

had not produced in Europe any decisive engagement with that power. To watch their motions, and annoy their commerce in the North, admiral Parker was despatched from Portsmouth with four ships of the line, and one of fifty guns. After sailing, he was farther joined by several other ships, which augmented his force to six sail of the line, viz. one of eighty guns, two of seventy-four, one sixty-four, one sixty, one of fifty and a frigate of forty-four guns, which the admiral was obliged through necessity, to admit as a ship of the line. The Dutch admiral, Zoutman, with a valuable convoy for the North, had sailed from the Texel with eight ships of the line, mounting from seventy-four to fifty-four guns, and ten frigates. He was also joined by a large American frigate, carrying on one deck thirty-six forty-two pounders, and as large in length as a ship of the line. Early in the morning of the 5th of August, 1781, the hostile fleets came in sight of each other on the Doggerbank, and, without any manœuvring or delay, approximated within pistol-shot to one of the bloodiest actions that ever was fought between the same number of ships. After a cannonade of three hours and forty minutes, both fleets lay like logs in the water, incapable of action or mutual annoyance; and it could only be determined which of them had the preferable claim to victory, by comparing the destruction of ships and havoc of men on either side. The English counted one hundred and four killed, and three hundred and fifty-nine wounded. The Dutch did not acknowledge their full loss; but it appeared, by authentic private intelligence, that it exceeded eleven hundred men, in killed, wounded, and drowned. One of their sixty-eight gun ships sunk in the night after the engagement; and by the circumstance of the English having brought off her colours, it appears that the action off the Doggerbank was, on the whole, in favour of the English arms. The other large ships belonging to the Dutch squadron were rendered almost unfit for repair. Admiral Zoutman returned to the Texel; but neither himself nor his convoy presumed afterward to proceed on their destination. Though in this, as in Kempenfeldt's affair, the public applauded the valour of their seamen, yet they were extremely dissatisfied with the conduct of the admiralty, in allotting to admiral Parker so small a force, when the object was so important, and the acquisition might have been rendered so secure and easy. The admiral himself justly complained of this circumstance, and, openly censuring the admiralty, resigned his command.

A squadron of British ships, under the command of commodore Johnstone, had been appointed in the spring of this year to annoy the Dutch in another quarter. They were to attack the cape of Good Hope, a settlement extremely valuable to the United Provinces; and having done that, the expedition was to proceed to the Spanish settlement of Buenos Ayres, in South America, where an insurrection of a formidable nature had taken place, which had given great alarm to the court of Madrid. The Dutch, aware of their inability to defend the cape, applied for assistance to France. The latter being also deeply interested in preventing England from obtaining so important a possession, ordered M. de Suffrein, in his way to India, to watch the motions of the British squadron. The force under commodore Johnstone consisted of one ship of seventy-four guns, one of sixty-four, and three of fifty guns each, besides several frigates, a bomb vessel, a fireship, and some sloops of war. The land-force which he took out consisted of three new regiments of a thousand men each. Several outward-bound East Indiamen and store ordnance vessels proceeded under the escort of this convoy; and the whole fleet, including transports and armed ships, amounted to more than forty sail. With these commodore Johnstone stopped at the Cape de Verde islands, for water and fresh provisions; and for the purpose of collecting these supplies, a great part of the crews, suspecting no enemy at hand, were dispersed on shore. At this moment, the French squadron, which consisted of five ships of the line, with a body of land-forces, having obtained information of the situation of the British, expected to take them by surprise. On the 16th of April, the French admiral, leaving his convoy at a distance, attacked the British squadron in port Prava, in the island of St. Jago. He advanced

as if to certain victory, but was speedily convinced of his mistake. The British force, though surprised, was so far from being intimidated, that they not only rallied, but entirely beat off the enemy, with considerable loss of men and damage to the shipping. Suffrein, disappointed in this attempt, made the best of his way to the cape, where, by means of a junction with the Dutch garrison, he knew he should be able to defend it against the British force; and commodore Johnstone, finding, on his arrival, that success would be impracticable, forbore the attempt. Soon after, meeting with five richly laden Dutch East Indiamen, homeward-bound, he captured four of them, and burned the other; after which, perceiving that he could not accomplish the original purpose of his expedition, he returned to England with his prizes.

