure on Melville in the house of commons. Pitt, with the approval of Sidmouth and his friends, moved the previous question on Whitbread's motion, and declared his intention of introducing a motion of his own for a select committee to investigate the charges. In spite of the support which Pitt derived from the followers of Sidmouth the votes were equally divided on Whitbread's motion, 216 a side. Abbot, the speaker, gave his casting vote in favour of Whitbread, and the announcement was received by the whig members with unseemly exultation.[28]

MINISTERIAL CHANGES.

The censure was followed by an impeachment before the house of lords, where Melville was acquitted in the following year. Meanwhile, he had resigned office on April 9, the day after the vote of censure, and his place at the admiralty was taken by Sir Charles Middleton, who was raised to the peerage as Lord Barham. The appointment gave umbrage to Sidmouth, to whom Pitt had made promises of promotion for his own followers, and he was with difficulty induced to remain in the cabinet. Pitt was, however, irritated by the hostile votes of Sidmouth's followers, Hiley Addington and Bond, on the question of the impeachment, and regarded this as a reason for delaying their preferment. Sidmouth now complained of a breach of faith, as Pitt had promised to treat the question as an open one, and he resigned office on July 4. Buckinghamshire resigned next day. Camden was appointed to succeed Sidmouth as lord president, Castlereagh followed Camden as secretary for war and the colonies, retaining his previous position as president of the board of control, and Harrowby, whose health had improved since his resignation in January, took Buckinghamshire's place as chancellor of the duchy. Thus weakened at home, Pitt could derive little consolation from the aspect of continental affairs. On May 26, Napoleon was crowned King of Italy in the cathedral of Milan, and the Ligurian Republic became part of the French empire in the following month. The ascendency of France in Europe might well have appeared impregnable, and it might have been supposed that nothing remained for England but to guard her own coasts and recapture some of the French colonies given up by the treaty of Amiens.

But Pitt's spirit was still unbroken, and by the middle of July he succeeded in rallying three powers, Russia, Austria, and Sweden, into a league to withstand the further encroachments of France. Such a league had been proposed by Gustavus IV. of Sweden, early in 1804, but nothing definite was

[28] Malmesbury, *Diaries*, iv., 338.

done till Pitt's ministry entered upon office. Meanwhile, the assassination of the Duke of Enghien had led to a rupture of diplomatic relations between France and Russia, though war was not declared. Negotiations were presently set on foot for a league, which, it was hoped, would be joined by Austria and Prussia in addition to Great Britain, Russia, and Sweden. An interesting feature in the negotiations was the tsar's scheme of a European polity, where the states should be independent and enjoy institutions "founded on the sacred rights of humanity," a foreshadowing, as it would seem, of the Holy Alliance. The discussion of details between Great Britain and Russia began towards the end of 1804. Difficulties, however, arose about the British retention of Malta and the British claim to search neutral ships for deserters. A treaty between the two powers was signed on April 11, 1805; but the tsar long refused his ratification, and it was only given in July, after a formal protest against the retention of Malta.

The object of this alliance was defined to be the expulsion of French troops from North Germany, the assured independence of the republics of Holland and Switzerland, and the restoration of the King of Sardinia in Piedmont; 500,000 men were to be provided for the war by Russia and such other continental powers as might join the coalition. Great Britain, instead of furnishing troops, was to supply £1,250,000 a year for every 100,000 men engaged in the war. After the close of the war an European congress was to define more closely the law of nations and establish an European federation. At the same time the allies disclaimed the intention of forcing any system of government on France against her will. It will be observed that the number of troops specified was far in excess of what Russia alone could place in the field; such numbers could only be obtained by the adhesion of Austria and of either Prussia or some of the smaller German states to the coalition. So far as Austria was concerned, Napoleon's Italian policy rendered war inevitable. Already in November, 1804, the Austrian court had entered into a secret agreement with Russia to make war on France in the event of further French aggressions in Italy. The coronation of Napoleon as King of Italy and the annexation of Liguria were, however, more than aggressions; they were open violations of the treaty of Lunéville which had guaranteed the independence of the Cisalpine and Ligurian republics. Austria hereupon determined on war, and secretly joined the coalition on August 9, 1805. Sweden, which was not a member of it, concluded separate treaties of alliance both with Great Britain and with Russia. Greater difficulties had to be surmounted in the case of Prussia. Frederick William III. cherished no enthusiasm for European liberty, and vacillated under the influence of Napoleon's offer of Hanover on the one hand and his numerous petty insults on the other. Prussia in consequence remained neutral throughout the most decisive period of the ensuing war.

NELSON AND VILLENEUVE.

Long before the coalition was ready Napoleon's mind had recurred to his venturesome project for the invasion of England. An army, the finest that he ever led to victory, which, even after it had been transferred to another scene of action, he still saw fit to call the "army of England," was encamped near Boulogne. It was constantly exercised in the process of embarking on board flat-bottomed boats or rafts, which were to be convoyed by Villeneuve, admiral of the Toulon fleet, and Gantheaume, admiral of the Brest fleet, for whose appearance the French signalmen vainly scanned the horizon. In the meantime, Nelson had been engaged for two years, without setting foot on shore, in that patient and sleepless watch, ranging over the whole Mediterranean, which must ever rank with the greatest of his matchless exploits. At last, he learned in the spring of 1805, that Villeneuve, following a plan concerted by Napoleon himself, had eluded him by sailing from Toulon towards Cadiz, had there been joined by the Spanish fleet, and was steering for the West Indies. Nelson followed with a much smaller number of ships, and might have forced an action in those waters, but he was misled by false intelligence and missed the enemy, though his dreaded presence was effectual in saving the British islands from any serious attack.

The combined fleets of France and Spain recrossed the Atlantic and in accordance with Napoleon's plans made for Ferrol on the coast of Galicia. After being repulsed with some loss off Cape Finisterre by Sir Robert Calder, who was court-martialled and severely reprimanded for neglecting to follow up his victory, they put in first at Vigo, and then with fifteen allied ships at Coruña. But, instead of venturing to carry out Napoleon's orders by challenging Admiral Cornwallis's fleet off Brest, and making a desperate effort to command the channel, Villeneuve now took advantage of his emperors recommendation to return to Cadiz in event of defeat, and set sail for that port in the middle of August. Nelson, ignorant of his movements, had vainly sought him off the Straits of Gibraltar, and came home to report himself at the admiralty. Arriving at Spithead on August 18, he was in England barely four weeks, most of which he spent in privacy at Merton. During this brief respite he received a general tribute of admiration and affection from his countrymen, which anticipated the verdict of posterity. On September 15 he sailed from Portsmouth, with a presentiment of his own fate, after having described to Sidmouth the general design of his crowning sea fight: he would, he said, break the enemy's line in two places; and he did so. He joined Admiral Collingwood off Cadiz on the 29th, and on October 19 he received news that Villeneuve, smarting under the prospect of being superseded, had put to sea with the combined fleet. Complicated naval manœuvres followed, but on the 21st the enemy was forced to give battle, a few leagues from Cape Trafalgar, and Nelson caused his immortal signal to be hoisted – "England expects that every man will do his duty".

THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR.

The French and Spanish fleet comprised thirty-three ships of the line, of which eighteen were French and fifteen Spanish; the British had only twenty-seven, but among these were seven three-deckers as against four on the side of the allies. It had the additional advantage of superior discipline and equipment, to say nothing of the genius of its commander. The British fleet advanced in two divisions, Nelson leading the weather division of twelve, and Collingwood the lee division of fifteen ships. According to Nelson's plan Collingwood was to attack the rear of the enemy's line, while he himself cut off and paralysed the centre and van. Both divisions advanced without regular formation, the ships bearing down with all the speed they could command and without waiting for laggards. Collingwood in the *Royal Sovereign*, steering E. by N., broke through the allies' line twelve ships from the rear, raking the *Santa Ana*, Alava's flagship, as he passed her stern, with a broadside which struck down 400 of her men. For some fifteen minutes the *Royal Sovereign* was alone in action; then others of the division came up and successively penetrated the line of the allies, and engaging ship to ship completely disposed of the enemy's rear, their twelve rear ships being all taken or destroyed.

Meanwhile, Nelson in the *Victory*, who had reserved to himself the more difficult task of containing twenty-one ships with twelve, held on his course, advancing so as to keep the allied van stationary and yet to prevent the centre from venturing to help the rear. He designed to pass through the end of the line in order to cut the enemy's van off from Cadiz, but, finding an opportunity, changed his course, passed down the line and attacked the centre. He passed through the line of the allied fleet, closely followed by four other ships of his division, and the five British ships concentrated their attacks on the *Bucentaure*, Villeneuve's flagship, the gigantic Spanish four-decker, the *Santísima Trinidad*, which was next ahead of her, and the *Redoutable*, which supported her. The centre of the allies was crushed and the van cut off from coming to the help of the rear, which was being destroyed by Collingwood.

Before the battle ended, the naval force of France, and with it Napoleon's projects of invasion, were utterly and hopelessly ruined. Eighteen prizes were taken, and, though many of these were lost in a gale, four ships which escaped were afterwards captured, and the remainder lay for the most part shattered hulks at Cadiz. By this battle the supremacy of Great Britain at sea was finally established. Nelson, who, during the ship-to-ship engagement which followed his penetration of the enemy's line, was mortally wounded by a sharp-shooter from the mizzen-top of the *Redoutable*, died before the

battle was over, though he was spared to hear that a complete victory was secure. His death is among the heroic incidents of history, and his last achievement, both in its conception and its results, was the fitting climax of his fame. The plan for the battle which he drew up beforehand for the instruction of his captains, and the changes which he made in it to meet the conditions of the moment are alike worthy of his supreme genius as a naval tactician. His arrangements were carried out by men who had learned to love and trust him, and who were inspired by the fire of his spirit, and hence it was that the allied fleet of France and Spain perished at the "Nelson touch".[29]

Very different were the fortunes of war in central Europe, where Napoleon himself commanded the "army of England". It was not until the end of August that Napoleon knew that Villeneuve would be unable to appear in the Channel, but no sooner did he abandon his project of invasion in despair than he resolved on a campaign scarcely less arduous, and gave orders for a grand march into Germany. Pitt, as we have seen, had successfully negotiated an alliance with Russia and Austria, whose armies were converging upon the plains of Bavaria and were to have been reinforced by a large Prussian contingent. Unhappily, they had not effected a junction when Napoleon crossed the Rhine near Strassburg and the Danube near Donauwörth, while he detached large forces to check the advance of the Russians and the approach of reinforcements expected from Italy. One of these movements involved an open violation of Prussian territory, but he could rely on the well-tried servility of Frederick William. The first decisive result of his strategy was the surrender of Mack at Ulm, with 30,000 men and 60 pieces of ordnance. This event took place on October 20, the very day before the battle of Trafalgar, and opened the road to Vienna, which the French troops entered on November 13, occupying the great bridge by a ruse more skilful than honourable, during the negotiation of an armistice. Vienna was spared, while Napoleon pressed on to meet the remainder of the Austrian army, which had now been joined by a larger body of Russians near Brünn. The allies numbered about 100,000 men; Napoleon's army was numerically somewhat less, but possessed the same kind of superiority as the British navy at Trafalgar. The result was the crushing victory of Austerlitz on December 2, followed by the peace of Pressburg, between France and Austria, signed on the 26th. The principal articles of this treaty provided for the cession of Venetia, Istria, and Dalmatia to the kingdom of Italy, and the aggrandisement of Bavaria and Würtemberg, whose electors received the royal title as the price of their sympathetic alliance with France. Russia withdrew sullenly, having learned the hollowness of her league with Prussia, which had basely temporised while the fate of Germany was at stake, and whose minister, Haugwitz, suppressing the *ultimatum* which he was charged to deliver, had openly congratulated the conqueror of Austerlitz.

Great Britain had had no direct share in the conflict in Southern Germany and Moravia; she had, however, joined in two expeditions, the one in Southern, the other in Northern Europe. In spite of a treaty of neutrality between France and the Two Sicilies, ratified on October 8, an Anglo-Russian squadron was permitted to land a force of 10,000 British troops under Sir James Craig, and 14,000 Russians on the shore of the Bay of Naples. These troops effected nothing, and the violation of neutrality was, as we shall see, destined to involve the Neapolitan monarchy in ruin. The expedition to North Germany was planned on a larger scale. Hanover had been occupied by France since June, 1803. Its recovery was attempted by an Anglo-Hanoverian force under Cathcart, which was to have been supported by a Russian and Swedish force acting from Stralsund. The co-operation of Prussia was also expected. In order to secure this alliance the British government offered Prussia an extension of territory so as to include Antwerp, Liège, Luxemburg, and Cologne, in the event of victory. In November the expedition landed. In December Prussia had definitely given her protection to the Russian troops in Hanover and offered it to the Hanoverians. Pitt computed that at the beginning of the next campaign nearly 300,000 men would be available in North Germany. But the vacillation

[29] Nelson's tactics at Trafalgar are explained in a series of remarkable articles in *The Times* of September 16, 19, 22, 26, 28, 30, and October 19, 1905. For incidents of the battle see Mahan, *Life of Nelson*, ii., 363 *sqq.*

of Prussia ruined all. On December 15 Haugwitz signed the treaty of Schönbrunn, by which Prussia was to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with France and was to receive Hanover in return for Ansbach, Cleves, and Neuchâtel. Frederick William could not yet stoop to such a degree of infamy, and therefore, instead of ratifying the treaty, resolved on January 3, 1806, to propose a compromise, which involved among other provisions the temporary occupation of Hanover by Prussia. In consequence of this determination he sent, on January 7, a request for the withdrawal of the British forces, which were accordingly recalled.[30]

THE DEATH OF PITT.

The collapse of his last coalition was the death-blow of Pitt, cheered though he was for the moment by the news of Trafalgar. The fatal consequences of Austerlitz were reported to him at Bath, whence he returned by easy stages to his villa at Putney in January, 1806. His noble spirit was broken at last by the defection of Prussia, and after lingering a while, he died on the 23rd of that month, leaving a name second to none among the greatest statesmen of his country. His sagacious mind grasped the advantage to be gained by freeing trade from unnecessary restrictions, and anticipated catholic emancipation, parliamentary reform, and the abolition of slavery. He gave the nation, in the union with Ireland, the one constructive measure of the first order achieved in his time, and only marred by the weakness of more pliable successors in a lesser age. His dauntless soul, which bore him up against the bitterest disappointments, the desertion of friends, and the depression of mortal disease, inspired the governing classes of England to endure ten more years of exhausting war, to save Europe (as he foretold) by their example, and to crown his own work at Waterloo. His lofty eloquence, which has been described as a gift independent of statesmanship, was indeed a product of statesmanship, for it consisted in no mere witchery of words, but in a luminous and convincing presentation of essential facts. He may have been inferior to his own father in fiery rhetoric, to Peel in comprehensive grasp of domestic policy, and to Gladstone in the political experience gained by sixty years of political life, but in capacity for command he was inferior to none. If he was not an ideal war minister, he was not a war minister by his own choice; his lot was cast in times which suppressed the exercise of his best powers; and he was matched in the organisation of war, though not in the field, against the greatest organising genius known to history. He must be judged by what he actually did and meditated as a peace minister; his conduct of the war must be compared with that of those able but not gifted men who strove to bend the bow which he left behind him; and we must assuredly conclude that none of his colleagues or rivals was his peer either in powers or in public spirit.

[30] Rose, *Life of Napoleon I.*, ii., 53-57, 63-65.

CHAPTER III.
GRENVILLE AND PORTLAND

The immediate effect of Pitt's death was the dissolution of his government. The king turned at first to Hawkesbury, afterwards destined as Earl of Liverpool to hold the office of premier for nearly fifteen years; but he then felt himself unequal to such a burden. He next sent for Grenville, who insisted on the co-operation of Fox, to which the king assented without demur, and the short-lived ministry of "All the Talents" was formed within a few days. It was essentially a whig cabinet, but it included two tories, Sidmouth as lord privy seal, and Lord Ellenborough, the lord chief justice. Grenville himself was first lord of the treasury, Fox foreign secretary, and Erskine lord chancellor. Charles Grey, the future Earl Grey, was first lord of the admiralty. Spencer home secretary, Windham secretary for war and the colonies, and Lord Henry Petty, the future Marquis of Lansdowne, chancellor of the exchequer. Fitzwilliam was lord president, and the Earl of Moira master-general of the ordnance. Ellenborough owed his place in the cabinet to the influence of Sidmouth. The appointment was a departure from the established constitutional practice. Since Lord Mansfield, who had ceased to be an efficient member in 1765, no chief justice had been a member of the cabinet, and it was argued in parliament by the opposition that a seat in the cabinet was inconsistent with the independence which a common law judge ought to maintain. It is also important to observe that Sidmouth when accepting office gave express notice to Grenville and Fox that under all circumstances "he would ever resist the catholic question".[31]

The friendly relations of the king with Fox were creditable to both of them, and in the last few months of his life Fox showed himself a statesman. Besides the abolition of the slave trade, his grand object was the restoration of peace on a durable basis. There were some grounds for believing that this was possible. France, under an emperor, seemed no longer to represent a new principle in European politics, and was not necessarily a menace to her neighbours; the coalition was fairly beaten on land, while British supremacy had been reasserted on sea, and Napoleon might well wish for peace to enable him to consolidate his position on land and regain the power of using the sea, just as he had done in 1801. Fox lost no time in renewing a pacific correspondence with Talleyrand, afterwards carried on through the agency of Lord Yarmouth, an English traveller detained in France, and Lord Lauderdale, who was sent over as plenipotentiary. The principle of the negotiation was that of *uti possidetis*, but it failed, as Whitworth's efforts had failed, because the pretensions of France were constantly shifting, and especially because France, anxious to isolate Great Britain, insisted on negotiating separately with Great Britain and Russia, while Fox very properly refused to make peace without our ally. Grey himself, now Lord Howick, afterwards declared that France showed no disposition to grant any terms which could be accepted by Great Britain. On September 13, Fox died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey almost side by side with his great rival.

