

concentrated their forces at Bastia. The British general, Dundas, thought the place too strong to be taken, without a reinforcement. Horatio Nelson, one of lord Hood's captains, said he would be ready to attack it with five hundred men, and the crew of his own ship, the Agamemnon. With his usual firm reliance upon the bravery and endurance of his sailors, and unbounded confidence in his own powers, Nelson effected for his admiral the reduction of this strong place without the help of general Dundas, taking the command of the soldiers, seamen, and marines. Four thousand troops capitulated to a force not exceeding twelve hundred men. Corsica, for a short period, was annexed to Great Britain. The people had a free constitution offered to them; and they testified their desire to be under British protection. It was an union of very short duration, for it had no natural principles of cohesion. Corsica very soon came again under the dominion of France; and certainly this island, with its fierce and ignorant population, was not a possession that would have been easy to retain under a system of regulated liberty, even if it had been worth retaining for any higher object than the assertion of national pride.

## CHAPTER III.

Accessions to the Ministry.—Opening of the Session.—Mr. Canning.—Opposition to the Address by Mr. Wilberforce.—Acquittal of Warren Hastings.—Marriage of the Prince of Wales.—Session closed.—Expedition to Quiberon.—Insurrections in Paris.—Revolt of the Sections suppressed by Bonaparte.—Opening of Parliament.—Attack upon the king.—Coercive policy of the Government.—Dread of Mr. Fox of approaching absolutism.—Bonaparte chief of the army of Italy.—Territorial divisions of Italy.—Bonaparte's first Italian Campaign.—Austrian successes in Germany.—Lord Malmesbury negotiates for peace, at Paris.—Death of the Empress Catherine II.—Retirement of Washington.—French fleet in Bantry Bay.

BEFORE the meeting of parliament on the 30th of December, 1794, the ministry of Mr. Pitt had received some important accessions from that section of the Whig party which had already given him their support in debates and in divisions. The duke of Portland was appointed third Secretary of State; Mr. Windham, Secretary at War; and earl Spencer First Lord of the Admiralty. Earl Fitzwilliam went to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, in December; but he was recalled in the following March.

Whatever was the amount of national gloom at the prospect of the war, there was one man who never lost heart or hope. The royal speech on the 30th of December was the anticipation of the sentiments, which William Pitt would again and again utter in majestic periods, to which his disciples would listen with unfeigned admiration. Disappointments and reverses were acknowledged, but security was only to be found in firmness and perseverance. Everything showed the rapid decay of the enemy's resources, and the instability of every part of their system. The United Provinces had entered into negotiations for peace, but no established government could derive real security from such negotiations. Forces were to be augmented; large additional burdens were to be imposed; and operations for another campaign were to be concerted with such of the powers of Europe as were impressed with the same sense of the necessity for vigour and exertion.

In the House of Commons, on that 30th of December, the speeches of two of the members excited more attention than even the stately harangue of the prime minister himself. George Canning, who had taken his seat in the previous session, seconded the motion for the Address. He had spoken three times during

the session which preceded, and had been reprov'd for a slight exercise of his sarcastic power, being described by sir Philip Francis as "the young gentleman who had just escaped from his school and his classics, and was not yet conversant in the laws and constitution of his country." Sheridan had somewhat rashly proclaimed to the House at the end of 1792, when Mr. Jenkinson (afterwards earl of Liverpool) made his first speech on the side of the Government, that his own party was about to receive a great accession in the companion and friend of the young orator who had then distinguished himself. Canning disappointed the hopes of Sheridan, and became the most devoted as well as the most able supporter of Pitt. Of his adhesion to the great minister's policy, there is a wild story told by sir Walter Scott: "Canning's conversion from popular opinions was strangely brought round. While he was studying in the Temple, and rather entertaining revolutionary opinions, Godwin sent to say that he was coming to breakfast with him, to speak on a subject of the highest importance. Canning knew little of him, but received his visit, and learned to his astonishment, that in expectation of a new order of things, the English Jacobins designed to place him, Canning, at the head of their revolution. He was much struck, and asked time to think what course he should take; and having thought the matter over, he went to Mr. Pitt, and made the anti-Jacobin confession of faith." Scott tells this story upon the authority of sir W. Knighton.\* A more improbable story was never told. That Godwin, a man of ripe age; singularly cautious in his actions, however bold were his political theories; studiously keeping aloof from all the Societies of that troubled time,—should have made this extraordinary proposal to a lad, whose abilities might have been exhibited in some British Forum, but were only known to the general world by his clever papers in "The Microcosm"; † moreover that Pitt should at once have gladly snatched the young democrat out of the dangerous embraces of the English Jacobins, to become his own bosom friend and companion in power—this is indeed a pretty romance, but one which we may leave for any historical value to the adornment of an eloquent biographer.‡ Canning's uncompromising speech on the 30th of December, 1794, for a vigorous continuance of the war, excited the admiration of the ministerial party, but it had an effect little anticipated by the minister. It called up Wilberforce, to move an Amendment to the Address—Wilberforce,