LETTER XIV.

Naval Exploits of Great Britain—Proceedings in the British Parliament—Resignation of Lord North—Success of Lord Rodney in the West Indies—Defeat of the combined Fleets—Relief of Gibraltar—Preliminaries of Peace signed at Versailles. A. D. 1782—1784.

THE French ministry, during the campaign of 1781, appear to have pursued the same plan of operation that had been defeated in the preceding; namely, to overpower the English force in the West Indies, and afterward compel Britain to relinquish her transatlantic colonies. There were already eight sail of the line at St. Domingo and Martinique, with a considerable body of land-forces. On the 22d of March, count de Grasse, with twenty ships of the line, one of fifty-four guns, and six thousand troops, sailed for the West Indies, with an immense convoy, amounting to no less than two hundred and fifty ships, and arrived off Martinique. In the end of April, admiral Rodney, having despatched three of his ships, under admiral Hotham, to escort the St. Eustatius booty to Britain, had only twenty-one ships of the line remaining, while de Grasse, being reinforced from Martinique, had twenty-four. Rodney, himself remaining with general Vaughan at St. Eustatius, despatched sir Samuel Hood towards Martinique, in order to intercept de Grasse's fleet and convoy. On the 28th of April, admiral Hood was informed, by his advanced cruisers, that the enemy were approaching in the channel between St. Lucia and Martinique. The next morning, he descried the fleet before the convoy; and though he had only eighteen ships of the line to encounter twenty-four, and the French had the wind in their favour, the British commander determined to hazard an engagement. With great skill and dexterity he endeavoured to gain the wind, and come to close action. De Grasse, however, declined a decisive engagement; and, from his windward position, being enabled to preserve the distance which he chose, he began to cannonade so far from the British ships, as to admit of little execution on either side. During the first conflict, the British van, however, and the foremost ships of the centre, after repeated endeavours, at last succeeded in approaching nearer to the enemy; and having received a very heavy fire, were considerably damaged in their masts, hulls, and rigging, before the rest of our ships came up to their assistance. Finding his wounded ships in a very shattered condition, admiral Hood thought it prudent during the night to sail for Antigua. In the absence of our fleet, the marquis de Bouillé attempted to reduce St. Lucia on the 10th of May; but by the vigorous resistance of the garrison he was compelled to relinquish the design. Admiral Rodney now found it necessary, instead of spending more time at St. Eustatius, to employ his whole force against the French armament: he therefore sailed to Antigua, and as soon as the ships were prepared, proceeded towards Barbadoes.

At the instant that admiral Rodney, with the fleets from Antigua, arrived at Barbadoes, a French squadron, with a considerable body of land-forces, under the command of M. de Blanchelande, late governor of St. Vincents, appeared off the island of Tobago. On the 23d of May, the day on which

six battalions of the line, amounted in all to six or seven thousand men. From a fleet so very inferior to that of the enemy, they had little to expect in the way of succour or defence. Their main confidence was in the strength of many posts in the island, and the zeal of the inhabitants, who, apprehending that the conquest of the island would be followed by a transfer of property and a change of proprietors, were resolved on a desperate defence. In this anxious state of matters, the pleasing intelligence arrived, that de Guichen's fleet and convoy, after their encounter with admiral Kempenfeldt, had been obliged to return to France, and that only two of their whole number could join de Grasse.