While he was earnestly striving for peace, there was no cessation of warlike movements or political changes either in Central Europe or in Italy. In June, 1806, Napoleon converted the Batavian Republic into the kingdom of Holland, over which he set his brother Louis. In July the discord of Germany, which had long ceased to be a nation, was consummated by the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine, which separated all the western states from the Holy Roman empire, and united them under the protection and control of France. On August 6, Francis II., who had assumed the title of Emperor of Austria in 1804, formally renounced the title of Roman Emperor, and the Holy Roman Empire became extinct. The King of Prussia, with singular disregard of good faith and national interest, finally accepted on February 15 the bribe of Hanover for adhesion to France,

[31] Colchester, *Diary* (Feb. 4, 1806), ii., 35, 36.

but without the offensive and defensive alliance offered him in the previous December, and with the additional humiliation of being compelled to close his ports to English ships. He vainly strove to conceal this shameful bargain, and was, as will be seen, punished by the destruction of Prussian commerce. After all, he found himself overreached by Napoleon in duplicity, and was at last provoked into risking a single-handed contest with his imperious ally. He declared war on October 1, and within a fortnight the army of Prussia, inheriting the system and traditions of the great Frederick, was all but annihilated in the twin battles of Jena and Auerstädt fought on October 14.

SMALL EXPEDITIONS.

The British government, though not unwilling to forgive the perfidy of its former confederate, was powerless to strike a blow on his behalf until it was too late. Indeed, the only warlike operation undertaken by Great Britain in Europe during the year was in the extreme south of Italy. Ferdinand, King of the Two Sicilies, had been driven out of his capital to make way for Joseph Bonaparte, who entered Naples on February 15, and the exiled monarch took refuge in the island of Sicily. In accordance with the shortsighted policy of small expeditions, a British force under Sir John Stuart was landed in Calabria to raise the peasantry, and on July 4, defeated the French at the point of the bayonet in the battle of Maida. This action shook the confidence of Europe in the superiority of the French infantry, and saved Sicily from France, but the French troops remained in possession of the Italian mainland. The prestige of Great Britain was raised by the conquest of the Dutch colony of the Cape of Good Hope in January by a naval and military force sent out by Pitt under the command of Sir Home Popham and General, now Sir David, Baird, but was damaged by a futile expedition to South America, undertaken by Popham without orders from the home government. The city of Buenos Ayres was taken, indeed, in June by General Beresford, but it was retaken by the Spaniards in August, and soldiers who could ill be spared from the European conflict now impending were lavished on a chimerical project on the other side of the Atlantic.

The short administration of Grenville, so inactive in its foreign policy, is memorable only for one redeeming measure of home-policy – the abolition of the slave trade. Before Fox's death, the attention of parliament had been divided mainly between Windham's abortive scheme for a vast standing army, to be raised on the basis of limited service, and the secret inquiry into the conduct of the Princess of Wales. This resulted in her being acquitted of the more scandalous charges against her, but on the advice of the cabinet, she was censured by the king for unseemly levity of behaviour. On October 24 parliament was dissolved. It was a foolish dissolution, for ministerial convenience only, and aimed not merely at strengthening the ministry, but at weakening the tory section within the ministry. The election was not well managed, and the king withheld the subscription of £12,000 with which he was accustomed to assist his ministers for the time being at a general election. Still the ministry obtained a considerable majority.[32] The new parliament met on December 15, and on March 25, 1807, the abolition bill, having passed the house of lords in spite of strong opposition, was carried in the commons by 283 to 16. Thus ended a philanthropic struggle, which began in 1783, when the quakers petitioned against the trade. Three years later Clarkson began his crusade. Two bills in favour of abolition were carried by the house of commons before the close of the eighteenth century, but were thrown out in the house of lords. The same fate befell a bill for a temporary suspension of the slave trade, which passed the commons in 1804 under the spell of Wilberforce's persuasive eloquence; but Pitt's government caused a royal proclamation to be issued, which at least checked the spread of the nefarious traffic in the newly conquered colonies. A larger measure failed to pass the house of commons in 1805, but in 1806 Fox and Grenville succeeded in committing both houses to an open condemnation of the trade. This was followed on March 25, 1807, by an enactment entirely

[32] Holland, *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, ii., 91-94.

prohibiting the slave trade from and after January 1, 1808, though it was not made felony to engage in it until a further act was carried by Brougham in 1811.

FALL OF GRENVILLE'S MINISTRY.

In default of important legislative tasks, the parliament which expired in 1806 devoted much attention to various features of the military system, as well as to proposed reforms in the public accounts. It sanctioned the principle of raising a great part of the war-expenses by special taxes rather than by loan. A property-tax of 10 per cent. was freely voted, and this was then represented to be its permanent limit. The assessed taxes were increased at the same time by 10 per cent., but with an allowance in favour of poorer taxpayers for every child above the number of two. It is worthy of notice that, while Grenville's ministry was in office, Whitbread brought forward an elaborate plan not only for reforming the poor laws but also for establishing a system of national education. Some changes in the cabinet were necessitated by the death of Fox. Howick became foreign secretary and was succeeded at the admiralty by Thomas Grenville, brother of the prime minister, most famous as a book-collector. Fitzwilliam retired at the same time on the ground of ill-health. He retained his seat in the cabinet, but was succeeded as lord president by Sidmouth, while Fox's nephew, Lord Holland, succeeded Sidmouth as lord privy seal.

The fall of the whig government in March, 1807, was due to a cause similar to that which had brought about the retirement of Pitt in 1801. The Duke of Bedford, who was lord lieutenant of Ireland, had urged the importance of making some concessions to Roman catholics. An Irish act of 1793 had opened commissions in the army as high as the rank of colonel to Roman catholics, and the ministry obtained the reluctant consent of the king to the extension of this concession to Roman catholics throughout his dominions. Without having fully ascertained the king's mind, Howick, on behalf of his colleagues, moved for leave to bring in a bill opening all commissions in the army and navy to Roman catholics. The king at once refused his sanction, and the government, finding that they could not carry their bill, agreed to withdraw it. This decision was announced to the king in a cabinet minute, drawn up at a meeting from which Ellenborough, Erskine, and Sidmouth, who sympathised with the king, were excluded, and from which Fitzwilliam and Spencer were absent owing to ill-health. The minute went on to record their adhesion to the policy embodied in the bill, reserving the right to advise the king on any future occasion in accordance with that policy. Thereupon, Sidmouth, who had already sent in his resignation, Eldon, Portland, and Malmesbury, with the concurrence of the Duke of York and Spencer Perceval, urged the king to make a stand upon his prerogative. He did so, by requiring the ministers who had signed the minute, to give him a written pledge that they would never press upon him further concessions, direct or indirect, to the Roman catholics. This pledge they properly declined, and accepted the consequence by resignation. Spencer was present at the meeting which arrived at this conclusion and concurred in the decision of his colleagues.[33]

A new administration was formed by Portland, as nominal head, but with Perceval as its real leader and chancellor of the exchequer, Canning as foreign secretary, Hawkesbury as home secretary, and Castlereagh as minister for war and the colonies. Camden, Eldon, Westmorland, and Chatham resumed the offices they had held before the death of Pitt, Mulgrave became first lord of the admiralty, and Earl Bathurst president of the board of trade. In this government, too, Sir Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, who had returned in 1805 from a brilliant military career in India, held office outside the cabinet as chief secretary for Ireland. Spencer Perceval was a half-brother of the Earl of Egmont and brother of Lord Arden. He enjoyed a large practice at the bar and had made his mark as a parliamentary debater when filling the offices, first of solicitor-general, and

[33] Holland, *Memoirs of the Whig Party,* ii., 173-205, 270-320; Colchester, *Diary*, ii., 92-115; Malmesbury, *Diaries*, iv., 357-72; Walpole, *Life of Perceval*, i., 223-33; Buckingham, *Courts and Cabinets*, iv., 117-50. Holland accuses the king of treachery and duplicity, and Lewis (*Administrations of Great Britain*, p. 294) repeats this charge in milder terms. But the documents quoted do not prove any want of straightforwardness, and the king's conduct was the logical consequence of his action in 1801.

then of attorney-general under Addington. He had held the latter office again under Pitt. Not the least source of his influence was his steady and determined opposition to the Roman catholic claims.

NON-INTERVENTION.

After a short but animated debate on the important constitutional question raised by the circumstances of the change of ministers, parliament was again dissolved on April 27. The king's speech in closing the session was virtually a personal appeal to his people, and a majority was returned in favour of the new ministry. This result may be said to mark the last triumph of George III. in maintaining the principle of personal government. "A just and enlightened toleration" was announced as the substitute for catholic relief. Still, a certain revival of independent popular opinion may be traced in the return of Sir Francis Burdett and Lord Cochrane for Westminster. It was not until June 22 that parliament assembled, and the engrossing interest of foreign events left but little room for discussions on home-policy. A motion by Whitbread, however, bore fruit in a bill for establishing parochial schools, which Eldon successfully opposed in the house of lords, mainly on the ground that it would take popular education out of the hands of the clergy. The same not unnatural apathy about home affairs prevailed throughout the session of 1808, which began on January 31, and though a large number of acts were placed on the statute book in this and succeeding years, the mass of them, including many relating to Ireland, were essentially of a local or occasional character. An exception must be recognised in the partial success of a motion for the reform of the criminal law, which was proposed by Sir Samuel Romilly, famous for his efforts in the cause of humanity, and which resulted in the abolition of capital punishment for the offence of pocket-picking.

During this critical period, when Great Britain was gradually drifting into a position of isolation, the course of parliamentary history becomes inseparable from the progress of those mighty events on the continent, which Grenville's government would fain have treated as outside the sphere of British interests. For, notwithstanding Windham's schemes for a reconstruction of the army, that government had allowed the naval and military establishments of Great Britain to fall below their former standard. The leading idea of their policy was non-intervention, and at the opening of 1807, there was no longer any thought of sending a force to cope with Napoleon's veterans on the continent When in 1805 a British force was operating in North Germany, it was possible that if Prussia had been faithful to her engagements, the disaster of Austerlitz might at least have been partially retrieved. It was otherwise when, after the collapse of Prussia, France and Russia stood face to face with each other. The drawn battle of Eylau in East Prussia, marked by fearful carnage, was fought on February 8, 1807. This check, breaking the spell of Napoleon's victorious career, had a remarkable effect in raising the spirits of the allies, Russia, Sweden, and Prussia, some remains of whose army were still in the field. These powers now drew closer together, but they received a lukewarm support from Great Britain, which might have done much to save Europe by timely reinforcements and liberal subsidies. In reply to an urgent appeal from the tsar for a loan of £6,000,000, the Grenville ministry doled out £500,000 to Russia, and a still more pitiful gift to Prussia. No troops were sent to aid Sweden on the Baltic coast, although, when, at Napoleon's instigation, Turkey declared war against Russia, expeditions were despatched to Alexandria and the Dardanelles. The notion of making war on a large scale, in concert with allies, on the continent of Europe, as in the days of Marlborough, and even of Lord Granby, seems to have vanished from the minds of English statesmen, except Castlereagh, who always advocated concentrated action.

The succession of Portland and Canning to Grenville and Howick brought no immediate change in our insular policy and the new government had been in office for above three months before a British force at last appeared in the Swedish island of Rügen. It arrived too late, Danzig surrendered in May, and on June 14 Napoleon obtained a decisive victory over the Russian army and its Prussian contingent at Friedland. Russia now gave a supreme example of that national selfishness, and contempt for the rights of independent states which had dominated the counsels of sovereigns

ever since the first partition of Poland. Doubtless the tsar might plead that Great Britain, too, had been wasting her strength in selfish attempts to secure her mastery of the seas, and to open new markets for her trade. He also deeply resented her recent failure to aid him in the hour of his utmost need, while he still cherished the policy of the "armed neutrality," and was eager to prosecute his designs against Turkey. Dazzled and flattered by Napoleon, he welcomed overtures for peace at the expense of Great Britain, and there is no doubt that his imaginative nature indulged in the vision of a regenerated Europe, divided between himself as emperor of the east and Napoleon as emperor of the west. It is therefore far from surprising that he should have held a private interview with Napoleon, on a raft in the Niemen, which led to the treaty of Tilsit on July 7.

THE TREATY OF TILSIT.

This treaty, in which the King of Prussia shared as a helpless partner, contained both public and secret articles, but the distinction was not very material, for the secret articles almost immediately became known to Canning. The general effect of the whole agreement was the utter humiliation of Prussia, the recognition by that country and Russia of all Napoleon's acquisitions, and their combination with France against the maritime claims and conquests of Great Britain. The western provinces of Prussia were to be incorporated with other German annexations to form the new kingdom of Westphalia; Prussian Poland was to be converted into the duchy of Warsaw under the crown of Saxony, to which a right of passage through Silesia was reserved; and Berlin with other great Prussian fortresses were to remain in the hands of the French until an exorbitant war indemnity should have been paid.[34] At one stroke Prussia was thus reduced to a second-rate power, with a territory little greater than it possessed before the first partition of Poland. The rule of Joseph Bonaparte at Naples, that of Louis in Holland, and the confederation of the Rhine, were solemnly confirmed. Above all, Russia pledged herself to join France in coercing Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal into an adoption of the organised commercial exclusion, known as the "continental system," and hostility to Great Britain in the event of her resistance. If Sweden refused to join this league, Denmark was to be compelled to declare war on her.

No sooner did it receive information of this alliance than the British government despatched a naval armament to Denmark and landed troops, which were soon reinforced by those withdrawn from Rügen. There had been no open rupture with Denmark, though much irritation existed between Denmark and Great Britain with reference to neutral commerce. But there were the best reasons for believing that the Danish fleet, as well as that of Portugal, would be demanded by France and Russia, to be employed against Great Britain, and it was certain that Denmark could not withstand such pressure. The British envoy, Jackson, was accordingly instructed to offer Denmark a treaty of alliance, of which one condition was to be the deposit of her fleet on hire with the British government. The proposal was accompanied by a threat of force, and the crown prince, with a spirit worthy of admiration, refused the terms. In consequence a peremptory summons to deliver up her ships of war and naval stores was addressed to the governor of Copenhagen by the British commanders, Admiral Gambier and Lord Cathcart, under whom Sir Arthur Wellesley was entrusted with the reserve. The surrender, if made peaceably, was to be in the nature of a deposit, and the fleet was to be restored at the end of the war. The governor returned a temporising reply, and a bombardment of Copenhagen followed (September 2); the fleet was brought to England as prize of war; and Denmark naturally became the enemy of Great Britain.[35] Sweden declined the proffered alliance of France and Russia, and actually invaded Norway, then a part of the Danish kingdom. The result was the loss of Finland and Swedish Pomerania. The king, Gustavus IV., resembled Charles XII. in quixotic temperament, but not in ability; and Sir John Moore, sent to his support with an army of 10,000 men, found it

[34] In the following year Napoleon consented to evacuate all the Prussian fortresses except three, on condition that the Prussian army should not exceed a total of 40,000 men.

[35] *Annual Register*, xlix. (1807), 249-70, 731-38; Rose, in *English Historical Review*, xi. (1896), 82-92.

hopeless to co-operate with him. Shortly afterwards, his subjects formed the same opinion, and he was compelled to make way for his uncle, who succeeded as Charles XIII. with Marshal Bernadotte as crown prince. In consequence of this change Sweden became reconciled to Russia, and estranged from Great Britain.

The seizure of the Danish fleet, in time of so-called peace, roused great indignation throughout most of Europe, and, in some degree, strained the conscience of the British parliament itself. The justice and wisdom of it were strenuously challenged in both houses, especially by Grenville, Sidmouth, and Lord Darnley, who moved an address to the crown embodying an impressive protest against it. It was defended, however, by the high authority of the Marquis Wellesley, as well as by Canning and other ministers, on the simple ground of military necessity. Napoleon himself never ceased to denounce it as an international outrage of the highest enormity. This did not prevent his doing his best to justify it and to imitate it by sending Junot's expedition to Portugal, with instructions to seize the Portuguese fleet at Lisbon. It is strange that in the debates on this subject, peace with France was still treated on both sides as a possibility; but Canning declared that neither Russian nor Austrian mediation could have been accepted as impartial, or as affording the least hope of pacification. However, on September 25, the king addressed a declaration to Europe, in which, after justifying himself in regard to Copenhagen, he professed his readiness to accept conditions of peace "consistent with the maritime rights and political existence of Great Britain".

COMMERCIAL EXCLUSION.

