

councils, in 1806, of the Whigs, who bequeathed their policy to their Tory successors in 1807. But it was not directed against the Whigs. It was published in October, 1808, and was intended as a philippic against the first measures of the Peninsular war, which it was predicted would fail, as most other military efforts had failed, in producing any real effect upon the issue of the contest. There was a great deal of truth in what was said, and never more truth than if applied to the "neat little expeditions" of the ministry of lord Grenville and lord Howick, to which it was not meant to apply.

In February, 1807, Mr. Thomas Grenville is at the head of the Admiralty. He does not quite approve of the measures of his colleague, Mr. Wyndham, who is at the head of the War department. He writes, "Wyndham is sending out Whitelock to command at Plata. I know not why, for I do not believe that he is a bit better than Auchmuty." Sir Samuel Auchmuty, after the unfortunate result of Popham's attempt upon Buenos Ayres, had been sent out with a reinforcement of 3000 men. He found that he could do nothing at Buenos Ayres; and had attacked Monte Video. He took this fortified seaport by assault, with a severe loss. When Whitelock was sent out "to command at Plata," the government knew nothing of the success of Auchmuty; and his orders were to place his forces, united with those of general Crauford, under the command of general Whitelock. We shall have presently to speak of their operations at Buenos Ayres, in June. It is curious to note the want of harmony in the British government in undertaking these enterprises. Thomas Grenville says, "I am more than ever convinced that all those distant combinations are of necessity subject to so many chances, that I have little stomach to them; but, in spite of my feeble opposition, our military projectors are running after one expedition, and one general with another and another, till, in military language, the battalions are all clubbed, and no man knows where to find an entire company."\* Of his own management of naval expeditions, Mr. Thomas Grenville is very confident. An imposing force is to be sent to the Dardanelles, to co-operate with our ally, the emperor of Russia, against whom the Porte had declared war, we suspecting that the French influence was becoming paramount over the English influence at Constantinople. The Admiralty has its favourite commander in its eye. "The Russian minister," writes Grenville, "has the modesty to propose that a Russian admiral shall command the combined naval force at the Dardanelles."†

\* "Court, &c., of George III.," vol. iv. p. 123.

† *Ibid.*, p. 124.

The proud confidence in the valour and sagacity of a British admiral was amply justified by the memories of Howe and Nelson, and by the living examples of Collingwood and Sidney Smith. Sir John Thomas Duckworth was vice-admiral of the white; he was, moreover, a Knight of the Bath—an honour conferred upon him in 1801, on his return from taking quiet possession of the Danish West India islands.\* Great was the astonishment of Mr. Thomas Grenville, a few weeks after he went out of office, to find that the expedition to the Dardanelles could not have been worse managed, even if a Russian admiral had commanded. "Duckworth's business and his orders plainly directed him to insist upon the surrender of the Turkish fleet, or to burn it, and to bombard the town. Why he has done neither, and has retired to give them time to make this enterprise impossible, I cannot guess; but am mortified at being disappointed of a triumph which I had thought was as certain as the sailing of the expedition."† It is scarcely necessary to enter into any lengthened detail of this most ridiculous adventure, which degraded the British flag in the eyes of all the world. The French ambassador at Constantinople was general Sebastiani; the English ambassador was Mr. Arbuthnot. The Russian ambassador had gone on board an English ship; the French and the British ministers remained, each threatening sultan Selim with the vengeance of their courts if he did not conform to their wishes. But Sebastiani had something better than threats to offer—the invincibles of Napoleon should come to chase away the Russian armies who were on the frontier. Lord Collingwood in January was cruising off Cadiz, when he received orders from the Admiralty to detach a force to the Dardanelles; and, "as the service will require much ability and firmness in the officer who is to command it, you are to entrust the execution thereof to vice-admiral sir John Thomas Duckworth." Collingwood left little discretion to the ability and firmness of the officer that he had not the usual liberty of a chief-in-command to select. He recommended Duckworth not to allow any negotiation to continue more than half-an-hour; as any proposition to treat would probably be to gain time for preparing resistance or securing the Turkish ships. Duckworth, with seven sail of the line, and smaller vessels, forced the passage of the Dardanelles, having received little damage from the fire of the castles at the mouth of that strait. By an unhappy accident, the Ajax, of seventy-four guns, had been previously burnt. But the force was large enough for complete success. The Turkish fortifications along the Dardanelles were

\* James—"Naval History," vol. iv. p. 183.