By the arrival of sir George Rodney, who had sailed from England with twelve sail of the line, and his junction with admiral Hood at Barbadoes on the 19th of February, the number of the British grand fleet under the command of the former now amounted to thirty-three ships, and these were soon after joined by three others, thus making a total of thirty-six line-of-battle ships. De Grasse, with thirty-four sail of the line, only wished to join the Spaniards, while Rodney's success, and the safety of our West India possessions, depended on preventing that junction. On the 8th of April, de Grasse weighed anchor, and proceeded from fort Royal in Martinique for Hispaniola. The British were all upon the alert, and so rapid was the communication of intelligence, that about noon of the same day Rodney pursued him from Gros-islet in St. Lucia, and by daylight the following morning both fleets were ready for action off Dominick. It was nine o'clock, however, before the breeze could bear the van of our fleet into action, while the centre and rear lay becalmed. This circumstance stimulated the French admiral to hasten to action. The van of the British, commanded by sir Samuel Hood, was assailed for more than an hour by the superior force of the enemy; but the centre and rear, under Rodney and sir Francis Drake, at last coming up, and the French admiral perceiving the line fairly closed, lost all hopes of advantage from that source; and having the command of the wind, easily withdrew from action, though severely disabled in many of his ships. Several days were now spent in refitting; and, on the 11th, the French had got so far to the windward as to weather Guadaloupe, and were scarcely seen from the topmasts of the English centre. About noon, however, the falling to leeward of two of their disabled vessels, occasioned so vigorous a pursuit by the British, that, to save them, de Grasse was reluctantly brought to action.

The night, which prevented an immediate engagement, was passed in anxious preparation on both sides; and at half-past seven in the morning the engagement commenced. The scene of action is described as a moderately large basin of water, lying between the islands of Guadaloupe, Dominick, the Saints, and Marigalante. The fleets met on opposite tacks, but the wind was rather faint. The British ships, as they came up, ranged slowly along the line, exchanging a close and terrible fire, which was chiefly formidable to the French from the unerring precision of the British guns, and the number of men crowded in their ships. About noon, sir George Rodney, on board the Formidable, with his seconds, the Duke and the Namur, broke through the enemy's line, and throwing out signals for the van to tack, wore round, so that the British gained the wind, and stood on the same tack with the enemy. This intrepid and dexterous manœuvre threw the French into confusion, and decided the fate of the day. The French van bore away to leeward, wishing to re-form their broken line, but were unable to accomplish it. Sir Samuel Hood's division, which had been long becalmed, now came up with their leading ships, and completed the preponderance of our advantage. Yet the contest was continued with persevering obstinacy through the whole of the day. The French, though broken in their line, resisted in single encounters, and some of their ships fought for a while even against double antagonists. The captain of the Cæsar, a French seventy-four, nailed his colours to the mast; but his death, and the total wreck of his vessel, terminated the contest of this ship with the Centaur, captain Inglefield. The

Diadem, another French seventy-four, went down by a single broadside of a British vessel. Towards evening, captain Cornwallis of the Canada, having compelled the Hector, an enemy's ship of equal force, to surrender, attacked in the most gallant style the French admiral's ship, the Ville de Paris, which in two hours he reduced to a wreck. Still admiral de Grasse refused to surrender, till sir Samuel Hood arriving in the Barfleur, the fire of the French admiral ceased, only three men, it is said, being left on the upper deck, of whom de Grasse himself was one. When the firing of the Ville de Paris had ceased, the English called out to her, demanding to know why she did not strike her colours. The answer returned from the French ship was, "The admiral of France does not strike to any enemy; but you may come on board;" which was accordingly done.