Still more reasonable attacks, supported by strong petitions, were made by the opposition upon the "orders in council," whereby the British government retaliated against Napoleon's "continental system". This system was founded on a firm belief, shared by the French people, that Great Britain, as mistress of the seas, was the one great obstacle to his imperial ambition, and the most formidable enemy of French aggrandisement, only to be crushed by the ruin of her trade. Prussia had, in conformity with her treaty of February 15, 1806, issued a proclamation on March 28 of that year, closing her ports, which would now include those of Hanover, against British trade. The British government replied by first laying an embargo on Prussian vessels in the harbours of Great Britain and Ireland, and by proclaiming a blockade of the coast of Europe from Brest to the Elbe. This was followed on May 14 by an order in council for seizing all vessels found navigating under Prussian colours. As yet the policy of commercial exclusion had not been carried to any great length, but the Berlin decree issued by Napoleon on November 21 after the battle of Jena proclaimed the whole of the British Isles to be in a state of blockade, prohibited all commerce with them from the ports of France and her dependent states, confiscated all British merchandise in such ports, and declared all British subjects in countries occupied by French troops to be prisoners of war. Howick replied by further orders in council in January, 1807, forbidding neutrals to trade between the ports of France and her allies, or between the ports of nations which should observe the Berlin decree, on pain of the confiscation of the ship and cargo. On the 27th another decree, issued at Warsaw, ordered the seizure in the Hanse Towns of all British goods and colonial produce. The reply of Great Britain was a stricter blockade of the North German coast.

The accession of Russia to Napoleon's commercial policy at Tilsit seemed to have brought the combination against British trade to its furthest development, and it was answered by new orders in council, treating any port from which the British flag was excluded as if actually blockaded, and further limiting the carriage by neutral vessels of produce from hostile colonies. The Milan decree issued on December 17, and further orders in council published during the same winter, carried to greater extremes, if possible, this intolerable form of commercial warfare, under which neutral commerce was gradually crushed out of existence. Great Britain, owing to her command of the sea, was more independent of this kind of commerce than her rival, and both the decrees and the orders in council inflicted far more damage on France and her allies than on Great Britain. But neither party

was able to enforce completely its policy of commercial exclusion. Europe could not dispense with British goods or colonial produce carried in British vessels. The law was deliberately set aside by a regular licensing system, and evaded by wholesale smuggling; neutral ships continued to ply between continental ports, and Napoleon did not disdain to clothe his troops with 50,000 British overcoats during the Eylau campaign. Still, Great Britain was enabled to cripple, if not to destroy, the merchant shipping of all other countries, and the interests of consumers all over Europe were enlisted against the author of the continental system. On the other hand, a heavy blow was dealt to friendly relations between Great Britain and the United States, the chief victim of these belligerent pretensions.[36]

FRUITLESS EXPEDITIONS.

In the meantime, the prestige of Great Britain had been injured by three petty and abortive expeditions projected by the Grenville ministry. The first of these was sent out to complete the conquest of Buenos Ayres, the recapture of which was unknown in England. Sir Samuel Auchmuty, who commanded it, finding himself too late to occupy that city, attacked and took Monte Video by storm with much skill and spirit, on February 3, 1807. Shortly afterwards, he was superseded by General Whitelocke, bringing reinforcements, with orders to recover Buenos Ayres. In this he signally failed, owing to gross tactical errors. The British troops were almost passively slaughtered in the streets, and Whitelocke agreed to withdraw the remains of his force, and give up Monte Video, on condition of all prisoners being surrendered. On his return home, he was tried by a court-martial and cashiered, being also declared "totally unfit to serve his majesty in any military capacity whatever".

Equally ill-managed was the naval expedition, directed to support Russia, then in close alliance with Great Britain, by coercing the sultan into a rupture with France. Collingwood, who was not consulted, was required to entrust the command of this expedition, which started in February, 1807, to Sir John Duckworth. Everything depended on promptitude, and the admiral found little difficulty in forcing the passage of the Dardanelles, as it was then almost unfortified. Having reached Constantinople, he allowed himself to waste time in fruitless negotiations, contrary to Collingwood's earnest advice, and not only effected nothing but gravely imperilled his return. Instructed by the French minister Sébastiani, the Turks had armed their coasts, and erected batteries along the Dardanelles, through which the British fleet made its way with considerable loss. Instead of being detached from the French alliance, the Porte was thrown into its arms and became more embittered than ever against Russia. It was soon involved in a serious conflict with that country – for the possession of Wallachia and Moldavia – only to be deserted again by France under the compact made at Tilsit. The expedition to Egypt, planned in combination with the expedition to the Dardanelles, ended in a still worse disaster. Though General Fraser, its commander, was able to surprise Alexandria on March 30, he awaited in vain the expected news of Duckworth's success; he proceeded to attack Rosetta with as little generalship as Whitelocke had shown at Buenos Ayres, and encountered a similar repulse. An attempt to besiege the town met with no better fortune: the British troops submitted to a capitulation, evacuated Egypt, and sailed for Sicily in September, 1807. In an imperial manifesto addressed to the French nation at the end of this year, the British failures at Buenos Ayres, Constantinople, and Alexandria were paraded, together with our alleged crime against the rights of nations at Copenhagen.

In the early months of 1808 the continental system was extended by the establishment of French administration at Rome, and the annexation of the eastern ports of the Papal States to the kingdom of Italy. On February 18 of the same year Austria under French pressure adopted the system. Sweden and Turkey were now the only continental countries left outside it, but the retention of Sicily by the Bourbon king rendered it easy for British commerce to enter Italy through that island. The irritation of neutrals increased as the area of commercial exclusion widened, but the United States were now

[36] Captain Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, ii., 272-357, shows that the policy of the orders in council was essential to British safety.

the only neutral power of any consequence. After April 17 Napoleon took the high-handed step of confiscating all American shipping in his ports. In spite of this aggression, the president and congress of the United States continued to favour France against Great Britain. The story of the commercial warfare between Great Britain and the United States will be related more fully hereafter. For the present, it is sufficient to mention that an act, placing an embargo on foreign vessels in American ports, was passed by congress on December 22, 1807, and another on March 1, 1809, forbidding commercial intercourse with Great Britain and France and the colonies occupied by them.

Meanwhile Great Britain continued to enforce her maritime rights, including that of searching American merchantmen for British-born sailors, and impressing them at the will of British naval officers. These grievances ultimately led to a war between Great Britain and America in 1812. The continental system, however, did not long remain so complete as in the beginning of 1808. Junot's expedition to Portugal had led to a French occupation of that country before the end of 1807. The conquest of Portugal was followed, as we shall see later, by a partial conquest of Spain. This threw the Spaniards back upon the British alliance and afforded an opportunity for the liberation of Portugal, so that from May, 1808, Great Britain once more had a large seaboard open to her commerce. The early success of the Spanish resistance to France, and other events in the peninsula hereafter to be recorded, encouraged Austria to arm again; and on the news of the capitulation of the French army at Baylen in July, she pushed forward her preparations with redoubled energy. A national movement arose simultaneously in North Germany, but the Prussian government dared not head it so long as Russia remained faithful to the French alliance.

NAPOLEON AT ERFURT.

Notwithstanding a peremptory declaration from the tsar after the seizure of the Danish fleet, Russia had nothing to gain by war with Great Britain. She was bound to France by the prospect held forth to her at Tilsit of the conquest of Finland and the partition of Turkey, but she was inwardly desirous of peace with Great Britain. Napoleon, on the other hand, saw in the partition of Turkey an opportunity of striking at India, and had actually given orders for naval preparations to be made in Spain, when all thought of eastern conquest had to be postponed owing to the success of the Spanish patriots. After a conference between Napoleon and the tsar at Erfurt a secret convention was signed on October 12, by which France sanctioned Russian conquests in Finland and the Danubian provinces, and Russia recognised the Bonaparte dynasty in Spain and promised to assist France in a defensive war against Austria. The two powers despatched a joint note to Great Britain inviting her to make peace, on the principle of *uti possidetis*. Canning replied that he was prepared to negotiate if his allies, especially Sweden and the Spanish patriots, who were at that time in actual possession of almost the entire country, were included in the peace. On November 19 Napoleon expressed his willingness to treat with the British allies, but not with the Spanish "rebels," as he styled them. Alexander took up a similar position, speaking of the Spanish "insurgents," and expressly recognising Joseph as King of Spain. Thus ended these pacific overtures, and on November 3 the official *exposé*, annually issued in Paris, described Great Britain as "the enemy of the world".

The year 1808 is memorable in English history for the active intervention of Great Britain in the affairs of Spain which developed into the "Peninsular war".[37] This intervention was rendered possible and effective by the organisation of our army system in 1807, which was due to Castlereagh, though he received little credit for it. Under this system, the old constitutional force of the militia was made the basis of the whole military establishment. By the militia balloting bill and the militia transfer bill, that force, largely composed of substitutes, and bound only to home-service, was practically converted into a recruiting-ground for the regular army, and proved sufficient to make good all the losses incurred during the long campaigns in Portugal and Spain. The army thus raised contained, no doubt, many

[37] The course of this war is related continuously in chap. v.

soldiers of bad character, whose misdeeds, after the furious excitement of an escalade, or under the heart-breaking stress of a retreat, sometimes brought disgrace upon the British name. But these men, side by side with steadier comrades, bore themselves like heroes on many a bloodstained field; they quailed not before the conquering legions of Austerlitz and Wagram; they could "go anywhere or do anything" under trusted leaders; and they restored the military reputation of their country before the eyes of Europe. To have forged such an instrument of war was no mean administrative exploit. To have maintained its efficiency steadily on the whole, though sometimes with a faint-hearted parsimony, and to have loyally supported its commander against the cavils of a factious opposition superior in parliamentary ability, for a period of seven years, must be held to redeem the tory government from the charge of political weakness.

PARLIAMENTARY ZEAL.

At the beginning of 1809, however, the interest of parliament was less concentrated on Sir Arthur Wellesley's first campaign in Portugal, or even on the convention of Cintra, than on the scandals attaching to the office of commander-in-chief, held by the Duke of York. Though an incapable general, the duke had shown himself, on the whole, an excellent administrator, and in the opinion of the best officers had done much for the discipline and efficiency of the British army. Unfortunately, Mrs. Clarke, his former mistress, had received bribes for using her influence with the duke to procure military appointments. Colonel Wardle, an obscure member of parliament, to whom Mrs. Clarke had temporarily transferred herself after being discarded by the duke, animated by a desire to damage the ministry, came forward with charges directly implicating him in her corrupt practices, and incidentally brought similar accusations against Portland and Eldon. The government foolishly agreed to an inquiry on the Duke of York's behalf, and it was conducted before a committee of the whole house, which sat from January 26 to March 20. In the course of this inquiry, Sir Arthur Wellesley bore strong testimony in his favour, and the duke addressed a letter to the speaker, declaring his innocence of corruption. Though Wardle and his associates pressed for his dismissal, Perceval ultimately carried a motion acquitting him not only of corruption but of connivance with corruption. The majority, however, was small, and the duke thought it necessary to resign on March 20, whereupon the house of commons decided to proceed no further. A curious sequel of this case was an action against Wardle by an upholsterer, who had furnished a house for Mrs. Clarke by Wardle's orders, in consideration of her services in giving hostile evidence against her former protector. The plaintiff obtained £2,000 damages, and the law-suit was the means of producing a reaction in popular feeling in favour of the duke.

This scandal in high places quickened the zeal of parliament for general purity of administration, and led to a disclosure of some grave abuses. One of these, connected with the disposal of captured Dutch property, dated as far back as 1795. Others were found to exist in the navy department and the distribution of Indian patronage; others related to parliamentary elections. Perceval brought in a bill to check the sale and brokerage of offices, nor did Castlereagh himself escape the charge of having procured the election of Lord Clancarty to parliament by the offer of an Indian writership to a borough-monger. A frank explanation saved him from censure, especially as it appeared that the offer had never taken effect. The charge was renewed, in a different form, against both him and Perceval, and their accusers moved for a trial at bar. But as it turned out that undue influence rather than corruption was their alleged offence, and as the avowed object of the resolution was to force on parliamentary reform, it was negatived by an immense majority. Nevertheless, the object was not wholly defeated.

The removal of the Duke of York from the command of the army was singularly inopportune, for Sir David Dundas had scarcely been appointed as his successor when a juncture arose specially demanding a combination of energy and experience. The British government, already engaged in the Peninsular war, had at last resolved to take a vigorous part in the new and desperate struggle

between France and Austria in Southern Germany. The latent spirit of German nationality, aroused by Napoleon's ruthless treatment of Prussia, and quickened into a flame by sympathy with the uprising in Spain, was embodied in the secret association of the *Tugendbund*; and Austria, smarting under a sense of her own humiliation, mustered up courage to assume the leadership of a national movement. South Germany, governed by old dynasties, which profited by the French alliance, displayed as yet no symptoms of disaffection to France; but in North Germany the old dynasties had been either humbled or deposed, and the general ferment among the people, needed, as the Austrians believed, only the presence of a regular army to break out into a national revolt against the foreigner. Prussia, it is true, was still unwilling to move, because Russia was hostile; but the Austrian court knew well the lukewarmness of Russia's attachment to France, and hoped that a national upheaval would carry the Prussian government along with it. No one, in fact, had played a more active part in rousing Northern Germany than the Prussian minister, Stein, whom Frederick William, by Napoleon's advice, had called to his councils after Tilsit, and who was now compelled to resign his office and take refuge in Austria.

NAPOLEON IN AUSTRIA.

The British government was aware of the situation in Germany when it received a request in January, 1809, for the despatch of a British force to the mouth of the Elbe. Austria was, however, still nominally at war with Great Britain, and George III., perhaps not unreasonably, refused to give her active military assistance till peace was concluded. Meanwhile a subsidy of £250,000 in bullion was despatched to Trieste, and inquiries were set on foot as to the means of supplying such a military expedition as Austria desired.[38] On March 22, Dundas, who had only been a few days in office as commander-in-chief, reported that 15,000 men could not be spared from home service, and, in consequence, no extensive preparations were made until the muster rolls in June showed that 40,000 troops might safely be employed abroad. This convinced the government that a large force could be sent without interfering with home defence, as Castlereagh had long contended; and throughout June and July the naval and military departments were busy in preparing for what has since left a sinister memory as the Walcheren expedition. Meanwhile, as if the passion of frittering away resources were irresistible, a smaller force was despatched, as a kind of feint, against the kingdom of Naples. It consisted of 15,000 British troops and a body of Sicilians. Bailing from Palermo early in June it captured the islands of Ischia and Procida and the castle of Scylla, and threw Naples into consternation. But the attack was not pushed, and it was too late to be of any assistance to the Austrians who had already been expelled from the Italian peninsula. At last, in July, the treaty of peace with Austria was signed and the great armament was ready to sail.

But Napoleon had not awaited the deliberations of British statesmen. Hurrying back from Spain, he remained in Paris only long enough to organise a campaign in South Germany, and left the capital to join his armies on April 13. A week earlier, the Archduke Charles, having remodelled the Austrian army, issued a proclamation affirming Austria to be the champion of European liberty. On the 9th Austria declared war against Bavaria, the ally of France, and her troops crossed the Inn. On the 17th, when Napoleon arrived at Donauwörth, he found the archduke in occupation of Ratisbon. His presence turned the tide, and, after three victories, he was once more on the road to Vienna. The most important of these victories was that of Eckmühl, and he regarded the manœuvre by which it was won as the finest in his military career. On May 13 the French entered Vienna, but the Archduke Charles with an army of nearly 200,000 men was facing him on the left bank of the Danube. Napoleon's army crossed and encountered the Austrians on the great plain between Aspern and Essling. He was repulsed and fell back upon Lobau, between which and the Vienna side of the Danube the bridge of boats had been swept away by a rise of the river and by balks of timber floated down by the Austrians.

[38] Rose, *Life of Napoleon I.*, ii., 190, note.

In this dangerous position he remained shut up for several weeks. He finally succeeded in throwing across a light bridge by which his army regained the left bank on the night of July 4. Finding their position turned the Austrians took up their stand on the tableland of Wagram. On July 6 another pitched battle was fought, which, in the number of combatants engaged and in the losses inflicted on both sides, must rank with the later conflicts of Borodino and Leipzig. A hard won victory rested with the French, but it was not such a victory as that of Austerlitz or Jena, though it secured the neutrality, at least, of Austria for the next four years. Her army retreated into Bohemia, and on July 12 an armistice was signed at Znaim in Moravia, which formed the basis of a peace concluded at Vienna on October 14.

THE WALCHEREN EXPEDITION.

Nothing remained for Great Britain but to abandon the auxiliary enterprise so long planned, but so often delayed, or to carry it through independently, with little hope of a decisive issue. The latter alternative was adopted. The very day on which the news of the armistice arrived witnessed the departure of the greatest single armament ever sent out fully equipped from the shores of Great Britain. The deplorable failure of the Walcheren expedition has obscured both its magnitude and its probable importance had it only proved successful. The command of the fleet was given to Sir Richard Strachan, a competent admiral; that of the army to Chatham, who sat in the cabinet as master-general of the ordnance, an incompetent general, who owed his nomination to royal favour. This was the first blunder; the second was the utter neglect of medical and sanitary precautions against the notoriously unhealthy climate of Walcheren in the autumn months. The armament sailed from the Downs on July 28, in the finest weather and with a display of intense national enthusiasm. It consisted of thirty-five ships of the line, with a swarm of smaller war-vessels and transports, carrying nearly 40,000 troops, two battering-trains, and a complete apparatus of military stores. Its destination, though more than suspected by the enemy, had been officially kept secret at home. Castlereagh must be held largely responsible for the delays and for the unwise choice of a general which marred its success, but he showed true military sagacity in designating the point of attack. Inspired by him, the British government, distrusting the national movement in North Germany, had decided to strike at Antwerp, which Napoleon had supplied with new docks, and which, now that the mouth of the Scheldt had been reopened, threatened to become the commercial rival of London. The town was entirely unprepared, and a blow dealt here seemed the best way of doing as much harm as possible to France and at the same time gaining a national advantage for Great Britain.