† "Court," &c., vol. iv. p. 169.

dilapidated. When the fleet appeared before Constantinople the Sultan was alarmed, and would gladly have yielded. But Sebastiani exhorted him to do what Collingwood foresaw would be done—to gain time by negotiation. For days Duckworth sent threatening notes, and persuasive notes, and notes that showed clearly that nothing was to be attempted. Meanwhile the skilful Sebastiani had taught the Turks how to defend their shores. Cannon were mounted upon works at which the whole population laboured day and night. Troops lined the coast. All the passage down the Dardanelles assumed a very different aspect from that which the British saw as they passed up. The longer the fleet stayed before Constantinople the greater would be the danger; and on the 1st of March, during the course of thirty miles, the gauntlet was run through a constant fire. From the castles of Sestos and Abydos enormous granite shots, wondrous missiles which British sailors had never before seen, were discharged, breaking in decks, snapping masts, and producing a consternation such as no ordinary bombardment would have occasioned. The actual loss in this ill-fated expedition was less than might have been expected—about three hundred men killed and wounded. Attempts were made in parliament to investigate the causes of this extraordinary event. But the successors of the Whigs appeared to be tenderly disposed towards their rivals, at a time when a great amount of obloquy had fallen upon themselves, for their scheme of an expedition which, although a signal success, was considered, as that of the Dardanelles was considered, impolitic and unjust. Other expeditions against the Ottoman power had been sent forth by the government of lord Grenville. On the 20th of March, Alexandria capitulated to a force of 5000 men embarked at Messina. But at Alexandria there was apprehension that the troops would soon be in want of provisions unless Rosetta was taken possession of. General Frazer, with 1500 men, marched into the town, and was soon driven back with great loss, having been received with a heavy fire from the houses and windows of the inhabitants. Another British force of 2500 men was sent under general Stewart; and that little army had to retreat with a loss of a third of its number. The affair of Alexandria ended by the evacuation of Egypt by general Frazer, on condition that the British prisoners should be surrendered.

The most fatal result of the various projects by which the Whig government acquired the reputation of being the unluckiest of war-administrators, was that of the great expedition against Buenos Ayres. The ministry, as it now appears, had asked the

advice of Sir Arthur Wellesley, which he gave in November, 1806, and in February, 1807. That advice is chiefly confined to military affairs, which, to be successful, required to be arranged upon a large scale. In February, he says, "the late occurrences at Buenos Ayres shows that we ought not to rest entirely upon the accounts which we have received of the inefficiency of the Spanish military establishments in America."\* Upon the political question he is not then so decided. He observes "that all those who have communicated their ideas to his majesty's government upon the subject of the Spanish dominions in America have recommended that they should have in view a revolution, instead of a conquest, in their proceedings." The protection of an independent government would fall upon Great Britain, but he does not see how she is to be compensated for the expense and inconvenience which such protection would entail. All the hopes of assistance from the natives which have been entertained by persons who have written upon Spanish America are founded as much upon their wishes for an independent government, as upon their hatred of their masters, the Spaniards. † In February, 1808, when it was seriously contemplated to send out an expedition, under the command of Sir Arthur Wellesley himself, to co-operate with General Miranda in the liberation of Spanish America, he decidedly says (after the adventure which ended calamitously in 1807), "From what has lately passed at Buenos Ayres, and from all that I have read of these countries, I am convinced that any attempt to conquer them, with a view to their future subjection to the British crown, would certainly fail; and, therefore, I consider the only mode in which they can be wrested from the crown of Spain is by a revolution, and by the establishment of an independent government within them." ‡ General Whitelock, on the 28th of June, landed with 7800 men about thirty miles to the east of Buenos Ayres. They were before the city, which was nearly invested, on the morning of the 5th of July, when an attack was ordered, each division to enter upon the street opposite to it, and march through its particular street, till it reached the last square near the river Plata. In this progress the troops were to advance with unloaded muskets, two corporals marching at the head of each column with tools to break open the doors of the barricaded houses. The doors would not yield; the windows and roofs were crowded with the hostile population; and a terrible fire mowed down the advancing soldiers. Trenches had been dug in the streets; and cannon planted there swept away hundreds with grape shot. Auchmuty, in spite of these obstacles, made himself