The Ville de Paris was the largest ship then known, either in the French or any other service. She mounted one hundred and twenty guns, and was built at the expense of one hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds sterling. When captured, no less than thirty-six chests of treasure were found on board her. As it grew dark, the British admiral thought it necessary to collect the fleet, and secure the prizes. The enemy made off to leeward in the greatest confusion, and were totally out of sight in the morning. The superiority of British ships and seamen was so strikingly exemplified on this occasion, that it has rarely been disputed since that memorable period. The enemy's loss in men was prodigious; upwards of three thousand were either drowned or killed, and six thousand wounded, independent of about two thousand taken prisoners. On the part of the British the loss was one thousand and fifty, including two distinguished officers, captain Blair of the Anson, and lord Robert Manners, the amiable and gallant son of the late marquis of Granby. When the darkness of night prevented all farther pursuit, some of the enemy's ships escaped to the Dutch island of Curaçao; but the major part of them, under the vice-admirals de Bougainville and de Vaudrevil, keeping in a body, made their way to cape François. In a few days afterward, sir Samuel Hood, proceeding in pursuit of the fugitives, came up with five sail of French vessels in the Mona passage, between Porto Rico and St. Domingo; and, after several hours' chase, the Valiant and Magnificent, of seventy-four guns each, took the Jason and Caton of sixty-five guns each, with two attendant frigates, a third frigate effecting its escape. Thus, by one decisive blow, eight ships of the line were taken from the navy of France, together with all the stores, money, and artillery which had been treasured up for the projected assault of the combined fleets on the island of Jamaica. To that island admiral Rodney now repaired, displaying to the rejoicing inhabitants the trophies of his victory and of their deliverance. On his return to England, he was honoured with an English, and sir Samuel Hood with an Irish peerage. Indeed, the fortune of Rodney was eminently glorious during the present war. Within little more than two years, he had given a severe blow to the French, the Spanish, and the Dutch navy, and taken an admiral of each nation. He had in that time added twelve line-of-battle ships, all captured from the enemy, to the British navy; and he had destroyed five more. Of these, the Ville de Paris is said to be the only first-rate man-of-war that had then ever been taken and carried into port, by any commander of any nation.

This period of success was also signalized by the reduction of some Dutch forts on the coast of Africa, effected by captain Stirling, in the Leander, of fifty guns. The artillery in the captured forts amounted in all to one hundred and twenty-four pieces. The Dutch also sustained a loss of still greater importance in the East, at the commencement of this year. On the 5th of January, the town of Trincomalé, in the valuable island of Ceylon, was reduced by the spirited exertions of sir Edward Hughes.

The naval exploits, which had languished under the neglect of lord Sandwich, received a new impulse from the change of administration; and by the vigilance and intrepidity of our naval officers, the combination of the allied fleets was frustrated, and prevented from producing its usually dreadful effects.

Admiral Barrington, with twelve ships of the line, chased the French fleet off Ushant, and captured several transports and a number of troops. Captain Jarvis, commanding a British seventy-four, captured a French ship of equal force, and, while conveying his prize homeward, made another valuable prize of a sixty-four, laden with stores and treasure. For this gallant exploit he received the honour of knighthood. Lord Howe, with twelve sail of the line, blockaded the ports of Holland, and terrified the Dutch from the designs they had formed on the British trade in the Baltic and northern seas. Returning from this station, his lordship had the arduous task of protecting our homeward-bound Jamaica fleet (May 29th), which he accomplished with this inferior force, opposed to the French fleet under the command of de Guichen, and the Spanish fleet, though the combined force of the enemy amounted to more than double his number. This formidable force again occupied the chops of the channel, and captured eighteen of our Quebec and Newfoundland traders; but the able tactics of lord Howe kept them at bay, and prevented them from committing farther depredations on our coast. The events of the year exhibited no farther disasters, except what the unsparring visitation of the elements produced. On the 20th of June, some of the finest prizes which admiral Rodney had made on the memorable 12th of April, foundered on their homeward passage. To aggravate this misfortune, when lord Howe, after his successful cruise, had returned home, and was preparing a new equipment for the relief of Gibraltar, the Royal George, of one hundred and eight guns, which was destined for this service, and undergoing repairs, was unfortunately upset in harbour by the rising of a sudden squall, and instantly buried in the waves. In this fine ship, which had successively borne the flags of Hawke, Kempenfeldt, and Rodney, there were at the moment nearly one thousand individuals, men, women, and children, all of whom perished by this memorable and melancholy accident; and, among the rest, the brave admiral Kempenfeldt. A victualling ship, which lay alongside the Royal George, was swallowed up in the vortex occasioned by the submersion of so large a body.