\* "Diary," April 17, 1828.

† Published in 1787, in which year Canning, at the age of seventeen and a half, was entered at Christchurch, Oxford.

‡ See Robert Bell's "Life of Canning," p. 85.

the warmest and most disinterested friend of Pitt. The conscientious man had a hard struggle to bring his mind to oppose the statesman whom he loved and revered. But he became convinced that his duty lay in recommending an attempt to negotiate with the French republic for peace on equitable terms. Pitt felt this difference very acutely. "There were but two events in the public life of Mr. Pitt, which were able to disturb his sleep—the mutiny at the Nore, and the first open opposition of Mr. Wilberforce."\* The natures of the two friends were too genial to allow of a permanent rupture. Pitt showed no resentment. The more violent of the ministerial party looked upon the unexpected opposition as something not much short of treason. "When I first went to the levee," says Wilberforce, "after moving my Amendment, the king cut me." But Wilberforce was not shaken by the taunts of the warlike party in the government, or by the frowns of the sovereign. He subsequently brought forward a specific motion to recommend overtures for peace, which, of course, was rejected by a large majority. He argued with Pitt in the old confidence of friendship, that he was under a delusion in his abiding belief that "the French were in a gulf of bankruptcy, and that he could almost calculate the time by which their resources would be consumed." At Wilberforce's own table a clever Frenchman had said, "I should like to know who was Chancellor of the Exchequer to Attila."†

During this session the resistance to the policy of the Government was very ineffectual. The Habeas Corpus Suspension Act was continued. A loan of four millions to the emperor was voted. The trial of Warren Hastings, which had dragged on for seven years, then came to an end, the Lord Chancellor declaring him, upon the votes of the peers, to be acquitted of all the charges of impeachment brought against him.

The great domestic event of the year was the marriage of the prince of Wales—an event whose unhappy consequences were not to be measured solely by the miseries and disgraces of the ill-assorted pair themselves. Lord Malmesbury—who was about to return home from his mission at Berlin, where he had unsuccessfully struggled against the selfish dishonour of the Prussian court—was commanded by George III. to proceed to Brunswick, to demand the princess Caroline in marriage for the prince of Wales. The Diary of lord Malmesbury is indeed a most instructive revelation of the dangers that might have been expected from an alliance forced on for state reasons—an alliance between a reckless volup-

\* "Life of Wilberforce," vol. ii, p. 17.

† *Ibid.*, p. 92. Macaulay has paraphrased the Frenchman's *mot*, see ante, p. 524.