Chatham had received very precise instructions from Castlereagh, the objects prescribed to him being, (1) the capture or destruction of the enemy's ships, either building or afloat at Antwerp or Flushing, or afloat in the Scheldt; (2) the destruction of the arsenals and dockyards at Antwerp, Terneuze, and Flushing; (3) the reduction of the island of Walcheren; (4) the rendering of the Scheldt no longer navigable to ships of war. These objects were named, as far as possible, in the order of their importance, and Chatham was specially directed to land troops at Sandvliet and push on straight to Antwerp, with the view of taking it by a *coup de main*. Napoleon, who clearly foretold the catastrophe awaiting the British troops in the malarious swamps of Walcheren, afterwards admitted that Antwerp could have been captured by a sudden assault. Chatham obeyed his general orders, but, instead of taking them in the order of importance, gave precedence to the objects which could most easily be accomplished. By prompt action the French fleet, which was moored off Flushing, might have been captured, but it was allowed to escape to Antwerp. By August 2 the British were in complete possession of the mouth of the Scheldt, and had taken Bath opposite Sandvliet, while Antwerp was still almost unprotected. But Chatham concentrated his attention on the siege of Flushing, which surrendered, after three days' bombardment, on August 16, contrary to Napoleon's expectation. Antwerp had meanwhile been put in a state of defence, and was now protected by the enemy's fleet, while French and Dutch troops were pouring down to the Scheldt. After ten days of

inactivity, Chatham advanced his headquarters to Bath, found that further advance was impossible, and recommended the government to recall the expedition, leaving 15,000 men to defend the island of Walcheren. This advice was adopted, but the garrison left in Walcheren suffered most severely from fever in that swampy island. Eventually, on December 24, Walcheren was abandoned, the works and naval basins of Flushing having been previously destroyed. The destruction of Flushing was the sole result of this expedition.

The failure of the British to make any serious impression on the French either in the Low Countries or in Spain induced Austria to consent to peace with France. By the peace of Vienna, signed on October 14, she ceded Salzburg and a part of Upper Austria to Bavaria, West Galicia to the duchy of Warsaw, and a part of Carinthia with Trieste and the Illyrian provinces to France. A small strip of Galicia was ceded to the Russian tsar, who had rendered France some very half-hearted assistance and was further alienated by the extension of the duchy of Warsaw. Austria was enslaved to the will of Napoleon. She had abandoned the Tyrolese peasants whose loyal insurrection against the Bavarians was the most heroic incident in the war, and she now joined the other nations of the continent in excluding the commerce of Great Britain, which had made a powerful diversion in Spain and an imposing though futile diversion on the Scheldt to save her from national annihilation.

While the Walcheren expedition was preparing, two additions were made to the cabinet. Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, brother of the Marquis of Stafford, was admitted in June as secretary at war, and in July Harrowby, who was created an earl, became president of the board of control with a seat in the cabinet. After the fate of the expedition became known, though before its final withdrawal, a serious quarrel took place between Canning and Castlereagh. Personal jealousies had long existed between these two statesmen, both half-Irish, half-English, and of approximately the same age, yet widely different in character. Canning was the most brilliant orator of his day, and no less persuasive in private conversation than in public orations, gifted with an agile brain that leaped readily from one idea or one project to another, but cursed with a bitter wit which lightly aroused enduring enmities, and which, coupled with an excessive vanity, rendered him unpopular with his colleagues, and made it difficult for any one to take him seriously; while his rival, not less able, and much more steady and trustworthy, a skilful manager of men, was scarcely able to pronounce a coherent sentence. Early in April Canning pressed upon the Duke of Portland the transfer of Castlereagh to another office. Private communications followed between various members of the cabinet, and it was understood that Camden, as Castlereagh's friend, should apprise him of the prevailing view, which the king himself had approved under a threat of Canning's resignation. The duke, however, begged Camden to postpone the disclosure, and others of Castlereagh's friends urged Canning not to insist upon the change pending the completion of the Walcheren expedition.

DUEL BETWEEN CANNING AND CASTLEREAGH.

As the scheme took shape in July Camden was to resign, and thus make possible a shifting of offices, which was to result in the Marquis Wellesley succeeding Castlereagh as secretary for war. At last, on September 6, the duke informed Canning of his own intention to retire on the ground of ill-health, and at the same time disclosed the fact that no steps had been taken to prepare Castlereagh for the proposed change in his position. Thereupon Canning promptly sent in his own resignation, the duke resigned the same day, and Castlereagh, learning what had passed, followed his example two days later.[39] Believing that Canning had been intriguing against him behind his back, under the guise

[39] The best account of the quarrel, especially in its relation to the composition of the cabinet, is to be found in Walpole's *Life of Perceval*, vol. i., chap. ix., and vol. ii., chap. i. Lewis, *Administrations*, pp. 314-15, finds a double ground for Canning's resignation in his failure to obtain the removal of Castlereagh from the war office and in the refusal of the king and cabinet to allow him to succeed Portland as prime minister. It is quite clear, however, that at the time of Canning's resignation no decision had been come to about a successor to Portland. Some correspondence had passed between Canning and Perceval, in which each had refused to serve under the other, but that this correspondence was unknown to the cabinet as a whole is proved by Mulgrave's letters to Lord Lonsdale of September 11 and 15 (Phipps, *Memoir of Ward*, pp. 210-17); in the former of these he discusses Canning's probable conduct without

of friendship, he demanded satisfaction on the 19th, and on the 21st[40] the duel was fought, in which Canning received a slight wound. Such events provoked little censure in those days, and it is pleasant to know that Canning and Castlereagh afterwards acted cordially together as colleagues. Their enmity broke up the government. The Duke of Portland did not long survive his withdrawal from office, and died on October 29; Leveson-Gower insisted on following Canning into retirement.

Perceval was entrusted with the task of forming an administration, but the new ministry was not formed without considerable negotiation. Canning vainly endeavoured to impress first on his colleagues and then on the king his own pretensions to the highest office, while attempts, to which the king gave a reluctant assent, had been made to enlist the co-operation of Grenville and Howick, who succeeded his father as Earl Grey, in 1807, but they failed as all later attempts were destined to fail. The most influential motive governing their conduct was, doubtless, their feeling that they would not as ministers possess the king's confidence. Sidmouth's following had also been approached. Sidmouth himself was considered too obnoxious to some of Pitt's followers to be a safe member of the new cabinet, but Vansittart was offered the chancellorship of the exchequer and Bragge, who had taken the additional surname of Bathurst, the office of secretary at war. They refused, however, to enter the ministry, unless accompanied by Sidmouth himself.

Perceval eventually became prime minister, retaining his former offices; Lord Bathurst, while remaining at the board of trade, presided temporarily at the foreign office, which was offered to the Marquis Wellesley, then serving as British ambassador to the Spanish junta at Seville, and taken over by him in December. Hawkesbury, now Earl of Liverpool, succeeded Castlereagh as secretary for war and the colonies, and was followed at the home office by Richard Ryder, a brother of Harrowby. Harrowby himself gave up the board of control in November to Melville's son, Robert Dundas, who, however, was not made a member of the cabinet. Lord Palmerston, who had been a junior lord of the admiralty under Portland, declined the chancellorship of the exchequer, and though he accepted Leveson-Gower's post as secretary at war, he was by his own desire excluded from the cabinet.

NEW BRITISH CONQUESTS.

While the close of the year 1809 was darkened by national disappointment and political anxieties, the honour of British arms had been amply vindicated in the Spanish peninsula, and the brilliant exploit of Lord Cochrane in Basque Roads had recalled the glories of the Nile. Cochrane had already achieved marvels under Collingwood in the Mediterranean, and notably off the Spanish coast, when he was selected to conduct an attack by fireships on the French squadron blockaded under the shelter of the islands of Aix and Oléron. This he carried out on the night of April 11, with a dash and skill worthy of Nelson, and unless checked by Gambier, the admiral in command, who had been raised to the peerage after the seizure of the Danish fleet in 1807, he must have succeeded in destroying the whole of the enemy's ships. Gambier was afterwards acquitted by a court martial of negligence, but the verdict of the public was against him. In the autumn Collingwood reduced the seven Ionian islands, and gained an important advantage by cutting out a considerable detachment of the Toulon fleet in the Bay of Genoa. In the course of the year, too, all the remaining French territory in the West Indies, as well as the Isle of Bourbon in the Indian Ocean, was captured by the British navy. But this unchallenged supremacy on the high seas did not prevent the depredations of French

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referring to this correspondence, while in the latter he only knows of such negotiations as subsequent to the resignations of September 6 and 8. So, too, Eldon's letter to his wife of September 11 (Twiss, *Life of Eldon*, ii., 88-90), places the whole correspondence between Canning and Perceval after Portland's resignation on September 6. The king was not informed of Canning's views as to a successor to Portland till September 13, and the cabinet minute of September 18, advising co-operation with Grenville and Grey, mentions the selection of Canning as prime minister as a course open to the king.

[40] This is the date commonly given. The *Annual Register*, li. (1809), 239, gives the 22nd, while Perceval refers to the result of the duel in a letter dated the 20th (Colchester, *Diary*, ii., 209). It is clear, however, that Canning did not receive Castlereagh's challenge till the morning of the 20th (see his letter in *Annual Register*, *loc. cit.*, 505, also his detailed statement to Camden, *ibid.*, 525), and therefore the duel cannot have taken place till the 21st. Lord Folkestone in a letter dated the 21st refers to the duel as having been fought at "7 o'clock this morning" (*Creevey Papers*, i., 96).

gunboats on British merchantmen in the channel. Indeed after the battle of Trafalgar, the French "sea-wasps" infesting the Channel were more active and destructive than ever.

On October 25, being the forty-ninth anniversary of his accession, the jubilee of George III. was celebrated with hearty and sincere rejoicings. His popularity was not unmerited. He was politically shortsighted, but within his range of vision few saw facts so clearly; he was obstinate and prejudiced, but his obstinacy was redeemed by a moral intrepidity of the highest order, and his prejudices were shared by the mass of his people. Having lived through the seven years' war, the war of the American revolution, and the successive wars of Great Britain against the French monarchy and the French republic, he was now supporting, with indomitable firmness, a war against the all-conquering French empire – the most perilous in which this country was ever engaged. The colonial and Indian dominions of Great Britain, reduced by the loss of the North American colonies, had been greatly extended during his reign in other quarters of the globe. His subjects regarded him as an Englishman to the core; they knew him to be honest, religious, virtuous, and homely in his life; they justly believed him, in spite of his failings, to be a power for good in the land; and they rewarded him with a respect and affection granted to no other British sovereign of modern times before Queen Victoria. They had good cause to desire the continuance of his life and reason, knowing the character of his heir-apparent, and contrasting the domestic habits of Windsor with the licence of Carlton House.

CHAPTER IV.
PERCEVAL AND LIVERPOOL

The administration of Perceval, covering the period from October, 1809, to May, 1812, coincided with a lull in the continental war save in the Peninsula, though it saw no pause in the progress of French annexation. Nor was it marked by many events of historical interest in domestic affairs. When parliament was opened on January 23, 1810, it was natural that attention should chiefly be devoted to the Walcheren expedition, which the opposition illogically and unscrupulously contrived to use to disparage the operations of Sir Arthur Wellesley, now Viscount Wellington, in Spain. Grenville, who argued with some reason that 40,000 British troops could have been employed to far better purpose in North Germany, would have been on stronger ground if he had complained that for want of them the British army had been unable to occupy Madrid. Castlereagh, indeed, had confessed to Wellesley that he could not spare the necessary reinforcements, after the reserves had been exhausted in Walcheren; but it is by no means certain that Wellesley could have collected provisions enough to feed a much larger force, or specie enough to pay for them. Liverpool was driven in reply to Grenville to magnify the value of the capture of Flushing, as the necessary basis of the naval armaments which Napoleon had intended to launch against England from the Scheldt. The government was also defended by the young Robert Peel, lately elected to parliament. As the calamity was irreparable, a committee of the whole house spent most of its time on a constitutional question, regarding a private memorandum placed before the king by Chatham in his own defence. So irregular a proceeding was properly condemned, and Chatham resigned the mastership of the ordnance, but the policy of the Walcheren expedition was approved by a vote of the house of commons. Mulgrave received the office Chatham had vacated, and was himself succeeded by Yorke at the admiralty.

Parliament was next occupied by a question of privilege, in which Sir Francis Burdett, member for Westminster, then a favourite of the democracy, played a part resembling that of John Wilkes a generation earlier. Burdett had been for fourteen years a member of parliament, and had been conspicuous from the first for the vehemence of his opposition to the government, and more especially to its supposed infringements of the liberty of the subject. He had more recently taken an active part on behalf of Wardle's attack on the Duke of York and had supported the charges of ministerial corruption in the previous session. On the present occasion one John Gale Jones, president of a debating club, had published in a notice of debate the terms of a resolution which his club had passed, condemning in extravagant language the exclusion of strangers from the house of commons. This was treated as a breach of privilege, and Jones was sent to Newgate by order of the house itself. Burdett, in a violent letter to Cobbett's *Register*, challenged the right of the house to imprison Jones by its own authority, and, after a fierce debate lasting two nights, was adjudged by the house, on April 5, to have been guilty of a still more scandalous libel. Accordingly, the speaker issued a warrant for his committal to the Tower. Burdett declared his resolution to resist arrest, the populace mustered in his defence, the riot act was read, and he was conveyed to prison by a strong military escort, on whose return more serious riots broke out, and were not quelled without bloodshed. On his release at the end of the session a repetition of these scenes was prevented by the simple expedient of bringing him home by water. During his imprisonment he wrote an offensive letter to the speaker, and his colleague, Lord Cochrane, presented a violently worded petition from his Westminster constituents. In the following year he sued the speaker and the sergeant-at-arms in the court of king's bench, which decided against him on the ground that a power of commitment was necessary for the maintenance of the dignity of the house of commons, and its decision was confirmed, on appeal, by the court of exchequer chamber and the house of lords.

THE CURRENCY QUESTION.

The most important subject of internal policy discussed in the session of 1810 was the state of the currency. Since 1797 cash payments had been suspended, the issue of banknotes had been nearly doubled, and the price of commodities had risen enormously. Whether these results had in their turn promoted the expansion of foreign commerce and internal industry was vigorously disputed by two rival schools of economists. The one thing certain was the increasing scarcity of specie, and the serious loss incurred in its provision for the service of the army in the Peninsula. Francis Horner, then rising to eminence, obtained the appointment of what became known as the "bullion committee" to inquire into the anomalous conditions thus created, and took a leading part in the preparation of its celebrated report, published on September 20. The committee arrived at the conclusion that the high price of gold was mainly due to excess in the paper-currency, and not, as alleged, to a drain of gold for the continental war. They attributed that excess to "the want of a sufficient check and control in the issues of paper from the Bank of England, and originally to the suspension of cash-payments, which removed the natural and true control". While allowing that paper could not be rendered suddenly convertible into specie without dislocating the entire business of the country, they recommended that an early provision should be made by parliament for terminating the suspension of cash-payments at the end of two years. These conclusions were combated by Castlereagh and Vansittart, who afterwards, in 1811, succeeded in carrying several counter-resolutions, of which the general effect was to explain the admitted rise in the price of gold, for the most part by the exclusion of British trade from the continent, and the consequent export of the precious metals in lieu of British manufactures. The last resolution, while it recognised the wisdom of restoring cash-payments as soon as it could safely be done, affirmed it to be "highly inexpedient and dangerous to fix a definite period for the removal of the restriction on cash-payments prior to the conclusion of a definitive treaty of peace". These counsels prevailed, and the restriction was not actually removed until Peel's act was passed in July, 1819.

The last domestic event in the inglorious annals of 1810 was the final lapse of the king into mental derangement in the month of November. For more than six years his sight had been failing, but he had suffered no return of insanity since 1804. Now he lost both his sight and his reason. This event, impending for some time, was precipitated by the illness and death of the Princess Amelia, his favourite daughter, and was perhaps aggravated by the Walcheren expedition and the disgrace of the Duke of York. Parliament met on November 1, and was adjourned more than once before a committee was appointed to examine the royal physicians. Acting on their report, the ministers proposed and carried resolutions declaring the king's incapacity, and the right and duty of the two houses to provide for the emergency. It was also determined to define by act of parliament the powers to be exercised in the king's name and behalf. This implied a limitation of the regent's authority, and was resented by the Prince of Wales and his friends. Perceval, however, was able to rely on the precedent of 1788, to which Grenville, for one, had been a party, and, after considerable opposition, the prince was made regent under several temporary restrictions. With certain exceptions, he was precluded from granting any peerage or office tenable for life; the royal property was vested in trustees for the king's benefit, and the personal care of the king was entrusted to the queen, with the advice of a council. In this form, the regency bill was passed on February 4, 1811, after a protest from the other sons of George III. and violent attacks upon Eldon by Grenville and Grey. On the 5th, the regent took the oaths before the privy council, but, in accepting the restrictions, he delicately expressed regret that he should not have been trusted to impose upon himself proper limitations for the exercise of royal patronage. The interregnum thus established was to be provisional only, and was to cease on February 1, 1812, but the queen and her private council, with the concurrence of the privy council, were empowered to annul it at any time, by announcing the king's recovery, when he could resume his powers by proclamation.

THE REGENCY BILL.