Having secured her own coasts and trade, and prevented the junction of the Bourbon fleets with that of Holland, Britain now directed her naval attention to the relief of Gibraltar. From the surrender of Minorca, the king of Spain hoped the key of the Mediterranean would be his next acquisition. The spirited sortie which had taken place in 1781, by which general Elliot had succeeded in destroying the principal of the advanced works of the Spaniards, did not discourage them from renewing their efforts. On the contrary, the siege seemed to commence from a new era, and with redoubled zeal. The duke de Crillon, a French nobleman, who had commanded at Minorca, undertook the supreme conduct and management of the siege; and in this he was assisted by a great number of the ablest officers of both countries, and particularly of the most skilful engineers and officers of artillery that his own country could produce. An immense increase of both land and sea-forces was brought from France and Spain to aid the troops already before Gibraltar; and many of the nobility from both countries enrolled themselves as volunteers in the service. Two princes of the blood-royal of France, one of them the king's own brother, the count d'Artois, sought the glory of combating and defeating the brave British garrison and its illustrious commander. In the spirit of loyalty which was then diffused through the French soldiery, the presence of their princes excited an enthusiastic desire of distinguishing themselves before such high spectators: the same spirit pervaded the Spaniards, and both became impatient for action.

The besiegers had prepared new and extraordinary machines; battering ships, which, though of an astonishing bulk, could go through all their evolutions with the ease and dexterity of frigates. Twelve hundred pieces of heavy ordnance were to play from land and sea, besides a large floating battery, and five bomb-ketches. The land and sea-forces by which these operations were to be carried on, amounted to forty thousand men, independent of the combined fleet, consisting of fifty ships of the line, which was to cover and

support the attack. While dispositions were making for so tremendous an assault, the besiegers amused themselves with calculations of the exact time when Gibraltar would be taken! Some said, the garrison would hold out twelve hours after the onset commenced; others, less sanguine, thought it would be sixteen, and a very few allowed even twenty-four hours for completing the conquest.

Without precisely knowing what the inventions of the enemy were, general Elliot had a general idea that their dispositions were both mighty and extraordinary; and with that foresight and courage which so eminently distinguished him, he prepared against every species of attack. Perceiving their works on the land side to be nearly completed, he determined to try how far a vigorous cannonade and bombardment with red-hot balls, carcasses, and shells might operate to their destruction. On the 8th of September, at seven in the morning, he commenced a firing so powerful, and so skilfully directed, as to commit considerable devastation on the enemy's works. Enraged at this loss, the besiegers hurried on their grand attack. On the 13th of September, the tremendous operation commenced both by sea and land: the various parts being very skilfully adjusted, their batteries appeared to have prodigious effect; their battering-ships especially, so formidable for offence, during several hours seemed exquisitely adapted for defence, and even to be invulnerable to the red-hot balls that were pouring from the garrison. The execution of these terrible instruments, though not instantaneous, was nevertheless effectual. About two o'clock, the admiral's ship was seen to issue smoke; at night she was in flames, and several others were perceived to be on fire. Soon after, the conflagration was general over the battering-ships, and all the efforts of the enemy were now exerted in saving the men.

The small naval force employed in the garrison of Gibraltar was commanded by captain Curtis. That brave officer and his men had, in the preceding attacks from the garrison, performed very difficult and important services by land; and opportunity now occurred of exerting themselves upon their own element. During the confusion and distress of the enemy hurrying from the burning battering-ships, captain Curtis, with twelve gun-boats, flanked their line, raked them on one side, while the garrison was destroying them from another. The Spanish boats durst no longer attempt to assist the battering-ships; and when daylight appeared, the assailants who had been stationed in those, were seen perishing in the flames, or, in their endeavours to escape, overwhelmed by the opposite element.