tuary, anxious only to have his debts paid by the nation on the occasion of his marriage, and a giddy, coarse, ill-educated woman, who was dazzled with the glittering prospect of quitting a petty principality to intermarry with the heir-apparent of one of the most splendid of European crowns. Lord Malmesbury had his instructions from the king himself, "with no discretionary power to give advice or information to his majesty or the government on the principal subject of this mission." He saw the princess, "vastly happy with her future expectations." A messenger from England "brings the prince's picture, and a letter from him to me, urging me vehemently to set out with the princess Caroline immediately." The duke of Brunswick told the ambassador that his daughter was not silly—(*Elle n'est pas bête*)—but that she wanted judgment—had been brought up severely, which was quite necessary. The father saw the trouble that was in store—"he dreaded the prince's habits." The poor princess said to Malmesbury, "I am determined never to appear jealous. I know the prince is *leger*, and am prepared on this point." The sagacious ambassador very soon perceived the impending danger. He regretted the apparent facility of the princess's character—her want of reflection and *substance*—"with a steady man she would do vastly well, but with one of a different description there were great risks." He came to the conclusion that "she has no governing powers, although her mind is physically strong." Malmesbury did his duty in offering her advice and sometimes remonstrance—especially "on the toilette, on cleanliness, and on delicacy in speaking"—strange subjects of discussion with a lady who might be queen of England. The destined bride and the ambassador set out at last for the court of St. James's. On the 5th of April their arrival was notified to the king and the prince of Wales. The princess was introduced to the prince, who came alone to receive her. She attempted to kneel, as she was instructed. "He raised her gracefully enough, and embraced her; said barely one word; turned round; retired to a distant part of the apartment, and, calling me to him, said, 'Harris, I am not well; pray get me a glass of brandy.' Harris recommended a glass of water, and the prince, exclaiming 'No,' with an oath, rushed away to the queen. Well might Caroline of Brunswick be "in a state of astonishment," and inquire, "is the prince always like that?" The marriage took place on the 8th. Parliament voted a large income, but determined that out of this income the prince's debts should be paid without a separate grant.\*

On the prorogation of Parliament on the 27th of June, the royal

\* See Malmesbury's "Diary," &c., vol. iii. p. 147 to p. 210.

speech expressed a hope, derived from "the internal situation of the enemy," "that the present circumstances of France may, in their effects, hasten the return of such a state of order and regular government as may be capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of amity and peace with other powers." Fox interpreted this sentence as indicating the views of that party in the Cabinet who could anticipate no "state of order and regular government" but in the return of the Bourbons to power. He describes these expressions as "that foolish paragraph in the king's speech at the prorogation, at which they made him foretell the restoration of monarchy in France." \* There were "other powers" whose prudence or whose fears led them to preserve or to seek "amity and peace" with the Republic. The United States had preserved peace both with France and England, chiefly through the firmness and moderation of Washington. Prussia had made peace with France on the 5th of April. Spain, at this very time, was negotiating for peace, and a treaty was ratified in less than a month after this prorogation of Parliament. But on the very day that the royal speech pointed, as Fox believed, to a return of the old order of things as the only security for peace, a landing of emigrants and British marines was effected in Brittany, for the purpose of assisting a projected insurrection of the Chouan Royalists. Its results were most disastrous. This unfortunate expedition, it is affirmed, "was known to be peculiarly the measure of the Burke part of the Cabinet, and to have been undertaken on the sole responsibility of their ministerial organ, Mr. Windham." † A pacification with the Vendéan chiefs had been effected by the commissioners of the Convention on the 12th of February, 1795. There was still a smouldering fire of disaffection; and Puisaye, an agent of the French princes, led the warlike members of the English Cabinet to believe that the whole country could be again roused, if the means were afforded of landing a body of emigrant volunteers, and of supplying arms to the peasantry. A squadron of nine ships of war, under the command of sir John Borlase Warren, convoyed fifty transports, having on board the royalists and their stores. On the 27th of June they landed near Carnac. On the 3rd of July they occupied the peninsula of Quiberon. The emissaries of the royalists again stirred up a civil war throughout Brittany. Charette, Stofflet, and other insurgent chiefs, who had submitted in February, resumed their arms. But Hoche was at hand with fourteen thousand men. He made a night attack upon Fort Penthièvre; poured his thousands into the peninsula; and by daybreak he was driving the wretched

\* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 119. † Moore, "Life of Sheridan," p. 522.

emigrants into the sea, or taking them prisoners to be doomed to death as traitors to the Republic. The Comte d'Artois came with another expedition. He looked upon La Vendée, and consulted his safety by a return to England. On the 8th of June the unhappy son of Louis XVI. had died a prisoner in the Temple, in the 12th year of his age. Physicians who examined the body declared that his death was caused by scrofulous disease. The poor boy had been subjected to the most shameful treatment, even when the Jacobin reign of terror was at an end. He was confined in a small room; was left without change of linen; was devoured by vermin. His uncle Monsieur was now Louis XVIII. But neither of the uncles of the child who is registered in the annals of France as Louis XVII. could have revived such a feeling of royalism as the continued existence of this suffering prisoner of the Temple might have commanded—if the spirit of royalism, indeed, had not been almost extinct, and incapable of being revived by any rallying cry. The daughter of Louis XVI., who was called by Napoleon “the only man of the family,” was released from her confinement after the death of her brother.