The hopes of the opposition had been greatly excited by the prospect of a regency, and it was generally expected that a change of ministry would be its immediate consequence. Private communications had, in fact, passed between the prince and the whig lords, Grenville and Grey, but they were rendered nugatory by the dictatorial tone assumed by those lords and by the unwillingness of the prince to dispense with the advice of Moira and Sheridan. The two whig lords had by the prince's desire prepared a reply to the address from the houses of parliament, preparatory to the regency bill. Grenville had voted in favour of the restriction on the creation of peers, and it is therefore not surprising that the reply which he and Grey drafted appeared to the prince too weak in its protest against the limitations. He therefore adopted in its stead another reply which Sheridan had composed for him. The two lords thereupon addressed to the prince a remonstrance, which practically claimed for themselves the right of responsible ministers to be the sole advisers of their prince. This remonstrance provoked the ridicule of Sheridan, and certainly did not please the prince, who since the fall of the Grenville ministry had refused to be regarded as a "party man". The regent, accordingly, gave Perceval to understand that he intended to retain his present ministers, but solely on the ground that he was unwilling to do anything which might retard his father's recovery, or distress him when he should come to himself. This reason was probably genuine. The king appeared to be recovering; he had had several interviews with Perceval and Eldon, and had made inquiries as to the prince's intentions. Soon, however, the malady took a turn for the worse, and the physicians came to the conclusion that it was permanent.[41]

Before February, 1812, when the restrictions expired, and a permanent regency bill was passed, the prince drifted further away from his former advisers, and had been pacified by the loyal attitude of Perceval and Eldon. Further overtures were conveyed to the whig lords through a letter from the prince regent to the Duke of York, in which he declared that he had "no predilections to indulge or resentments to gratify," but only a concern for the public good, towards which he desired the co-operation of some of his old whig friends, indicating Grenville and Grey. They declined in a letter to the Duke of York, alleging differences on grounds of policy too deep to admit of a coalition. Eldon, on his part, expressed a similar conviction, but the regent never fully forgave what he regarded as their desertion. Wellesley, who was strongly opposed to Perceval's policy of maintaining the catholic disabilities, resigned the secretaryship of foreign affairs, protesting against the feeble support given to his brother in the Peninsula, and was succeeded by Castlereagh. In April Sidmouth became president of the council in place of Camden, who remained in the cabinet without office; and in the next month, on May 11, Perceval was assassinated in the lobby of the house of commons by a man named Bellingham, who had an imaginary grievance against the government.

A very general and sincere tribute of respect was paid by the house to Perceval's memory, for, though his statesmanship was of the second order, he was far more than a tory partisan; he was an excellent debater, and a thoroughly honest politician, and his private character was above all reproach or suspicion. The cabinet was bewildered by his death, and a fresh attempt was made to strengthen it by the simple inclusion of Canning as well as Wellesley. Wellesley stipulated that the catholic question should be left open, and that the war should be prosecuted with the entire resources of the country, while Canning declined co-operation on the ground of the catholic question alone. No agreement being found possible, the house of commons stepped in and addressed the regent, begging him to form a strong and efficient administration, commanding the confidence of all classes. He replied by sending for Wellesley, offering him the premiership and entrusting him with the formation of a comprehensive ministry; but Wellesley soon found that Liverpool and his adherents would not serve under him at all, while Grenville and Grey, who secretly condemned the Peninsular war, would only serve on conditions which he could not grant. Once more, the regent treated directly with these

[41] For the whole crisis see Walpole, *Life of Perceval*, ii., 157-96, and for Sheridan's share in the transactions, Moore, *Life of Sheridan*, ii., 382-409.

haughty whigs, now including Moira, to whom he committed the task of forming an administration. Grenville and Grey raised difficulties about the appointments in the royal household, which they wished to include in the political changes, and the negotiation was broken off. The regent at last fell back on Liverpool, a capable and conciliatory minister, who adopted Perceval's colleagues, and a spell of tory administration set in which remained unbroken for no less than fifteen years. Had more tact been shown on all sides, had the whigs been less peremptory in their demands, and had the trivial household question never arisen, the course of the war, if not of European history, might, whether for good or evil, have been profoundly modified.

SOCIAL REFORMS.

During the later period of Perceval's administration, from 1811 to 1812, the strife of politics had been mainly concentrated on the regency question, the chance of ministerial changes, and the fortunes of the war in Spain. But it must not be supposed that social questions were neglected, even in the darkest days of the war, however meagre the legislative fruits may appear. Session after session, Romilly pressed forward reforms of the criminal law, the institution of penitential houses in the nature of reformatories, and the abolition of state lotteries. Others laboured, and with greater success, to remedy the delays and reduce the arrears in the court of chancery. Constant efforts were made to expose defalcations in the revenue, to curtail exorbitant salaries, and to put down electioneering corruption. In 1809 Erskine introduced a bill for the prevention of cruelty to animals. In 1810 there were earnest, if somewhat futile, debates on spiritual destitution, the non-residence and poverty of the clergy, and the scarcity of places of worship. Moreover, early in 1811, a premonitory symptom of the repeal movement caused some anxiety in Ireland. It took the form of a scheme for a representative assembly to sit in Dublin, and manage the affairs of the Roman catholic population, under colour of framing petitions to parliament, and seeking redress of grievances. It was, of course, to consist of Roman catholics only, and to include Roman catholic bishops. The Irish government wisely suppressed the scheme, and Perceval justified their action, on the ground that a representative assembly in Dublin, with such aims in view, bordered upon an illicit legislature.

Except for the war in the Spanish peninsula, and the war between Russia and the Porte on the Danube, the year 1810 was marked by undisturbed peace throughout the continent of Europe. France continued to make annexations, but they were at the expense of her allies, not of her enemies. Her supremacy was signalised in a striking way by the marriage of her *parvenu* emperor, whose divorce the pope still refused to recognise, with Maria Louisa, daughter of the Emperor of Austria. Though thirteen out of twenty-six cardinals present in Paris declined to attend it, this marriage was a masterstroke of Talleyrand's diplomacy; it secured the benevolent neutrality of Austria for the next three years, and weakened the counsels of the allies during the negotiations of 1814-15. But it went far to estrange the Tsar of Russia, who, though he had courteously declined Napoleon's overtures for the hand of his own sister, was greatly offended on discovering that another matrimonial alliance had been contracted by his would-be brother-in-law before his reply could be received.

It was only within the limits of the French empire that Napoleon's authority had been sufficient to enforce the rigorous exclusion of British goods. His allies, including Sweden, which closed her ports to British products in January, 1810, and declared war on Great Britain in the following November, had adopted the continental system; but administrative weakness, and the obvious interest that every people had in its infraction, rendered its operation partial. Napoleon, determined to enforce the system in spite of every obstacle, met this difficulty by placing in immediate subjection to the French crown the territories where British goods were imported. The first ally to suffer was his own brother, Louis, King of Holland. His refusal to enforce Napoleon's orders against the admission of British goods was followed at once by a forced cession of part of Holland to France and the establishment of French control at the custom houses, and shortly afterwards by the despatch of French troops into Holland and its annexation to France on July 9, 1810. In December the French dominion over the North Sea

coast was extended by the annexation of a corner of Germany, including the coast as far as the Danish frontier, and the town of Lübeck on the Baltic. As a result of this annexation, the duchy of Oldenburg, held by a branch of the Russian imperial family, ceased to exist. The act was a conspicuous breach of the treaty of Tilsit, which Napoleon considered himself at liberty to disregard, as Russia had shown by her conduct during the campaign of 1809 that she was no longer more than a nominal ally of France. At last, on January 12, 1811, Russia asserted her independence in fiscal matters by an order which declared her ports open to all vessels sailing under a neutral flag, and imposed a duty on many French products. Still the course of French annexation crept onwards, and quietly absorbed the republic of Vallais in Switzerland, which had been a great centre of smuggling.

THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM.

Meanwhile, the restrictions and prohibitions which formed the continental system were made more and more severe. By the Trianon tariff of August, 1810, heavy duties were levied on colonial products, and by the Fontainebleau decree of October 18 all goods of British origin were to be seized and publicly burned. In November a special tribunal was created to try offenders against the continental system. Nevertheless, the fiscal and foreign policy of France at this date alike show how far the continental system had failed in its object, and to what extreme lengths it had become necessary to push it in order to give it a chance of success. The strain of the system on English commerce was immense, but the burden fell far more heavily on the continental nations. Colonial produce rose to enormous prices in France, Germany, and Italy, especially after the introduction of the Trianon tariff, and a subject or ally of the French emperor had to pay ten times as much for his morning cup of coffee as his enemy in London. The German opposition to Napoleon had failed in 1809 mainly through the political apathy of the German nation. Napoleon's fiscal measures were the surest way of bringing that apathy to an end, and converting it into hostility.

The events of December, 1810, and January, 1811, constituted a distinct breach between France and Russia, which could only end in war, unless one party or the other should withdraw from its position. A few months sufficed to show that no such withdrawal would take place; but neither power was prepared for war, and seventeen months elapsed after the breach before hostilities began. The intervening period was spent in negotiation and preparation. Much depended on the alliances that the rival powers might be able to contract. Although Napoleon had bound himself not to restore Poland, he had by the creation and subsequent enlargement of the duchy of Warsaw given it a semblance of national unity, and had inspired the Poles with the hope of a more complete independence. The Polish troops were among the most devoted in the French army, and the position of their country rendered the support of the Poles a matter of great importance in any war with Russia. It occurred to the Tsar Alexander that he might win their support for himself by a restoration of Poland, under the suzerainty of Russia. He promised Czartoryski the restoration of the eight provinces under a guarantee of autonomy, and undertook to obtain the cession of Galicia. On February 13, 1811, he made a secret offer to Austria of a part of Moldavia in exchange for Galicia. Nothing came of this, but the massing of Russian troops on the Polish frontier in March was met by the hurried advance of French troops through Germany, and war seemed imminent until Russia postponed the struggle by withdrawing her troops.

Meanwhile, other European powers looked forward to selling their alliance on the best possible terms. Sweden and Prussia both approached the stronger power first. Bernadotte, on behalf of Sweden, was prepared for a French alliance if France would favour the Swedish acquisition of Norway. Napoleon, on February 25, not only refused these terms, but ordered Sweden to enforce the continental system under pain of a French occupation of Swedish Pomerania. This threat Sweden ventured to ignore. Prussia, lying directly between the two future belligerents, was in a more dangerous position. Neutrality was impossible, because her neutrality would not be respected. She first offered her alliance to Napoleon in return for a reduction of the payments due to France and a

removal of the limit imposed on her army. Napoleon did not reply to this offer at once. Meanwhile the movement of French troops already mentioned and the increase of the French garrisons on the Oder, though primarily intended for the defence of Poland, caused great alarm in Prussia and resulted in preparations to resist a French attack. In July Napoleon finally refused to discuss the Prussian terms. Ever since his marriage he had been inclined more and more to an Austrian alliance. On March 26 of this year Otto, his ambassador at Vienna, had received information that France would support Austria if she would protest against the occupation of Belgrade by the Serbs. Napoleon even assured Otto that he was prepared to undertake any engagement that Austria desired. Rest was, however, essential to Austria. The military disasters of 1809 had been followed by national bankruptcy, and with the government paper at a discount of 90 per cent. she dared not incur further liabilities.

Russia had an advantage over France in that she was able to free herself from her entanglement in Turkey, while Napoleon could not make peace either with Great Britain or with the Bourbon party in Spain. An armistice with the Porte was concluded on October 15. By that time all pretence of friendly intentions had been abandoned by France and Russia. Prussia, hoping still to save herself from an unconditional alliance with France, now turned to Russia, and Scharnhorst was despatched to seek a Russian alliance. Meanwhile Napoleon sent word to the Prussian court that, if her military preparations were not suspended, he would order Davoût to march on Berlin, and at the same time disclosed his offer of an unconditional alliance against Russia. Prussia, hoping for Russian aid still, put aside the French demands, but the Tsar Alexander expressed a decided preference for a defensive campaign against France, and refused any assistance unless the French should commit an unprovoked aggression on Königsberg. Scharnhorst seems to have seen the wisdom of this policy. He now turned to Austria, but there again a definite alliance was refused. Russia was equally unable to move Austria to join her, so that Russia and Prussia were each isolated in their opposition to Napoleon.

In the months of August and September of this year a British force, commanded by Auchmuty, effected the conquest of Java, the wealthiest of the East Indian islands. The island had been a Dutch colony, and like other Dutch colonies had passed into the hands of France. Sumatra fell into English hands along with Java, so that the supremacy of Great Britain in the East Indies was fully established.

LIVERPOOL'S MINISTRY.

The new ministry which entered on office in June, 1812, differed largely in composition from that which had preceded it. Ryder and Yorke retired at the death of Perceval, Harrowby returned to office, and places in the cabinet were found for Sidmouth's adherents, Buckinghamshire, Vansittart, and Bragge-Bathurst. Sidmouth himself succeeded Ryder as home secretary, while Harrowby succeeded Sidmouth as president of the council. Earl Bathurst took Liverpool's place as secretary for war and the colonies. Vansittart succeeded Perceval at the exchequer and Bragge-Bathurst in the duchy of Lancaster. Robert Dundas, now Viscount Melville, followed Yorke at the admiralty, and Buckinghamshire took Melville's place at the board of control, which became once more a cabinet office. Eldon, Castlereagh, Westmorland, and Mulgrave retained their former offices, while Camden remained in the cabinet without office. In September Mulgrave was created an earl, and Camden a marquis. The internal history of England during the first two years of Liverpool's premiership has been entirely dwarfed by the interest of external events. For this period comprised not only the Russian expedition – the greatest military tragedy in modern history – the marvellous resurrection of Germany, with the campaigns which culminated in the stupendous battle of Leipzig, and the invasion of France which ended in the abdication of Napoleon at Fontainebleau, but also the brilliant conclusion of the Peninsular war, and the earlier stages of the war between Great Britain and the United States.

The nation was contented to leave the guidance of home and foreign policy at that critical time to the existing ministers, all honest, experienced, and high-minded statesmen, but none gifted with any signal ability, and inferior both in cleverness and in eloquence to the leaders of the opposition.

Napoleon was not far wrong in regarding the British aristocracy, which they represented, as his most inveterate and powerful enemy; but he was grievously deceived in imagining that this aristocracy, in withstanding his colossal ambition, had not the British nation at its back. The electoral body, indeed, to which they owed their parliamentary majority, was but a fraction of the population, and the public opinion which supported them may seem but the voice of a privileged class in these days of household suffrage. But there is little reason to doubt that, if household suffrage had then prevailed, their foreign policy would have received a democratic sanction; nor is it at all certain that some features of their home policy, now generally condemned, were not justified, in the main, by the exigencies of their time.

INDUSTRIAL DISTRESS.

The "condition of England," as it was then loosely termed, was the first subject which claimed the attention of Liverpool's government. While Perceval was congratulating parliament on the elasticity of the revenue, a widespread depression of industry was producing formidable disturbances in the midland counties. This depression was the consequence partly of the continental system, crippling the export of British goods to European countries; partly of the revival, in February, 1811, of the American non-intercourse act, closing the vast market of the United States; and partly of the improvements in machinery, especially those in spinning and weaving machines introduced by the inventions of Cartwright and Arkwright. Unhappily, this last cause, being the only one visible to artisans, was regarded by them as the sole cause of their distress. During the autumn and winter of 1811 "Luddite" riots broke out among the stocking-weavers of Nottingham. Their name was derived from a half-witted man who had destroyed two stocking frames many years before. Frame-breaking on a grand scale became the object of an organised conspiracy, which extended its operations from Nottinghamshire into Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire. At first frame-breaking was carried on by large bodies of operatives in broad daylight, and when these open proceedings were put down by military force, they were succeeded by nightly outrages, sometimes attended by murder. Early in 1812 a bill was passed making frame-breaking a capital offence.

In spite of this riots grew into local insurrections, and a message from the prince regent on June 27 recommended further action to parliament. It was natural, in that generation to connect all disorderly movements with revolutionary designs, and this belief underlies an alarmist report from a secret committee of the house of lords on the prevailing tumults. Accordingly, Sidmouth obtained new powers for magistrates to search for arms, to disperse tumultuous assemblies, and to exercise jurisdiction beyond their own districts. In November many Luddites were convicted, and sixteen were executed by sentence of a special commission sitting at York. These stern measures were effectual for a time, and popular discontent in the manufacturing districts ceased to assume so acute a form until after the war was ended.

The sufferings of the poor in the rural districts, though generally endured in silence, were at least equally severe with those of the artisan class, and it is difficult to say whether a good or bad harvest pressed more heavily on agricultural labourers. When the price of wheat rose to 130s. per quarter or upwards, as it did in 1812 and other years of scarcity, the farmers were able to pay comparatively high wages. When the price fell to 75s., as it did in years of plenty like 1813, wages were reduced to starvation-point, but supplemented out of the poor-rates, under the miserable system of indiscriminate out-door relief graduated according to the size of families. In either case, the entire income of a labourer was far below the modern standard, and the prosperity of trade meant to him an increase in the cost of all necessaries except bread. As for their employers, the golden age of farming, which is often identified with the age of the great war, had really ceased long before. Not only did the high price of a farmer's purchases go far to neutralise the high price of his sales, but the excessive fluctuations in all prices, due to the opening and closing of markets according to the fortunes of war,

made prudent speculation almost impossible. The frequently recurring depressions were rendered all the more disastrous, because in times of high prices "the margin of cultivation" was unduly extended.

CORN LAWS.