The British now seeing that they had completely destroyed these formidable batteries, with characteristic humanity set themselves to rescue the remainder of the crews who defended them; and captain Curtis and his gallant band, at the peril of their own lives, succeeded in saving the lives of about four hundred. Such was the signal and complete defensive victory obtained, by comparatively a handful of heroes, over the combined efforts and united powers, by sea and land, of two great, warlike, and potent nations, who, sparing no expense nor exertion of art for the attainment of a favourite object, exceeded all former examples, both in the magnitude and formidable nature of their preparations.

The enemy, disappointed in their sanguine hopes and expectations of taking this fortress by assault, now rested their sole confidence in being able to effect it by blockade, which they were not long in resuming. Their object was to prevent lord Howe from relieving the garrison with ammunition and provisions. They professed ardently to look forward to the arrival of the British fleet, and assured themselves of compensating their direful disasters by a brilliant victory. On the 9th of October, a violent storm dispersed the combined armament, and exposed them to imminent danger. Lord Howe, having been retarded by contrary winds, did not arrive at the straits until the 11th of October, though he had sailed a month before; and, when he arrived, a considerable part of his fleet during the night, having missed the bay of Gibraltar, entered the Mediterranean; and the next day, the admiral followed to collect together the scattered ships, having left the Buffalo, of

the enemy appeared, Mr. George Fergusson, the governor, sent the intelligence to admiral Rodney, whom it reached on the 26th. The admiral, mistakenly underrating the enemy's force, appointed six sail of the line and some frigates to proceed under the command of admiral Drake, with about six hundred land-forces, for its relief. That officer having, on the 30th, arrived off Tobago, descried the enemy's fleet, consisting of twenty-four sail of the line, lying between him and the land. Finding it impossible to land his troops, he retired, and sent the commander-in-chief intelligence of the posture of affairs; and in the mean time, about three thousand French troops landed on the island. The white inhabitants, who were capable of bearing arms, including a few soldiers and the colonial militia, scarcely exceeded four hundred men, but they found most intrepid and faithful auxiliaries in the blacks. Governor Fergusson himself was distinguished for his humane manner of treating the negroes, the joint result of judgment and humanity, by which he secured their obedience, while he conciliated and established their affection and fidelity. The island, however, not being far advanced in cultivation, the number of negroes fit to bear arms was but small. The gallant Fergusson made a skilful and vigorous defence against an enemy four times the number of his brave band. Relying upon his receiving speedy succours, he occupied a strong post, and for seven days checked the enemy's progress. The marquis de Bouillé, who commanded the invaders, found all attempts to dislodge his opponents vain; and to compel them to surrender, he began to destroy their plantations. The inhabitants, perceiving the approaching devastation of their property, were awed to concessions which the fear of personal danger could not extort, and at last agreed to capitulate, which they did on honourable and advantageous terms. Admiral Rodney did not escape censure for not having adopted more prompt and effectual measures for the relief of Tobago; and it was asserted, not indeed without reason, that the French, whose naval force was not greatly superior, had in this campaign acquired a most important advantage in the West Indies. De Grasse continued in the West Indies from the capture of Tobago in the beginning of June to the beginning of August, without being encountered by Rodney, and in July sailed for St. Domingo, where, after being reinforced by five sail of the line, he escorted the rich mercantile convoy with a fleet amounting to twenty-eight ships of the line. He conducted the convoy northward until they were out of danger, and then proceeded to the second object of his expedition. Admiral Rodney, conceiving that his health required an immediate return to his native country, escorted the West India convoy home, and sent the greater part of his ships, under sir Samuel Hood, to watch the motions of the French fleet.