\* "Supplementary Despatches," vol. vi. p. 58. † *Ibid.*, p. 50. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

master of the Plaza de Toros, a strong post; and another place of strength had been taken, when the action was ended at nightfall. Two thousand five hundred British had been killed and wounded, or were prisoners. General Linieres, the commander in the city, addressed a letter next morning to General Whitelock, offering to give up the prisoners, and those made in the previous year, if he would desist from further attack, and withdraw the British forces from La Plata. Monte Video was of course to be surrendered. Whitelock agreed to these degrading terms; returned home with a whole skin; ran great risk of being torn to pieces by the English populace, who nicknamed him general Whitefeather; was tried by court-martial, and was declared "totally unfit and unworthy to serve his majesty in any military capacity whatever." There can be little question that Mr. Wyndham was decided in the appointment of an incompetent man, by that preponderating influence which, in those days, rendered a minister, unless he were resolved to maintain his responsible authority, the slave of court favouritism and of base jobs. From these influences the country would not readily have escaped unless a man had arisen, to prescribe his own will to courts and ministers,—to achieve success by the invincible force of his own sagacity, and yet to keep within the bounds of duty.

The new Parliament assembled on the 22d of June. On the 26th, upon an Amendment to the Address, the strength of parties was tested in the fullest house ever recorded. Of 505 members present, not counting the Speaker and four tellers upon the division, 356 voted with the government. The Royal Speech, delivered by Commissioners, referred to the disappointment of the efforts of his majesty's squadron in the Sea of Marmora, and to the losses sustained by our gallant troops in Egypt. Nevertheless, his majesty had thought it right to adopt such measures as might enable him, in concert with his ally the emperor of Russia, to take advantage of any favourable opportunity of bringing the hostilities in which they are engaged against the Sublime Porte to a conclusion. His majesty's endeavours had been most anxiously employed for the purpose of drawing closer the ties by which he is connected with the powers of the continent, and of assisting the efforts of those powers against the ambition and oppression of France. Four days after this speech had been delivered, came the news of the battle of Friedland. The efforts of the powers of the continent were at an end. Prussia was crouching at the victor's feet; Russia was scheming with him to divide the empire of the world, and they were taking sweet counsel together for the destruction of Great Britain. According to the agreeable arrangement of these poten-

tates, the hostilities against the Sublime Porte were to be brought to a conclusion by Alexander and Napoleon dividing the Turkish empire—Alexander becoming Emperor of the East, as Napoleon was to be Emperor of the West.

After the great battle of Eylau the Allied armies and the French armies remained for several months inactive. Reinforcements were necessary to each, for repairing the terrible destruction of that day when the falling snow covered thousands of the dead and dying. Napoleon had proposed peace to Alexander, but Alexander refused the proffered terms. He expected aid from England; but the succour did not come in time. The Russians determined to act for themselves. Early in June they attacked the French lines, and were repelled. A great encounter then took place at Heilsberg; and on the 14th of June a general battle was fought at Friedland, which broke the Russian spirit, terminated the campaign, and made the two emperors, for a season, the dearest of friends. Eight days after the victory, which was won on the anniversary of the battle of Marengo, an armistice was concluded, and Napoleon addressed a proclamation to his army from his camp at Tilsit. "From the banks of the Vistula we have arrived on the banks of the Niemen with the rapidity of the eagle. . . . You will return to France, covered with laurels, after having obtained a glorious peace which bears a guarantee for its duration. It is time that our country should live in repose under shelter from the malign influence of England." That shelter was to be found in the new friendship of Alexander—of Alexander, who, only a few days previous, had written to George III., "that there was no salvation to himself or to Europe but by eternal resistance of Bonaparte."\* On the 9th of July, Napoleon wrote to his brother Joseph: "Peace was signed yesterday, and ratified to-day. The emperor Alexander and I parted to-day at twelve o'clock, after having passed three weeks together. We lived as intimate friends. At our last interview, he appeared in the Order of the Legion of Honour, and I in that of St. Andrew."†

On the 25th of June, the armies on each bank of the Niemen beheld an extraordinary preparation for some grand scenic display. In the middle of the river, near the town of Tilsit, was moored a large raft, upon which was raised a pavilion of the richest stuffs that could be furnished in a district so remote from luxurious capitals. From one bank of the Niemen Napoleon took boat, accompanied by four of his great officers. From the other bank

\* Malmesbury, "Diaries," vol. iv. p. 398.