The chaos of the French Revolution was slowly resolving itself into something like order. After the fall of Robespierre there was a progressive reaction against the system of terror of which he had been the most conspicuous mover. The instruments of bloodshed, before whom all France had trembled, were now to live in dread, not only of a loss of power, but of retributive justice. In May, 1795, Fouquier Tinville, and fifteen of the old Revolutionary Tribunal, were brought before a new Revolutionary Tribunal, were condemned to death, and were executed. The charge against Fouquier Tinville was, specially, that of causing the destruction, under the guise of trial, of a countless number of French of all ages and of both sexes, by inventing schemes of conspiracies.\* But the reaction against the Jacobins too often involved as much injustice and cruelty as had marked their supremacy. The struggle against the power of the Convention by the *sans-culottes* of Paris, crying for bread, and led on by a remnant of the chiefs of the days of terror, broke out in three insurrections. The first was that of the Twelfth of Germinal (April 1), which was put down by Pichegru without bloodshed—by the mere boom of unshotted cannon. The second revolt was that of the First of Prairial (May 20). The cry now is, “Bread and Constitution.” Saint Antoine pours out its citizenesses into the hall of the Convention. Its citizens murder one of the deputies, Férand. Sixty of the old deputies of the

\* See *ante*, vol. vi. p. 591.

Mountain retain their seats in the hall, all others having gone away to look for safety. The purged Assembly now decrees whatever *sans-culottism* demands. But the Jacobin deputies and their rabble are soon swept out by charge of bayonet; and the guillotine, suicide, and deportation leave the Convention for a little while in quiet. Its business is now to make a new Constitution. Sièyes has his plans ready for a Constitution far less democratic than that of 1793. There is to be a money qualification for electors; there are to be two chambers; two-thirds of the existing Convention must be re-elected; there is to be a Directory of five members. It was determined to submit this new Constitution for the acceptance of the people in their primary assemblies on the 6th of September. As might have been anticipated, a violent opposition, especially to that portion of the scheme which gave the citizens only the privilege of electing one-third of the new representatives, broke out. The Constitution was accepted by a very large majority of the people, and it was declared to be the fundamental law of the State. The sections of Paris were, however, in a ferment. The Convention saw that a third revolt was at hand. It had five or six thousand troops for its defence, and Menou had their command, as general-in-chief of the army of the interior. On the 4th of October Menou is sent to disarm the Section Lepelletier, which is sitting with loaded guns in a convent in the Rue Vivienne. He proceeds to enforce their obedience with his artillery and his battalions, demanding the surrender of their arms. He returns to the Convention to say that he has summoned Lepelletier in vain; the Section has shown too formidable an array. Some more determined leader must be found. Barras is named to the command in the place of Menou; but Barras is only to be a vicarial commander. There was a young man known to Barras as having done good service at Toulon, but who had been unemployed for some time; had been suspected as an adherent of Robespierre; and was now in very straitened circumstances. He was the man for a dash at the insurgents, whose numbers had increased to forty or fifty thousand after the retreat of Menou. These insurgents were of all classes of the discontented—Jacobins and royalists, republicans and constitutional monarchists, the starving and the restless. Napoleon Bonaparte was placed at the head of the troops of the line, as second in command to Barras. He had hesitated about accepting this command; as any less scrupulous man might have hesitated when he was selected to war against his fellow-citizens as against a foreign enemy. But having chosen his course, he lost no time in adopting the means of success. Murat, then an officer