Although the events of the year 1781, which have been now detailed, were of a varied complexion, and some of them highly honourable to the British arms both by sea and land, yet upon a calm and deliberate review of them, the country began to be seriously impressed with the folly of prosecuting any longer an offensive contest with America, and even ministers themselves began to entertain similar sentiments. The bad principles of the war, which might have passed with impunity among a large class of home politicians had they been crowned with success, were now very generally condemned, as the project of coercing America appeared more palpably impracticable. From hostile confederacies and disasters abroad, the ministry could not turn, without alarm, to the growing dissatisfaction of the nation. The authority of the mother-country had been so often explained and qualified, and by ministers themselves partially renounced, that men came to think it might be actually renounced without involving in it the ruin of the parent state. And the pride of the country, habituated to anticipate the event of American independence, at length became familiarized to the idea of degradation. All that had been predicted by the wisdom of lord Chatham and Mr. Fox, respecting the issue of the contest, was now fatally fulfilled by the surrender of the army under the command of lord Cornwallis. The public could no longer remain blind to the future effects of the war, or slumber in their former torpid state of security.

Parliament assembled on the 27th of November, 1781, and no inconsiderable degree of surprise was excited, on finding that the speech from the throne was quite silent on the subject of peace. The continuance of the war was still ascribed to the restless ambition of our enemies; and the royal speech offered the highest congratulations to the public on the protection which our navy had been enabled to afford to our commercial fleets, and the prosperous aspect of our East Indian affairs. In the house of commons, the motion for an address produced an important debate of considerable length on the question at issue. The declaration, in the proposed address, to pledge the house to an unqualified support of the war, after seven years of disaster, and the boldness of holding such language at the very moment when the calamities which the measures of administration had entailed upon the country called aloud for humiliation and sorrow, were topics urged by Mr. Fox with his usual warmth and energy. He pointedly reprehended the principles of the war, animadverted indignantly on the delusions by which parliament had been led on, year after year, to support it, and the gross and criminal mismanagement which characterized every branch of administration. He even imputed the loss of the army under lord Cornwallis to the incapacity of lord Sandwich, who was at the head of the admiralty. That minister, he said, had declared in another assembly, that a first lord of the admiralty who should fail in having a fleet equal to the combined force of France and Spain, would deserve to be dragged from his situation to condign punishment. But such a case, he contended, was now before them. The inferiority of the British fleet in every quarter of the globe might be proved from the events of the campaign; and he conjured the house to bring their marine minister to the reward which, by his own confession, he so richly merited. Mr. Fox went on to observe, that it had been avowed by one of the highest members of administration, that if the capture of Charleston produced no decisive result, he should grow weary of the war. That event had taken place, and brought disasters in its train; and yet ministers persisted in wishing to prosecute the war—they even seemed to love it as it grew more disastrous. He concluded by moving an amendment to the address, the object of which was to leave the expediency of continuing the war open to future debate, instead of binding the house to any specific course of measures.

The impression which this speech appeared to make on the house, and the silence of those who had been accustomed on all occasions to justify the principle and the policy of the war, called up lord North in an early part of the debate. He defended the grounds of the colonial contest, and asserted that the war was not maintained for the prerogative of the king, but of parliament, against which the revolted colonists had unjustly taken up arms. He contended, that neither the speech from the throne, nor the proposed address, pledged the house to a continuance of the war. "A melancholy disaster," said his lordship, "has occurred in Virginia,—are we, therefore, to lie down and die? By dejection and despair every thing must be lost; by bold exertion, every thing might yet be saved." The war, he allowed, had been unfortunate, but it was not unjust; and should the share he had had in supporting a war, in defence of the rights of parliament and the British constitution, lead him to the scaffold, his opinion would remain unaltered. Mr. Dundas made an elaborate speech in support of the address, which called up Mr. Burke, who inveighed most indignantly against the pertinacity of ministers. The war, he said, had teemed with calamities; but this speech of the king's was the greatest calamity of all. "Most excellent rights!" he exclaimed, alluding to lord North's defence of the war, as a vindication of parliamentary rights, "which have cost Great Britain thirteen provinces, four islands, a hundred thousand men, and seventy millions of money, her empire over the ocean, her rank among nations, her dignity and commerce abroad, her happiness at home—rights which have deprived us of all this, and yet threaten to spoil us of what remains!"