With a view to diminish the violence of these fluctuations, a select committee on the corn-trade was appointed by the house of commons in 1813, and reported in favour of a sliding-scale. When the price of wheat should fall below 90s. per quarter, its exportation was to be permitted; but its importation was to be forbidden, until the price should reach 103s., when it might, indeed, be imported, but under "a very considerable duty". It was assumed, in fact, that the normal price of wheat was above 100s. per quarter, and the price above which importation should be permitted was nearly twice as high as that fixed in 1801, when, moreover, it was to be admitted above 50s. at a duty of 2s. 6d., and above 54s. at a duty of sixpence. It is remarkable that in the debates of 1814 upon the report of this committee, William Huskisson, as well as Sir Henry Parnell, supported its main conclusions, upon the ground that agriculture must be upheld at all costs, and the home-market preferred to foreign markets. Canning and others ably advocated the cause of the consumers, alleging that duties on corn injured them far more than they could benefit landowners or farmers. Finally, a bill embodying a modified sliding-scale was introduced by the government, and, though lost by a narrow majority in 1814, became law in 1815. Under this act the importation of foreign corn was prohibited, so long as the price of wheat did not rise above 80s. Above that price it might be imported free. Corn from British North America might, however, be imported free so long as the price of wheat exceeded 67s.

The parliamentary debates of 1812 chiefly turned on Spanish affairs, the revocation of the orders in council, the subsequent rupture with the United States which had anticipated this great concession, and the wearisome cabinet intrigues which preceded the accession of Liverpool as prime minister. It is noteworthy that so conservative a house of commons should actually have pledged itself to consider the question of catholic emancipation in the next session, and should have passed an act relieving nonconformists from various disabilities. The next session of this parliament, however, never came, for an unexpected dissolution took place on September 29. This dissolution was attributed, with some reason, to a wish on the part of the government to profit by an abundant harvest, and to the restoration of comparative quiet both in England and in Ireland. A new parliament assembled at the end of November. The prince regent's speech in opening it, though it noticed the suppression of the Luddite disturbances, was inevitably devoted to the great events in Spain and Russia, the conclusion of a treaty with Russia, and the American declaration of war. After the Christmas recess, Castlereagh presented an argumentative message from the prince fully discussing the points at issue between Great Britain and the United States, upon which Canning, though out of office, delivered a vigorous speech in defence of the British position. Eldon, in the house of lords, went further, boldly justifying the right of search, and denying the American contention that original allegiance could be cancelled by naturalisation without the consent of the mother-country. The Princess of Wales, who had long been separated from the prince, was the cause of more parliamentary time being wasted by a complaint which she addressed to the speaker against the proceedings of the privy council. That body had approved restrictions which her husband had thought fit to place on her intercourse with her daughter, the Princess Charlotte. Parliament, however, took no action in the matter.

Perhaps the most important measure enacted in the session of 1813 was the so-called East India company's act. By this act the charter of the company was renewed with a confirmation of its administrative privileges and its monopoly of the China trade, but subject to material reservations: the India trade was thrown open from April 10, 1814, and the charter itself, thus restricted, was made terminable by three years' notice after April 10, 1831. In this year the naval and military armaments of Great Britain, considered as a whole, perhaps reached their maximum strength, and the national expenditure rose to its highest level, including, as it did, subsidies to foreign powers amounting to about £10,500,000. Of the aggregate expenditure, about two-thirds, £74,000,000, were provided

by taxation, an enormous sum relatively to the population and wealth of the country at that period. Patiently as this burden was borne on the whole by the people of Great Britain, we cannot wonder that Vansittart, the chancellor of the exchequer, should have sought to lighten it in some degree by encroaching upon the sinking fund, as founded and regulated by Pitt. The debates on this complicated question, in which Huskisson and Tierney stoutly combated Vansittart's proposal, belong rather to financial history. What strikes a modern student of politics as strange is that Vansittart, tory as he was, should have advocated the relief of living and suffering taxpayers, upon the principle, then undefined, of leaving money "to fructify in the pockets of the people"; while the whig economists of the day stickled for the policy of piling up new debts, if need be, rather than break in upon an empirical scheme for the gradual extinction of old debts.

CHAPTER V.
THE PENINSULAR WAR

Reference has already been made to the conflict maintained for six years by Great Britain against France for the liberation of Spain and Portugal, which has since been known in history as the Peninsular war. It had its origin in two events which occurred during the autumn of 1807 and the spring of 1808. The first was the secret treaty of Fontainebleau concluded between France and Spain at the end of October, 1807; the second was the outbreak of revolutionary movements at Madrid, followed by the intervention of Napoleon in March, April, and May, 1808. The treaty of Fontainebleau was a sequel of the vast combination against Great Britain completed by the peace of Tilsit, under which the continental system was to be enforced over all Europe. Portugal, the ally of this country and an emporium of British commerce, was to be partitioned into principalities allotted by Napoleon, the house of Braganza was to be exiled, and its transmarine possessions were to be divided between France and Spain, then ruled by the worthless Godoy in the name of King Charles IV. Whether or not the subjugation of the whole peninsula was already designed by Napoleon, his troops, ostensibly despatched for the conquest of Portugal under the provisions of the treaty, had treacherously occupied commanding positions in Spain, when the populace of Madrid rose in revolt, and, thronging the little town of Aranjuez, where the court resided, frightened the king into abdication. His unprincipled son, Ferdinand, was proclaimed in March, 1808, but Murat, who now entered Madrid as commander-in-chief of the French troops in that city, secretly favoured the ex-King Charles. In the end, both he and Ferdinand were enticed into seeking the protection of Napoleon at Bayonne. Instead of mediating or deciding between them, Napoleon soon found means to get rid of both. They were induced or rather compelled to resign their rights, and retire into private life on large pensions; and Napoleon conferred the crown of Spain on his brother Joseph, whose former kingdom of Naples was bestowed on Murat.

In the meantime, sanguinary riots broke out afresh at Madrid, hundreds of French were massacred, and the insurrection, as it was called, though sternly put down by Murat, spread like wildfire into all parts of Spain. A violent explosion of patriotism, resulting in anarchy, followed throughout the whole country. Napoleon was taken by surprise, but the combinations which he matured at Bayonne for the conquest of Spain were as masterly as those by which he had well-nigh subdued the whole continent, except Russia. He established a base of operations in the centre of the country, and organised four campaigns in the north-west, north-east, south-east, and south. Savary, who had succeeded Murat at Madrid, was supposed to act as commander-in-chief, but was really little more than a medium for transmitting orders received from Napoleon at Bayonne. The campaign of Duhesme in Catalonia was facilitated by the treacherous seizure of the citadel of Barcelona in the previous February. It was not long, however, before effective aid was rendered on the coast by the British fleet under Collingwood, and especially by Lord Cochrane in the *Impérieuse* frigate; the undisciplined bands of Catalonian volunteers were reinforced by regular troops from Majorca and Minorca; the fortress of Gerona made an obstinate resistance; the siege of it was twice raised, and Barcelona, almost isolated, was now held with difficulty.

FRANCE OCCUPIES THE PENINSULA.

Marshal Moncey vainly besieged Valencia, while Generals Lefebvre-Desnoëttes and Verdier were equally unsuccessful before Zaragoza. In the plains of Leon, Marshal Bessières gained a decisive victory over a superior force of Spaniards under Cuesta and Blake, at Medina de Rio Seco, on July 14. Having thus secured the province of Leon, and the great route from Bayonne to Madrid, he was advancing on Galicia when his progress was arrested by disaster in another quarter. General Dupont, commanding the southern army, found himself nearly surrounded at Baylen, and solicited

an armistice, followed by a convention, under which, "above eighteen thousand French soldiers laid down their arms before a raw army incapable of resisting half that number, if the latter had been led by an able man".[42] The convention, signed on July 20, stipulated for the transport of the French troops to France, but its stipulations were shamefully violated; some were massacred, others were sent to sicken in the hulks at Cadiz, and comparatively few lived to rejoin their colours. Meanwhile a so-called "assembly of notables," summoned to Bayonne, consisting of ninety-one persons, all nominees of Napoleon, assumed to act for the whole nation, had accepted the nomination of Joseph Bonaparte as king, and proceeded to adopt a constitution. On July 20, the very day of the capitulation of Baylen, Joseph entered Madrid, and on the 24th was proclaimed King of Spain and the Indies. But the military prestige of the grand army received a fatal blow in the catastrophe, of which the immediate effect was the retirement of Joseph behind the Ebro, and the ultimate effects were felt in the later history of the war.

At this moment almost the whole of Portugal was in possession of the French. In November, 1807, under peremptory orders from Napoleon, Junot with a French army and an auxiliary force of Spaniards, but without money or transport, had marched with extraordinary rapidity across the mountains to Alcantara in the valley of the Tagus. He thence pressed forward to Lisbon, hoping to anticipate the embarkation of the royal family for Brazil, which, however, took place just before his arrival and almost under his eyes. With his army terribly reduced by the hardships and privations of his forced march, he overawed Lisbon and issued a proclamation that "the house of Braganza had ceased to reign". A fortnight later a Spanish division occupied Oporto, and meanwhile another Spanish division established itself in the south-east of Portugal, but, as the French stragglers came in and reinforcements approached, Junot felt himself strong enough to cast off all disguise; he suppressed the council of regency, took the government into his own hands, and levied a heavy war contribution. During the early months of 1808 he was employed in reorganising his own forces, and the resources of Lisbon, where an auxiliary Russian fleet of nine ships was lying practically blockaded. In a military sense, he was successful, but the rapacity of the French, the contagion of the Spanish uprising, the memory of the old alliance with England, and the proximity of English fleets, stirred the blood of the Portuguese nation into ill-concealed hostility. The Spanish commander at Oporto withdrew his troops to Galicia, and the inhabitants declared for independence. Their example was followed in other parts of Portugal. Junot acted with vigour, disarmed the Spanish contingent at Lisbon, and sent columns to quell disturbances on the Spanish frontiers, but he soon realised the necessity of concentration. He therefore resolved to abandon most of the Portuguese fortresses, limiting his efforts to holding Lisbon, and keeping open his line of communication with Spain.

VIMEIRO AND CINTRA.

Such was the state of affairs in the Peninsula when Sir Arthur Wellesley landed his army of some 12,000 men on August 13, 1808. He had been specially designated for the command of a British army in Portugal by Castlereagh, then secretary for war and the colonies, who fully appreciated his singular capacity for so difficult a service. Sir John Moore, who had just returned from the Baltic, having found it hopeless to co-operate with Gustavus IV. of Sweden, was sent out soon afterwards to Portugal with a corps of some 10,000 men. Both these eminent soldiers were directed to place themselves under the orders not only of Sir Hew Dalrymple, the governor of Gibraltar, as commander-in-chief, but of Sir Harry Burrard, when he should arrive, as second in command. Wellesley had received general instructions to afford "the Spanish and Portuguese nations every possible aid in throwing off the yoke of France," and was empowered to disembark at the mouth of the Tagus. Having obtained trustworthy information at Coruña and Oporto, he decided rather to begin his campaign from a difficult landing-place south of Oporto at the mouth of the Mondego, and to march thence upon Lisbon. He was

[42] Napier, *Peninsular War* (3rd edition), i., 123.

opportunely joined by General Spencer from the south of Spain, and chose the coast-road by Torres Vedras. At Roliça he encountered a smaller force under Delaborde, sent in advance by Junot to delay his progress, and routed it after a severe combat. Delaborde, however, retreated with admirable tenacity, and Wellesley, expecting reinforcements from the coast, pushed forward to Vimeiro, without attempting to check the concentration of Junot's army. There was fought, on August 21, the first important battle of the Peninsular war. The British troops, estimated at 16,778 men (besides about 2,000 Portuguese), outnumbered the French considerably, but the French were much stronger in cavalry, and boldly assumed the offensive, confident in the prestige derived from so many victories in Italy and Germany. Wellesley's position was strong, but the attack on it was skilfully designed and pressed home with resolute courage. It was repelled at every point of the field, and the French, retiring in confusion, might have been cut off from Lisbon. But Burrard, who had just landed and witnessed the battle without interfering, now absolutely refused to sanction a vigorous pursuit.

On the following day he was superseded in turn by Dalrymple. The new commander determined to await the arrival of Moore, whose approach was reported, but who did not disembark his whole force until the 30th. In the meantime, overtures for an armistice were received from Junot, and ultimately resulted in the so-called "convention of Cintra," though it was first drafted at Torres Vedras and was ratified at Lisbon. Under this agreement the French army was to surrender Lisbon intact with other Portuguese fortresses, but was allowed to return to France with its arms and baggage at the expense of the British government. Having dissented from the military decision which had enabled Junot to negotiate, instead of capitulating, Wellesley also dissented from certain terms of the convention. He was, however, party to it as a whole, and afterwards justified its main conditions as securing the evacuation of Portugal at the price of reasonable concessions. This was not the feeling of the British public, which loudly resented the escape of the French army and insisted upon a court of inquiry. The verdict of this court saved the military honour of all three generals, but its members were so divided in opinion on the policy of the convention that no authoritative judgment was pronounced. Napoleon felt no such difficulty in condemning Junot for yielding too much, and the inhabitants of Lisbon were infuriated not only by the loss of their expected vengeance, but also by the shameless plunder of their public and private property by the departing French. Under a separate convention, the Russian fleet, long blockaded in the Tagus, was surrendered to the British admiral, but without its officers or crews.

The capitulation of Baylen paralysed for a time the aggressive movements of France in Spain. Catalonia remained unconquered, even Bessières retreated, and Joseph, as we have seen, abandoned Madrid. Happily for the French, the Spaniards proved quite incapable of following up their advantages, and though a "supreme junta" was assembled at Aranjuez, it wasted its time in vain wrangling, and did little or nothing for the organisation of national defence. Meanwhile, Napoleon was pouring veteran troops from Germany into the north of Spain, where they repulsed the Spanish levies in several minor engagements. On October 14 he left Erfurt, where he had renewed his alliance with the tsar, and reached Bayonne on November 3. His simple but masterly plan of campaign was already prepared, and was carried out with the utmost promptitude. On November 10-11, one of three Spanish armies was crushed at Espinosa; on the former day another was routed at Gamonal; on the 23rd the third was utterly dispersed at Tudela. Napoleon himself remained for some days at Burgos, awaiting the result of these operations; on December 4, after a feeble resistance, he entered Madrid in triumph, and stayed there seventeen days, which he employed with marvellous activity in maturing fresh designs, both civil and military, for securing his power in Spain.

ADVANCE OF SIR JOHN MOORE.

Already, on October 7, Sir John Moore had taken over the command of the British forces. He probably owed his appointment to George III., who seems on this occasion to have overruled his foreign and war ministers, Canning and Castlereagh. In spite of his unwillingness to offer the

appointment to Moore, Castlereagh gave him the most loyal and efficient support during the whole campaign; and this loyalty to Moore was one of the reasons for Canning's desire to remove Castlereagh from the war office, which, as we have seen, led to the famous duel between those two statesmen. It was at first intended that Moore should co-operate with the Spanish armies which were then facing the French on the line of the Ebro. For this purpose he was to have the command of 21,000 troops already in Portugal and of about 12,000 who were being sent by sea to Coruña under Sir David Baird. Burrard was to remain in Portugal with another 10,000. Nothing had been done before Moore was appointed to the command to provide the troops with their necessary equipment or their commander with the necessary local information. The departure of the troops was therefore slow. By October 18 the greater part of the British troops in Portugal were in motion, but the whole army had not left Lisbon till the 29th. The main body travelled by fairly direct routes to Salamanca, where Moore arrived on November 13, but he was induced by information, which proved to be incorrect, to send his cavalry and guns with a column under Hope, by the more circuitous high road through Elvas and Talavera. When this route was adopted it was anticipated that the different divisions of the British army would be able to unite at, or near, Valladolid. But the advance of the French rendered this impossible, and Hope ultimately joined Moore at Salamanca on December 4.

Baird suffered from even more vexatious delays. Though the greater part of his convoy had arrived at Coruña on October 13, the local junta would not permit them to land without express orders from the central junta at Aranjuez. Consequently the disembarkation did not begin till the 26th and was only finished on November 4. Transport and equipment were difficult to obtain, and on November 22 Baird was still only at Astorga. There exaggerated reports of the French advance induced him to halt, but by Moore's orders he continued his march. On the 28th the news of the defeat of Castaños at Tudela reached Moore at Salamanca. Co-operation with a Spanish army now appeared impossible, and even a junction with Baird seemed too hazardous to attempt. Moore therefore, ordered Baird to retire on Coruña and to proceed to Lisbon by sea, and, while waiting himself at Salamanca for Hope, made preparations for a retreat to Portugal. On December 5, the day after his junction with Hope, Moore determined to continue his advance. He had received news of the enthusiastic preparations for the defence of Madrid but did not know of its fall, and he considered that the Spanish enthusiasm justified some risk on the part of the British troops. He accordingly recalled Baird, whose infantry had retired to Villafranca, though his cavalry were still at Astorga. On the 9th came the news of the fall of Madrid, but Moore believed that an attack on the French lines of communication might still prove useful, and on the 11th the advance was renewed. Moore himself left Salamanca on the 13th. On the 12th he learned for the first time from some prisoners the true strength of the French army, 250,000 of all arms, and also discovered that the enemy were in complete ignorance of the position of his own army. Next day an intercepted despatch showed him that he might possibly be able to cut off Soult in an isolated position at Saldaña. Having at last effected a junction with Baird's corps on the 19th he reached Sahagun on the 21st, and was on the point of delivering his attack under favourable conditions, though his triumph must have been short-lived.