† "Correspondence with King Joseph," vol. i. p. 249.

Alexander took boat, accompanied by five of his suite, princes or generals. The two potentates met on the raft at the same moment, and they embraced each other, amidst the shouts of the soldiery. They then entered the pavilion unaccompanied, and there held a long conversation on matters of high import. Historians take upon themselves to relate what passed at this secret conference and in other private conversations. M. Thiers is careful to show that Napoleon seduced Alexander by his caressing words—flattering the monarch and flattering the man—and he gives us many of the fine speeches in which the pliant Tartar was won to swear an eternal friendship, founded chiefly upon a mutual hatred of England.\* Some Russian writers excuse the violent professions of esteem for Napoleon on the part of Alexander, by attributing them to his profound dissimulation. One thing is clear—that Napoleon obtained all that he wanted in the Treaty of Tilsit, and especially in its secret articles. The articles that were patent took away whole provinces from Prussia, and gave her back some territory which Napoleon would also have taken, but which was restored at the intercession of Alexander. Out of the spoils of Prussia on the left bank of the Elbe was formed the kingdom of Westphalia, of which Jerome Bonaparte was to be king. The Prussian provinces of Poland were to be erected into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and bestowed upon the king of Saxony, with the exception of one province, which Russia coveted. King Louis and king Joseph were to be recognized by Russia, as well as all Napoleon's creations of new subject states, and his willing instrument, the Confederation of the Rhine. But in addition to the secret articles of this treaty, there was a Treaty of Alliance, offensive and defensive, between France and Russia, of which the conditions were to be inviolably secret. M. Thiers says, that under the title of "Secret Articles of the Treaty of Tilsit" many conditions absolutely false have been published. "The English, especially, to justify their ulterior conduct towards Denmark, have brought to light many pretended articles of the treaty of Tilsit, which were communicated to the cabinet of London by diplomatic spies. But," continues M. Thiers, "through authentic and official documents which were open to my investigation, I am able for the first time to give the veritable stipulations of Tilsit, public as well as secret."† We will recapitulate the articles of "*le traité occulte*," thus brought to light by the French historian. It contained an engagement, on the part of Russia and of France, to make common

\* "*Le Consulat et l'Empire*," tome vii. p. 627 to 633.

† *Ibid.*, p. 628.

cause under all circumstances; to unite their forces by land and by sea in every war which they should have to maintain; to take arms against England, if she did not subscribe to the mediation of Russia to establish peace between herself and France; to make war against the Porte, if she did not subscribe to the mediation of France to establish peace between himself and Russia, and in case this mediation was refused, to rescue the European provinces from the vexatious authority of the Porte, except Constantinople and Roumëlia. Moreover, the two powers agreed to summon, in common, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, and Austria, to concur in the projects of France and of Russia: that is, to shut their ports against England, and to declare war against her. This is the text of the treaty to be kept inviolably secret, as given by the historian of the Empire. It is added, by some writers, that Napoleon imparted to Alexander his schemes of placing members of his family on the thrones of Portugal and Spain, and that a treaty to this effect was concluded.\*

"While this was passing in the North," writes lord Malmesbury, "a plan was forming here of surprising the Danish fleet. Ministers had received the most undoubted information (and, strange to say, the *first* information came through the prince of Wales to the duke of Portland in an audience he had at Carlton House in May) that, by the assistance of this fleet, Bonaparte intended to invade the north-east coast of England; and this came from Portugal, whose fleet Bonaparte also wanted. The Regent of Portugal rejected the proposal, and communicated it to us. The Danes accepted it, were silent at the time, and afterwards denied it."† Our Foreign Secretary immediately made preparations for anticipating the hostile submission of Denmark to the commands of Napoleon. These preparations went on, without apparent haste, till after the treaty of Tilsit was concluded, when Mr. Canning obtained a knowledge of the Secret Articles. How he obtained that knowledge he never would disclose. The "*Memoirs of Fouché*,"—now generally believed to be the genuine revelations of a notable intriguer,—contain the following passage: "About this time it was that we learned the success of the attack upon Copenhagen by the English; which was the first derangement of the secret stipulations of Tilsit, by virtue of which the Danish fleet was to be placed at the disposal of France. Since the death of Paul I., I never saw Napoleon give himself up to such violent transports of passion. That which astonished him most in that vigorous *coup-de-main* was

\* Alison, "*History of Europe*," vol. vii. p. 308.