of cavalry, was despatched by Bonaparte, that night, to bring away from Sablons the cannon which had been deposited there during the insurrection of May, when the National Guards wished to show their fidelity to the Convention. The Section Lepelletier had also despatched its officers to bring away the cannon. Murat was beforehand with them, and arrived early in the morning of the 5th at the Tuileries with the park of artillery. Bonaparte distributed his cannon and his troops at every point where the Convention was open to attack. The Section Lepelletier was joined by other Sections. Generals were chosen. A plan of attack upon the Tuileries was arranged. Bonaparte ordered that no aggressive movement should be made, but that his troops should remain on the defensive. The members of the Convention took their seats, arms having been provided, which they were themselves to use in case of attack. The day wore on till half-past four, all the streets surrounding the Tuileries being filled with troops of the Sections. The insurrectionary columns then moved up the Rue St. Honoré, and along the quays, and when they came to where Bonaparte's men were posted, instead of dispersing, as they were summoned to do, they discharged their muskets. The young general of the Convention thought the time was at last come for decisive action. A great body of insurgents had taken up a commanding position on the steps leading to the Church of St. Roch. Bonaparte opened a heavy fire of grape-shot upon them; and they were quickly dislodged. He brought his cannon into the street of St. Honoré, and swept it with his *mitraille* from one end to the other. The insurgents fled from this quarter; but at other points of the city the same contest was going on between disciplined troops, most skilfully disposed, and a rash multitude without efficient leaders. Bonaparte, says Thiers, "shewed a merciless energy, and fired upon the population of Paris as upon Austrian batallions." The captive at St. Helena himself said, "It is false that we fired first with blank shot; it had been a waste of life to do that." At six o'clock all was over, and the victorious general of the Convention fired his cannon loaded with powder only, to terrify those who had still a wish to fight. The fortunes of Bonaparte were in the ascendant; and from that day the history of Europe becomes in a great degree merged in the history of one man. The time is not yet ripe for the supreme power of this man. There will be an Executive, composed of five Directors; Council of Ancients; Council of five hundred. The French people will feel that the days of anarchy and insurrection are over—that the volcano of the Revolution is burnt out. But other nations will feel,

for twenty years, that the strong arm of military power, which has striven with and conquered the spirit of revolt in Paris, will become an organized ambition, as dangerous to the repose of the world as the outbreaks of that democracy against which kings vainly confederated.

The Session of Parliament was opened on the 29th of October, under very inauspicious circumstances. On the 26th, a general meeting of the London Corresponding Society was held in St. George's Fields, when some bold speeches were addressed to a vast multitude. Provisions at this period were excessively dear. The same privations that moved the people of Paris to assail the Convention with "Bread and the Constitution," moved the people of London to assail the king on his way to Parliament with cries of "Bread! bread! Peace! peace!" One of the windows of the state carriage was broken by a stone, or by a shot from an air-gun. The king manifested his wonted courage, amidst the groans and hisses of an excited mob. An Address to his majesty was voted in both houses before the royal speech was taken into consideration. The government, as was for many years its policy, whenever popular discontent assumed the form of violence and outrage, was ready with its measures of coercion. In the House of Lords, lord Grenville brought in a bill "for the safety and preservation of his majesty's person and government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts." In the House of Commons, Mr. Pitt brought in a bill "for the more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies." The Treasonable Attempts Bill was an extension of the provisions of the statute of Edward III., as to compassing and imagining the death of the king, by connecting that compassing and imagining with the publication of any printing or writing. The parliamentary opposition to the Bill was as strong as to that against Seditious Meetings. The one measure still forms part of our code of law; the other was totally unfitted for any permanent condition of constitutional liberty. By this second Bill, every public meeting for the purpose of preparing any petition or remonstrance, or for deliberating upon any grievance in Church or State, was forbidden to be held, except under certain regulations, by which the individuals calling the meeting could be identified: it further gave power to any justice of the peace to disperse the meeting, if the language of the speakers was calculated to bring the government into contempt; and if twelve persons remained together one hour after being so ordered to disperse, the offenders were to be adjudged felons, without benefit of clergy. The public reprobation of these measures was expressed in the