His real success was of another order. He had anticipated that Napoleon would postpone everything to the opportunity of crushing a British army, and the ultimate object of his march to Sahagun was to draw the French away from Lisbon and Andalusia. He was not disappointed. Napoleon at last divined that Moore was not flying in a south-westerly direction, but carrying out a bold manœuvre in a north-easterly direction. He instantly pushed division after division from various quarters by forced marches upon Moore's reported track, while he himself followed with desperate efforts across the snow-clad mountains between Madrid and the Douro. Apprised of his swift advance, and conscious of his own vast inferiority in numbers, Moore had no choice but to retreat without a moment's delay upon Benevente and Astorga. He was now sufficiently far north to prefer to retire upon Galicia rather than upon Portugal. The retreat began on the 24th and was executed with such rapidity that on January 1, 1809, Napoleon gave up the pursuit at Astorga, leaving it to be continued by

Soult. Whether he was influenced by intelligence of fresh armaments on the Danube, or of dangerous plots in Paris, must remain uncertain, but it is highly probable that he saw little honour to be won in a laborious chase of a foe who might prove formidable if brought to bay.

Moore's army, disheartened as it was by the loss of a brilliant chance, and demoralised as it became under the fatigues and hardships of a most harassing retreat, never failed to repel attacks on its rear, where Paget handled the cavalry of the rear-guard with signal ability, especially in a spirited action near Benevente. In spite of some excesses, tolerable order was maintained until the British force, still 25,000 strong, reached Astorga, and was joined by some 10,000 Spaniards under Romaña. Thenceforward, all sense of discipline was abandoned by so many regiments that Moore described the conduct of his whole army as "infamous beyond belief," though it is certain that some regiments, and notably those of the reserve, should be excepted from this sweeping condemnation. Drunkenness, marauding, and other military crimes grew more and more general as the main body marched "in a drove" through Villafranca to Lugo, where Moore vainly offered battle, and onwards to Betanzos on the sea-coast. There a marvellous rally was effected, stragglers rejoined the ranks in unexpected numbers, the *moral* of the soldiery was restored as the fearful strain of physical misery was relaxed, and by January 12, 1809, all the divisions of Moore's army were safely posted in or around Coruña. Bad weather had delayed the fleet of transports ordered round from Vigo, but it ran into the harbour on the 14th, and the sick and invalids were sent on board.

THE BATTLE OF CORUÑA.

Moore was advised to make terms for the embarkation of his entire command, but he was too good a soldier to comply. Those who took part in the battle of Coruña on the 16th, some 15,000 men in all, were no unworthy representatives of the army which started from Lisbon three months earlier. Soult, with a larger force, assumed the offensive, and made a determined attack on the British position in front of the harbour and town of Coruña. He was repulsed at all points, but Moore was mortally, and Baird severely, wounded on the field. Hope, who took command, knowing that Soult would soon be reinforced, wisely persisted in carrying out Moore's intention, evacuated Coruña, and embarked his army for England during the night and the following day. His losses were estimated by Hope at above 700, killed and wounded; those of the enemy were twice as great. Thus victory crowned a campaign which otherwise would have done little to satisfy the popular appetite for tangible success. The original object of supporting the Spanish resistance in the north had been rendered impossible of fulfilment by Napoleon's victories when Moore had barely crossed the Spanish frontier, and in this sense the expedition must be regarded as a failure, though its commander was in no sense responsible for its ill-success. On the other hand, considered as a skilful diversion, the expedition was highly successful. It drew all the best French troops and generals into the north-west corner of Spain, leaving all the other, and far richer, provinces to recover their power of resistance.[43]

The spirit in which Napoleon had entered upon this contest is well illustrated in two sentences of his address to the citizens of Madrid. "The Bourbons," he said, "can no longer reign in Europe," and "No power under the influence of England can exist on the continent". The counter-proclamations of Spanish juntas were more prolix and equally arrogant, but one of them reveals the secret of national strength when it asserts that "a whole people is more powerful than disciplined armies". The British estimate of Napoleon's Spanish policy was tersely expressed by the Marquis Wellesley in the house of lords, "To him force and fraud were alike; force, that would stoop to all the base artifices of fraud; and fraud, that would come armed with all the fierce violence of force".

WELLESLEY TAKES COMMAND.

[43] For Moore's campaign see Napier, *Peninsular War*, i., pp. xxi. – xxv., lvii. – lxxvi., 330-44, 431-542, and Oman, *Peninsular War*, i., 486-602; and compare Moore's *Diary*, edited by Maurice, ii., 272-398. Sir F. Maurice has not completely answered Professor Oman's criticisms.

For three months after the battle of Coruña, the Peninsular war, as regards the action of Great Britain, was all but suspended. Two days before that battle, a formal treaty of peace and alliance between Great Britain and the Spanish junta, which had withdrawn to Seville, was signed at London. Sir John Cradock was in command of the British troops at Lisbon, and took up a defensive position there, with reinforcements from Cadiz, awaiting the approach of Soult, who had captured Oporto by storm, and of Victor, who was in the valley of the Tagus. At the request of the Portuguese, Beresford had been sent out to organise and command their army. Early in 1809 the Spaniards were defeated with great slaughter at Ucles, Ciudad Real, and Medellin; Zaragoza was taken after another siege, and still more obstinate defence; and the national cause seemed more desperate than ever. On April 2, however, Sir Arthur Wellesley, who had returned home after the convention of Cintra, was appointed to the command-in-chief of our forces in the Peninsula. Before leaving England, he left with the ministers a memorandum on the conduct of the war which, viewed by the light of later events, must be accounted a masterpiece of foresight and sagacity. When it was laid before George III., his natural shrewdness at once discerned its true value, and he desired its author to be informed of the strong impression which it had produced on his mind.

Wellesley, indeed, could not estimate beforehand the vast numerical superiority of the French while the rest of Europe was at peace, or the impotent vacillations of Spanish juntas, or the "mulish obstinacy" of Spanish generals, which so often wrecked his plans and spoiled his victories. Nor could he foresee the advantages which he would derive from the resources of guerilla warfare, the mutual jealousies of the French marshals, and the sudden recall of the best French troops for service in Germany and Russia. But his prescient and practical mind firmly grasped the dominant facts of the position – that Portugal, guarded by the ocean on the west and by mountain ranges on the east, was far more accessible to the British navy than to the French army; that, under British officers, its troops might be trained into an effective force; and that, with it as a basis, Great Britain might ultimately liberate the whole Peninsula. "I have always been of opinion," Wellesley said in this memorandum, "that Portugal might be defended, whatever might be the result of the contest in Spain; and that in the meantime the measures adopted for the defence of Portugal would be highly useful to the Spaniards in their contest with the French." On this simple principle all his detailed recommendations were founded, and he expressed a deliberate belief that, if 30,000 British troops were supported by an equal number of Portuguese regulars, and a reserve of militia was provided, "the French would not be able to overrun Portugal with less than 100,000 men". This forecast was verified, and upon its essential wisdom the fate of the Peninsular war, with all its consequences, may be said to have depended.[44]

Wellesley landed at Lisbon on April 22, and was received with the utmost demonstrations of joy and confidence. He found not only the capital but the whole country in a state of tumult, if not of anarchy, due to a growing despair of the national cause. His arrival rekindled the embers of patriotism, and on May 5 he reviewed at Coimbra a body of troops consisting of 17,000 British and Germans, with about 8,000 Portuguese. The next day he marched towards the Douro, and on the 14th he effected the passage of that river in the face of the French army occupying Oporto, which the British forthwith recaptured. Soult beat a hasty and disorderly retreat into Galicia. Having driven Soult out of Portugal, the British general was encouraged to undertake a further advance into Spain, where Joseph with Victor and Sébastiani had collected a much larger army to bar the approaches to Madrid than Wellesley, relying on Spanish intelligence, had been led to expect. During June and the first days of July, he moved by Abrantes and the Tagus valley as far as Plasencia, little knowing that Soult was about to sweep round his rear, with 50,000 men, and intercept his communications with Lisbon. On July 10 he held a conference with the Spanish general Cuesta, who insisted on making an aggressive movement with his own troops only, and met with a repulse.

[44] Wellington, *Dispatches*, iv., 261-63 (March 7, 1809).

THE TALAVERA CAMPAIGN.

On the 27th, the combined armies of Wellesley and Cuesta, numbering respectively about 20,000 British and 35,000 Spanish, confronted 46,000 French troops, under Victor, in a strong position behind Talavera.[45] The Spanish forces occupied the right and the British the left of this position. Joseph was present, and disregarding the counsels of Jourdan, his proper military adviser, authorised Victor to assume the offensive. He failed in two preliminary attacks on the 27th, but renewed them on the 28th, when a general engagement ensued. The whole brunt of the battle fell upon the British troops, who gallantly withstood a desperate onset, first on their left and then on their centre and right, until the French quitted the field in confusion. The Spaniards, posted in entrenchments nearer Talavera itself, did and suffered comparatively little. Some of their regiments fled disgracefully, but the rest held their ground, and Wellesley in his despatch spoke favourably of their behaviour.[46] Perhaps the part which they played may be roughly estimated by their losses, amounting to 1,200, as compared with 6,268 British and nearly 9,000 French. Wellesley, after further experience of Spanish co-operation, made up his mind to dispense with it altogether in future.

The victory of Talavera won for Wellesley the rank of viscount, to which he was raised on September 4, with the title of Wellington. Although the victory revived the respect of foreign nations for the prowess of British arms, it was otherwise fruitless, and its sequel was fairly open to criticism. Wellesley found that Soult, with Ney and Mortier, had circumvented him, and that he must retreat through Esdremadura, on the south of the Tagus, upon Badajoz. Cuesta, who had advocated bolder counsels, undertook to guard the rear, and to protect the British wounded at Talavera. But he soon found it necessary to abandon that position. Fifteen hundred of the wounded were left behind, and were humanely treated by the French generals. Wellesley's retreat over the mountains was attended with great hardship and loss, for want of supplies either from Spain or from the coast, and his long encampment in the malarious valley of the Guadiana about Badajoz swelled the number of his sick to a frightful extent. It was not until December, when it got into better cantonments on Portuguese soil, that the British army, triumphant at Talavera, recovered either its health or its *moral*. Napoleon boasted, in a memorandum to be inserted in the Paris journals, that Wellington had really been beaten in Spain, and that "if affairs there had been properly conducted not an Englishman would have escaped". Without going quite so far as this, the parliamentary opposition in England made the least of the victory and the most of the retreat, which unfortunately coincided in time with the wreck of the Walcheren expedition. Even Wellington's best friends in England began to lose heart, as did many of his own officers. He remained undaunted, and having established his headquarters on the high ground between the Tagus and the Douro, meditated designs which, slowly matured, bore good fruit in later years.

It is difficult to understand the inaction of Wellington for so many months after the Talavera campaign, without taking into account not only the difficulty of obtaining sufficient recruits and stores from England after the waste of both at the mouth of the Scheldt, but the greatly increased strength of the French in Spain during the long interval between the Wagram campaign and the Russian expedition. At the close of 1809 all the fortresses of Spain had fallen into the enemy's hands, and all her principal armies had been defeated and dispersed in successive battles of which the greatest was that of Ocaña in the month of November. Suchet was master of Aragon and the east of Spain, nor was he dislodged from it until the end of the war; Andalusia was nearly conquered; Cadiz was only saved by the self-reliant courage of the Duc d'Albuquerque, baffling the intrigues and treachery of the supreme junta there assembled; and Napoleon was preparing a fresh army to overrun Portugal, under the command of Masséna. The Perceval ministry, in which Liverpool had taken Castlereagh's post of

[45] For the exact figures see Oman, *Peninsular War*, ii., 645-48.

[46] Wellington, *Dispatches*, iv., 536 (July 29, 1809).

secretary for war and the colonies, adopting an optimistic tone at home, practically told Wellington that he must shift for himself; and he braced himself up to do so with extraordinary fortitude.

He remained watching the gathering storm from the heights of Guarda, south-west of Almeida, and commanding two great roads from Spain into Portugal, but his thoughts were equally fixed upon the vast and famous lines of Torres Vedras, which he was constructing for the defence of Lisbon. His force, including the Portuguese regulars, did not exceed 50,000 men; that of the French under Ney, Reynier, and Junot consisted of about 70,000, but they were not equally capable of being concentrated on a single point. The Portuguese militia, too, were being gradually disciplined, and the Portuguese civil authorities were being gradually schooled into the new lesson of sweeping their own country bare of all supplies before the coming French invasion. Wellington did not even strike a blow to save Ciudad Rodrigo, which Masséna took on July 10, 1810. But it was no part of his plan that Almeida should capitulate, as it did shortly afterwards, partly owing to the accidental explosion of a magazine, and partly as was suspected, to an act of treachery. Still, Masséna delayed until urged by Napoleon, and deceived by false intelligence, he launched forth, at the beginning of September, on an enterprise which proved fatal to his reputation. Both he and Wellington issued appeals to the Portuguese nation, the contrast between which is significant. The French marshal, echoing the prevailing note of his master's proclamation, denounced Great Britain as the enemy of all Europe; Wellington called upon the Portuguese to remember their actual experience of French rapacity and outrage.

BUSSACO AND TORRES VEDRAS.

The object of Masséna was to reach Coimbra before Wellington. His manœuvres to outflank Wellington's left were skilfully devised, but the British army marched steadily down the valley of the Mondego, carrying with it the population of the district, and took its stand on the ridge of Bussaco, north of Coimbra, barring Masséna's progress. There was fought, on September 27, 1810, a battle as deadly as that of Talavera, and more decisive in its consequences. The French, as usual, were the assailants; the English and the Portuguese stood at bay. Never, in any of their brilliant victories, did French troops show more heroic daring than in this assault under Reynier on the British right, and under Ney on the British left. Both columns forced their way up bare heath-clad slopes, and reached the summit, whence they were only driven back after repeated charges. Their loss in killed and wounded exceeded 4,500, that of the allies was about 1,300. The French generals threw the blame of defeat upon each other, but, in fact, the skill of Masséna converted a defeat into an episode in his victorious advance. On the following day, he again found a way of turning Wellington's left, and, in an intercepted despatch, he naturally treated this as a compensation for the repulse at Bussaco, which he did not disguise. Compelled to retire once more with a vast drove of encumbered, panic-stricken, and famishing Portuguese fugitives, and conscious that no reserves awaited him, Wellington knew, nevertheless, that he was drawing Masséna further and further away from his base, to encounter a terrible surprise. For, so useless had been the French scouts, and so worthless the information received from Portuguese sources, that no adequate conception of the obstacle presented by the lines of Torres Vedras had entered the mind of that experienced strategist.

These elaborate works had been constructed in the course of a year by thousands of Portuguese labourers, directed by Colonel Fletcher of the royal engineers, upon a plan carefully thought out and laid down by Wellington himself. The first and principal chain of fortifications stretched for nearly thirty miles across the whole promontory between the river Tagus and the sea, about twenty-five miles north of Lisbon. The summits of hills were crowned with forts, their sides were escarped and protected with earthworks, their gorges were blocked with redoubts, a small river at the foot of them was made impassable by dams; in short, the utmost advantage was taken of the defences provided by nature, and these were supplemented by artificial entrenchments. Portuguese garrisons manned the greater part of the batteries, armed with guns from the arsenals of Lisbon; British troops were to occupy the most vulnerable points of attack. There was a second and third range of fortifications

behind the first, in case these should be forced, but no such emergency arose. When Masséna had carefully inspected the stupendous barrier reared in front of him, his well-trained eye recognised it as impregnable: he paused for some weeks under semblance of blockading the British forces, while he was really scouring the country for the means of feeding his own; but in November he began to retreat upon Santarem, Almeida, and Ciudad Rodrigo, with a half-starved and dispirited army, greatly reduced in numbers during the campaign.[47]

The year 1811 was perhaps the least interesting, yet the most critical in the history of the Peninsular war. Wellington had not escaped criticism at home for allowing Masséna to remain so long unmolested near Santarem. He described himself in a private letter, written in December, 1810, as "safe for the winter at all events". More he could not have said, knowing, as he did, that Soult was in force before Cadiz, and might at any moment join Masséna. This, in fact, he did; leaving his fields of plunder in Andalusia under the positive orders of Napoleon, he defeated the Spaniards at the Gebora on February 19, and captured Badajoz, as well as Olivenza. In his absence, Sir Thomas Graham, who commanded the British troops at Cadiz, sailed thence with La Peña, the Spanish commander, and a combined force of about 12,000 men, to make a flank march, and attack the French besiegers, under Victor, in the rear. A brisk action followed at Barrosa, in which Graham obtained a complete victory, but the Spanish troops, as usual, remained almost passive; the beaten army was not pursued, and the siege of Cadiz was not raised. This city was still the seat of the Spanish national government, but the feeble junta had been superseded by a national cortes, fairly representative of the nation, which passed some liberal measures, and dissolved the so-called regency which assumed to represent Ferdinand.

FUENTES D'ONORO AND ALBUERA.