† "*Diaries*," vol. iv. p. 399.

the promptitude with which the English ministry took their resolution."\* Bonaparte suspected Talleyrand, says Fouché. According to another authority, some humbler person was the medium of communication to the British government. Mr. Stapleton, private secretary to Mr. Canning, says, that an individual was concealed behind a curtain of the tent on the raft, and heard Napoleon propose to Alexander, and Alexander consent to the proposition, that the French should take possession of the fleet of Denmark.† That Talleyrand should have betrayed the counsels of his master, at the height of his power, is just as improbable as that any "rash, intruding fool" should have been the rat behind the arras, whilst Bessières and Duroc, Benningsen and Ouwarrow, were watching on either side of the pavilion on the Niemen. Without the knowledge of any special provision that the Danish fleet was to be placed at the disposal of France, the general agreement of the treaty that Denmark and other powers should be compelled to join Russia and France, in a war against England, was sufficient to render a measure of hostility towards Denmark justifiable upon the great principle of self-defence. "No expedition was ever better planned or better executed, and none ever occasioned more clamour."‡

On the 12th of August, Mr. Jackson, an envoy from England, arrived in Copenhagen, to demand the delivery of the Danish fleet to lord Gambier, the British admiral, who was in the Sound with twenty-seven sail of the line, and many smaller vessels, in company with a fleet of transports, conveying twenty-seven thousand land-troops. The demand of Mr. Jackson was accompanied with an assurance that the fleet should be taken care of in British ports, and restored upon conclusion of peace with France and Russia. The Crown Prince of Denmark indignantly refused; and prepared for defence. The British land forces were commanded by lord Cathcart, the command of the reserve being entrusted to sir Arthur Wellesley. He had been called from his civil duty as Secretary for Ireland, to take this military duty. The troops were landed on Zealand on the 16th. They were not opposed; and they closely invested Copenhagen on the land side, erecting powerful batteries. Numerous bomb-vessels were ready also to pour their fire from the sea upon the devoted city. Congreve-rockets were there to be tried for the first time. Sir Arthur Wellesley, with his customary moderation, would have preferred "an establishment upon Amag, as a more certain mode of forcing a capitulation than a bombard-

\* Quoted in Mr. Robert Bell's "Life of Canning," p. 237.

† Stapleton, "George Canning and his Times," p. 125 (1859).

‡ Malmesbury, "Diaries," vol. iv. p. 399.

ment. . . . I think it behoves us to do as little mischief to the town as possible, and to adopt any mode of reducing it, rather than bombardment."\* The bombardment did take place; in spite of one more effort for averting it, by a proclamation on the part of the British commanders that they would withdraw their forces, if the fleet were surrendered as a deposit to be restored at the close of the war. The Crown Prince replied by a proclamation which was a declaration of war, and by ordering the seizure of all British ships and property. The bombardment was commenced with fatal vigour, and continued for four days. The conflagration of the city, and the sufferings of the inhabitants, were amongst those occurrences of the war which are most painful to look back upon. The Danish navy and arsenal were surrendered on the 8th of September. Sir Arthur Wellesley was appointed to conduct the negotiation. He writes on the day on which he concluded the settlement with the Danish commissioners, "I have only to observe upon the instrument, that it contains the absolute and unconditional cession of the fleet and naval stores, and gives us the possession of those military points which are necessary in order to enable us to equip and carry away the vessels. This was all that we wanted; and in everything else I did all in my power to conciliate the Danes."† His wise conclusion was not acceptable to violent politicians, who wanted some further evidences of our power. Enough had been done for our own safety; too much had been done to satisfy the honest, but not very politic, indignation of those who felt like Francis Horner. He had "endeavoured for awhile to view it as one of the extreme cases of that necessity which has no law;" but he turned aside from "the intricacies of state expediency to the daylight of common justice and old rules."‡ The state expediency is now held to have been justly paramount.

\* "Supplementary Despatches," vol. vi. p. 9—Letter to Lord Hawkesbury, August 28.

† "Supplementary Despatches," vol. vi. p. 21—Letter to Lord Hawkesbury, Sept. 8.

‡ "Memoirs," vol. i. p. 411.