most unequivocal manner. The indignation of Mr. Fox carried him beyond the verge of discretion, however just and courageous we may now consider the words which he uttered: "If ministers were determined, by means of the corrupt influence which they possessed in the two Houses of Parliament, to pass the bills in direct opposition to the declared sense of a great majority of the nation, and they should be put in force with all their rigorous provisions, if his opinion were asked by the people as to their obedience, he should tell them it was no longer a question of moral obligation and duty, but of prudence." Mr. Pitt expressed his horror and disgust at the words of Mr. Fox, which, he said, openly advised an appeal to the sword. Mr. Fox declared that he would not retract one word of what he had said: "Strong measures require strong words." The country had never been more agitated than at this crisis. Pitt expected "a civil broil," and said, "If I were to resign, my head would be off in six months."\* The bills passed. There was no civil broil. But it was very long before Englishmen could cease to feel that they had lost some portion of the freedom which their ancestors had won. It was no merely rhetorical art that led Fox to declare himself so strongly against these enactments. He expressed his deliberate conviction in a letter to lord Holland: "There appears to me no chance at present, but between an absolute surrender of the liberties of the people, and a vigorous exertion, attended, I admit, with considerable hazard, at a time like the present. My view of things is, I own, very gloomy; and I am convinced that in a very few years the government will become completely absolute, or that confusion will arise of a nature almost as much to be deprecated as despotism itself."† With a prolonged suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; with an Attorney-General who boasted that "in the last two years there had been more prosecutions for libels than in any twenty years before;"‡ with a new law to attach the penalty of treason to certain libels, and a new law to give one magistrate the power of dispersing any assembly, under the penalty of death to those who demurred to his will—we can scarcely think that the view of things taken by Mr. Fox was too gloomy, or that his resistance was unpatriotic and factious. In a review of "Gifford's Life of Pitt," written by Mr. Canning, in 1810, remarkable as much for its ability as its moderation, there is the following defence of, or rather apology for, these measures: "In other times, indeed, we should have condemned the coercive policy

\* "Life of Wilberforce," vol. ii. p. 114. † "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 124.

‡ "Parliamentary History," vol. xxxii. col. 488.

of Mr. Pitt. That policy is always to be judged of as being intended for a *crisis*; and, whatever may be thought of its merits, there can be no doubt that, on the one hand, the proselyting dexterity which characterized the prevailing spirit of the French Revolution, and, on the other, the general agitation, or disquietude, of the popular mind in our own country, concurred to form at that period, a moral crisis of a very peculiar nature."\* We have no more right to assume that Pitt was resolved upon establishing a despotism, than that Fox desired to witness the overthrow of the monarchy.

In the year 1796 the military operations in Germany and Italy were carried on upon a scale which had not been witnessed since the days of Marlborough. The French Directory had resolved to attack the forces of the emperor upon two points at one and the same time. The command of the army of the Sambre and the Meuse was given to Jourdan; the command of the army of the Rhine and Moselle was given to Moreau. At the end of November, 1795, the army of Italy had obtained some successes under Schérer, but his defeat of the Austrians had not been followed up in a manner to satisfy the Directory. During the winter, the pale, thin, reserved Corsican who had cannonaded the Sections into submission, remained in Paris, raised out of his poverty into what was then termed good society by the democrats who had grown luxurious, but which society, Burke, in one of his fiercest moods, describes as "a set of abandoned wretches, squandering in insolent riot the spoils of their bleeding country."† In the saloons of Barras and of Madame Tallien, Bonaparte met Josephine Beauharnois, the widow of the viscount Beauharnois, who had taken the side of the revolutionists, but was guillotined in the days of terror. The young general was married to Josephine in March. But his duties as chief of the army of Paris, and his devotion to an amiable and attractive woman, did not divert his thoughts from objects of high import. He had devised a plan for the invasion of Italy, which he submitted to Carnot, then one of the Directory. To obtain a permanent footing beyond the Alps; to hold the small Italian provinces in sovereignty or in subjection; perhaps to conquer the whole territory, and to make one subject people in that land of antique glory; this was the traditional policy of France, and any scheme for its realization was now peculiarly acceptable to the French Government. Bonaparte was appointed chief of the army in Italy; and on the 27th of March he entered upon his command at Nice.

\* "Quarterly Review," vol. iv. p. 230.

† "Regicide Peace," Letter III.