The two great frontier fortresses of Spain, Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, were now in the hands of the French. Masséna had regained the Spanish frontier in March, after frequent combats with the pursuing enemy, and with heavy losses in men and horses, though he saved every gun except one. This retreat involved the evacuation of every place in Portugal except the fortress of Almeida. Wellington's pursuit would have been still more vigorous, but that his Portuguese troops were half-starved, and had lost discipline under intolerable privations. His next design seems to have been the recapture of the fortresses, but he was not without ulterior hopes – all too premature – of afterwards pushing on to Madrid and operating in the eastern provinces of Spain. He first invested Almeida, and, leaving General Spencer to continue the blockade, proceeded to Elvas in order to concert measures with Beresford for the siege of Badajoz. Thence he was suddenly recalled northward to repel a fresh advance of Masséna, strongly reinforced, for the relief of Almeida. The battle which followed at Fuentes d'Oñoro, south-east of Almeida, was among the most hardly contested struggles in the whole Peninsular war. It began on May 3, and, with a day's interval, concluded on the 5th. The British remained masters of the field, and claimed a somewhat doubtful victory, which at least secured the evacuation of Almeida. The garrison of that fortress blew it up by night, and succeeded, by masterly tactics, in joining the main French army with little sacrifice of life.

Wellington returned to Badajoz, only to meet with disappointment. General Cole, acting under Beresford, had retaken Olivenza; but Soult, with a force of 23,000 men, was marching to succour Badajoz, when he was encountered by Beresford at Albuera. Beresford's force was numerically stronger than Soult's, but only 7,000 men were English, the rest being mostly Spanish. Measured by the proportion of losses to men engaged on both sides, this fight on May 16, 1811, must rank among the bloodiest on record. In four hours nearly 7,000 of the allies and 8,000 French were struck down. The decisive charge of the reserve was inspired and led by Hardinge, afterwards Governor-General of India; the French were routed, and Soult was checked, but little was gained by the victors.[48] The siege

[47] For Masséna's lines of march see T. J. Andrews in *English Historical Review*, xvi. (1901), 474-92.

[48] The battle is picturesquely described by Napier, *Peninsular War*, iii., 536-66. See also *ibid.*, pp. xxxv. – li.

of Badajoz, indeed, was renewed, but its progress was slow for want of proper engines and artillery, and it was abandoned, after two futile attempts, on June 11. By this time, Marmont had succeeded Masséna, and was carrying out Napoleon's grand plan for a junction with Soult's army and a fresh irruption into Portugal. With marvellous audacity, Wellington offered battle to both marshals, who, happily ignorant of his weakness, declined it more than once. In truth, he was never more nearly at the end of his resources than when he went into winter quarters at the close of 1811, having failed to prevent Marmont from provisioning Ciudad Rodrigo, and having narrowly escaped being overwhelmed by a much superior force. His army was greatly reduced by sickness, he was very ill-supplied from England, and he received no loyal support from the Portuguese government. Moreover, the French had apparently extended their hold on Spain, both in the eastern and northern provinces, while it was reported that Napoleon himself, not content with dictating orders from afar, would return to complete the conquest of the Peninsula.

At this juncture, he must have been cheered by the arrival of so able a lieutenant as Graham from Cadiz, and by the brilliant success of Hill against a detached body of Marmont's army south of the Tagus. There were other tendencies also secretly working in favour of the British and their allies. Joseph Bonaparte, as King of Spain, openly protested against the extortions which he was enjoined to practise on his subjects, and went so far as to resign his crown at Paris, though he was induced to resume it. Again the broken armies of the Spanish had reappeared in the form of guerilla bands under leaders such as Mina; they could not be dispersed, since they had no cohesion, and were more formidable through their extreme mobility than organised battalions. Above all, the domination of France over Europe was already undermined and tottering invisibly to its fall. The Tsar Alexander had, as we have seen, been deeply offended by the preference of an Austrian to a Russian princess, as the consort of Napoleon, and still more by his imperious annexation of Oldenburg. Sweden, following the example of Russia, had begun to rebel against the continental system. A series of internal reforms had aroused a national spirit, and stealthily created the basis of a national army in Prussia, and the intense hostility of all North Germany to France was thinly disguised by the unwilling servility of the Prussian court. Napoleon, who seldom laboured under the illusions propagated by his own manifestoes and bulletins, well knew what he was doing when, in August, 1811, he allowed himself to burst into a storm of indignation against the Russian ambassador at the Tuileries. From that moment he clearly premeditated a rupture with Russia, and soon he withdrew 60,000 of his best troops from Spain, to be employed in that fatal enterprise of 1812 which proved to be his doom.

CAPTURE OF CIUDAD RODRIGO AND BADAJOZ.

The winter of 1811-12 was spent by Wellington in preparing, with the utmost secrecy, for the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, as the first steps in an offensive campaign. In January, 1812, he struck a sudden blow against the former, and captured it by an assault, attended with great carnage, on the 19th of that month. In this furious conflict, lasting but half an hour, Craufurd, the renowned leader of the light division, fell mortally wounded. Shameful excesses sullied the glory of a splendid exploit. Marmont immediately drew in his troops towards Salamanca, leaving Soult in the valley of the Tagus; and Hill, with his southern army, moved northward. Wellington, who was created an earl in February, transferred the greater part of his troops to Badajoz, and began a regular siege, but with very imperfect materials, no organised corps of sappers and miners, and very few officers skilled in the art of taking fortified towns. He was greatly delayed on the route by the lack of transport, and the vexatious obstinacy of the Portuguese authorities, while time was of the utmost consequence lest any or all of three French armies should come to raise the siege. Hence the extreme rapidity of his final operations.

After the capture of an outlying fort, three breaches were made in the walls, and on the night of April 6, under the cover of thick darkness, two divisions of British troops descended into the ditch, many carrying ladders or sacks of hay, and advanced to the foot of the *glacis*. Here they were almost

overwhelmed with a hurricane of fiery missiles, and in mounting the breaches they had to face not only hand-grenades, trains of powder, and bursting shells, but a *chevaux-de-frise* of sabre-blades crowning the summit. None of these attacks was successful; but another division under Picton scaled the castle, and a brigade under Walker effected an entrance elsewhere. After this, the French abandoned the breaches; the resistance waxed fainter, and at six in the morning, Philippon, the governor, with his brave garrison, surrendered unconditionally. The loss of the British and Portuguese in killed and wounded was stated at the enormous figure of 4,885, and it was avenged by atrocities prolonged for two days and nights, worse than had followed the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo. Wellington ordered the provost marshal to execute any soldiers found in the act of plunder, but officers vainly attempted to check their men at the peril of their own lives.

SALAMANCA.

It had been the intention of Wellington to operate next against Soult, and drive him, if possible, from Esdremadura and Andalusia. But, as appears from one of his despatches to Lord Liverpool, he was ill satisfied with the conduct of his allies guarding Ciudad Rodrigo, and returned to resume command in that region. In the same despatch he complains bitterly of the niggardly policy of his government in regard to money and supplies. The same timidity on the part of ministers at home appears in a letter from Liverpool, almost forbidding him to accept the command-in-chief of the Spanish armies, which, however, was conferred upon him later in this year.[49] At present, he decided to march against Marmont in the plains of Leon. This movement was facilitated by the success of Hill in surprising a body of French troops, and seizing the important bridge of Almaraz over the Tagus on May 19, thereby breaking the French lines of communication and isolating Marmont's army for a time. Soon afterwards, Salamanca and its forts were captured by Wellington, but Marmont proved a very formidable opponent, and, having behind him another army under King Joseph, threatened the British lines of communication. In the series of manœuvres which ensued, Wellington's forces met with more than one reverse, but the French marshal was determined to win a victory on a large scale. Wellington had no wish to risk a battle, unless Salamanca or his own rear should be seriously threatened, and he stood on the defensive, a little south of Salamanca, with Marmont's army encamped in front of him.

Early on July 22, the French seized one of two hills called the Arapiles which formed the key of the position and commanded the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. Marmont then organised complicated evolutions, of which the ultimate object was to envelop the British right and cut off its expected retreat. To accomplish this, he extended his own left so far that it became separated by a gap from his centre. No sooner did Wellington, with a flash of military insight, perceive the advantage thus offered than he flung half of his troops upon the French left wing, and made a vigorous attack with the rest upon the French centre. It was too late for Marmont, himself wounded, to repair the mistake, the centre was driven in, and, as was said, 40,000 men were beaten in forty minutes. General Clausel, who took Marmont's place, showed great ability in the retreat, but the French army could scarcely have escaped destruction had not the Spaniards, who were entrusted with a post on the river Tormes, left the passage open for the flying enemy. Nevertheless, the battle of Salamanca was the greatest and most decisive yet fought by the British in the Peninsula; it established the reputation of our army, and placed Wellington in the first rank of generals. Three weeks later he entered Madrid in triumph, and was received with the wildest popular acclamations. Joseph once more abandoned his capital, joined Suchet in Valencia, and ordered Soult against his will to withdraw from Andalusia and move in the same direction. This concentration relieved Wellington from immediate anxieties, but exposed him to a serious danger of being confronted before long by forces thrice as great as his own. He also needed reinforcements, and was in still greater want of money.

[49] Wellington, *Supplementary Dispatches*, vii., 318-19.

To students of military history it may seem a very doubtful question whether, under such circumstances, it was prudent to advance farther into Spain from his strongholds on the Portuguese frontier. But Wellington, who had been created a marquis on August 18, judged it necessary to crush if possible the remainder of Marmont's army which had retired northward under Clausel. He therefore left Hill with a detachment to cover Madrid, and marching through Valladolid occupied the town of Burgos. The castle of that place remained in the hands of a French garrison 2,000 strong and had been carefully fortified. Here again we may be permitted to doubt whether, after the experience gained at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, Wellington did wisely in resolving to invest and storm a fortress so formidable, without an adequate siege-train, and with the knowledge that Clausel might rally his forces in time to relieve it. Wellington himself afterwards admitted to Liverpool that he had erred in not taking with him the best of his own troops, and that he did not possess the means of transporting ordnance and military stores from Madrid and Santander, where there was abundance of them. The siege lasted a month, from September 19 to October 18; the garrison offered a most obstinate resistance, inflicting great loss on the besiegers by sorties, and in the end the attack failed. Souham, with Clausel, was closing in upon Wellington from the north, Soult from the south-east; Hill's position at Madrid was untenable, and another retreat became inevitable. It was the last and most trying in Wellington's military career. The army which had behaved nobly at Salamanca broke down under the strain of suffering and depression, like that of Sir John Moore before Coruña. The enemy was driven back in various rear-guard actions, but on the march the sense of discipline vanished and shameful disorders occurred. A scathing reprimand from Wellington, which might have been written by a French critic and which ought never to have been made public, threw all the blame of this disorganisation on the regimental officers, and denied that any scarcity of provisions could be pleaded in excuse of it.

MILITARY REFORMS.

By the middle of November the campaign ended, and Wellington's headquarters were at Ciudad Rodrigo. For the present, Spain was still dominated by the French, but its southern provinces were clear of the invaders, and elsewhere the tide was already on the turn. The Russian war cast its shadow beforehand on the Spanish peninsula; the French army was constantly weakened in numbers and still more in quality, as conscripts were substituted for veterans, and inferior generals succeeded to high commands; the Portuguese and Spanish contingents of the British army were stronger and better disciplined. Wellington himself, tenacious of his purpose as ever, received heartier support from home, where Liverpool had become prime minister in June, and had been succeeded by Bathurst as secretary for war and the colonies; and though the Marquis Wellesley, no longer in the government, complained that his brother's operations had been crippled by ministerial apathy, the Peninsular war, on the eve of its completion, was adopted with pride and sympathy by the nation.

The last chapter of the Peninsular war opens with the operations culminating in the battle of Vitoria, and closes with the battle of Toulouse. Having accepted the office of generalissimo of the Spanish armies, Wellington repaired to Cadiz during the winter of 1812-13, and formed the lowest estimate of the make-shift government there carried on under the dual control of the cortes and the regency. He failed to obtain a reform of this system, but succeeded in effecting a reorganisation of the Spanish army, to be in future under his own command. He next addressed himself, with the aid of Beresford and the British minister at Lisbon, to amend the monstrous abuses, civil and military, of Portuguese administration. By the beginning of May, 1813, a great improvement was visible in the equipment and *moral* of the Spanish and Portuguese troops; a vigorous insurrection against the French occupation had broken out in the province of Biscay, endangering the great road into Spain; and an Anglo-Sicilian army of 16,000 men, under Sir John Murray, had repulsed Suchet, hitherto undefeated, at Castalla on the Valencian coast, without, however, completing their victory, or capturing any of the French guns in the narrow defile by which the enemy fled. The want of unity in

the command of the French army, and of harmony between its generals, was more felt than ever now that Napoleon's master-mind was engrossed in retrieving the awful ruin of the Russian expedition.

Yet Napoleon's instructions to Joseph show that he had fully grasped the critical nature of the situation. He enjoined Joseph to mass all his forces round Valladolid, and imperatively directed that at all hazards the communications with France should be maintained. The Spanish guerillas had long rendered communications so insecure that couriers with despatches had to be escorted by bodies of 250 cavalry or 500 infantry; they were now so effectually intercepted that Napoleon's own despatch reached Joseph more than two months late, by way of Barcelona and Valencia. Meanwhile, Joseph was openly accusing Soult, in a letter to his brother, of criminal ambition – a charge to which he laid himself open before in Portugal – and did not hesitate to add, "the Duke of Dalmatia or myself must quit Spain". In England, on the contrary, parties were at last united in the desire to bring the war to a triumphant end, and parliament grudged neither men nor money to aid Wellington's plan of campaign. It was, then, under happier auspices than in former years that he broke up from his cantonments then stationed on the Coa, a little to the north-west of Ciudad Rodrigo, and set forward with 70,000 British and Portuguese troops, besides 20,000 Spaniards, to drive the French out of Spain. So confident was he of success that, as Napier relates, he waved his hand in crossing the frontier on May 22, and exclaimed, "Farewell, Portugal".[50]

VITORIA.

He advanced by the valley of the Douro; then, turning to the north-east, he compelled the French to evacuate Burgos, and passed the Ebro on June 13. Graham in command of his left wing there joined him, after forcing his way by immense efforts across the mountains of the Portuguese frontier. Hill, commanding the right wing of his composite but united army, was already with him. A depot for his commissariat and a military hospital were established at Santander, where a British fleet was lying, and whence he could draw his supplies direct from home. The French army, under Joseph and Marshal Jourdan, fell back before him by a forced night march on the 19th and took up its position in front of Vitoria, in the province of Biscay. Here, on the plain of the river Zadorra, was fought on the 21st the greatest battle of the Peninsular war. Wellington had encountered serious physical difficulties in his passage from the valley of the Ebro to that of the Zadorra; but for once his plans had been executed with admirable precision, and all his troops arrived at the appointed time on the field of battle. The French, conscious of their impending expulsion from Spain, were encumbered by enormous baggage-trains containing the fruits of five years' merciless spoliation "not of a province but of a kingdom," including treasures of art from Madrid and all the provincial capitals, with no less than 5,500,000 dollars in hard cash, besides two years' arrears of pay which Napoleon had sent to fill the military chest of Joseph's army. A vast number of vehicles, loaded with the whole imperial and royal treasure, overspread the plain and choked the great road behind the French position, by which alone such a mass of waggons could find its way into France.

The French army consisted of about 60,000 men, with 150 pieces of cannon, but strong detachments, under Foy and Clausel respectively, had been sent away to guard the roads to Bilbao and Pamplona. The British army numbered nearly 80,000, inclusive of Portuguese and Spanish, with 90 guns. The French were posted on strong ground, and held the bridges across the river. Graham, with the left column of the British, made a circuit in the direction of Bilbao, working round to cut off the French rear on the Bayonne road. Hill, with the right column, forced the pass of Puebla, in the latter direction, carried the ridge above it after much hard fighting, and made good his position on the left flank of the French. Wellington himself, in the centre, under the guidance of a Spanish peasant, pushed a brigade across one of the bridges in his front, weakly guarded, and thus mastered the others; his force then expanded itself on the plain and bore down all opposition. Graham had

[50] Napier, *Peninsular War* (first edition), v., 513.

met with a more obstinate resistance from the French right, under Reille, but at last got possession of the great Bayonne road. Thenceforward a retreat of the French army, partly encircled, became inevitable, but it was conducted at first in good order and with frequent halts at defensible points. The only outlet left open was the mountain road to Pamplona, and this was not only impracticable for heavy traffic but obstructed by an overturned waggon. The orderly retreat was soon converted into a rout; the flying throng made its way across country and over mountains towards Pamplona, leaving all the artillery, military stores, and accumulated spoils as trophies of the British victory.

The value of these was prodigious, but the great mass of booty, except munitions of war, fell into the hands of private soldiers and camp-followers. Wellington reported to Bathurst that nearly a million sterling in money had been appropriated by the rank and file of the army, and, still worse, that so dazzling a triumph had "totally annihilated all order and discipline".[51] The loss in the battle had been about 5,000, but Wellington stated that on July 8 "we had 12,500 men less under arms than we had on the day before the battle". He supposed the missing 7,500, nearly half of whom were British, to be mostly concealed in the mountain villages.[52] A large number of stragglers afterwards rejoined their colours, but too late to aid in an effectual pursuit of the enemy. The immediate consequence of this great victory was the evacuation by the French of all Spain south of the Ebro. Even Suchet abandoned Valencia and distributed his forces between Tarragona and Tortosa. To his great credit, Wellington addressed to the cortes an earnest protest against wreaking vengeance on the French party in Spain, many of whom might have been driven into acceptance of a foreign yoke "by terror, by distress, or by despair". At the same time, he vigorously followed up his success by chasing and nearly surrounding Clausel's division, while Hill invested Pamplona, and Graham drove Foy across the Bidassoa, in his advance upon the fortress of St. Sebastian.

[51] Wellington, *Dispatches*, x., 473 (June 29, 1813).

[52] *Ibid.*, x., 519 (July 9, 1813).

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.