The debate was renewed on the 14th of December, when the eloquence of Pitt was again displayed, in describing the total contrariety of principles

which prevailed in the present cabinet. He described them as being at war with each other's opinion, distrustful of mutual support, yet meanly continuing in power for the enjoyment of office, thus standing responsible for measures of which they could not approve. Their only principle of coherence, their only common object, he averred, seemed to be the ruin of the empire; an object which he feared they would accomplish ere the vengeance of the people could overtake them. "And God grant," said Mr. Pitt, "that the punishment be not so long delayed as to involve a great and innocent family, who, though they share not the guilt, most likely will participate in the atonement."

But the period was now arrived, when the opinion of the public respecting the continuance of the American war was to be rendered so apparent, that no secret wish for a farther prosecution of it should induce the ministers to take any measures for retarding a final adjustment. On the 22d of February, general Conway moved in the house of commons, that an address should be presented to his majesty, imploring him to listen to the advice of his faithful commons, that the war in America might be no longer pursued for the impracticable purpose of reducing the inhabitants of that country to obedience by force; and to express their hopes that a happy reconciliation might be effected with the revolted colonies. A long debate ensued, in which the ministers continued to speak on the subject in a vague and indeterminate manner. After both sides of the house had exhausted their often-repeated arguments, the country gentlemen, as they are called, gave up the support of ministers, and the motion was negatived by a majority of one solitary vote; there being only one hundred and ninety-four to one hundred and ninety-three. The opposition now cherished the most sanguine hopes of victory; and accordingly, on the 27th of February, proposed the same motion under another form. The usual arguments were repeated, and on a division of the house, the opposition succeeded in carrying their point, by a majority of two hundred and thirty-four against two hundred and fifteen. Thus, after a contest of eight years, Mr. Fox and his party succeeded in their efforts to procure a vote from the house for requesting the king to conclude the American war. The resolution thus carried was as follows:—"Resolved, February 27th, in the house of commons, that an humble address be presented to his majesty, that the farther prosecution of offensive war on the continent of North America, for the purpose of reducing the revolted colonies to obedience by force, will be the means of weakening the efforts of this country against her European enemies; tends, under the present circumstances, dangerously to increase the mutual enmity, so fatal to the interests both of Great Britain and America; and, by preventing a happy reconciliation with that country, to frustrate the earnest desire, graciously expressed by his majesty, to restore the blessings of public tranquillity." To this address his majesty returned the following answer:—"Gentlemen of the house of commons: there are no objects nearer to my heart than the ease, happiness, and prosperity of my people. You may be assured, that, in pursuance of your advice, I shall take such measures as shall appear to me to be most conducive to the restoration of harmony between Great Britain and the revolted colonies, so essential to the prosperity of both; and that my efforts shall be directed in the most effectual manner against our European enemies, till such a peace can be obtained, as shall consist with the interests and welfare of my kingdom."

It was now confidently expected that lord North, in conformity with the manly language he had held in the debate, would have instantly resigned a post in which he was no longer supported by the confidence of parliament; but some secret reasons induced him still to linger in his seat; and he even defeated, by small majorities, some motions of the opposition which involved in them strong censures on the past conduct of the administration. Confiding, however, in its increasing strength, the opposition resolved to bring this question to immediate issue. Accordingly, on the 8th of March, lord John Cavendish proposed a string of resolutions to the following effect:

That, from the year 1775 to that time, the nation had expended upwards of one hundred millions of money in a fruitless war, during which we had lost thirteen colonies, many of our valuable West India and other islands; that the rest were in imminent danger; that we were now engaged in an expensive war with America, France, Spain, and Holland, without a single ally; and that the chief cause of these accumulated misfortunes was, the united incapacity and misconduct of administration.

Thus ended the administration of lord North; a period, of which the greater part teemed with calamitous events beyond any of the same duration to be found in the annals of British history. His lordship certainly was not destitute of talents; he had wit and learning at command; but he possessed neither the acute penetration nor the sound and discriminating judgment of a great statesman. He was an intelligent financier; but some of his taxes were partial and injudicious. As a war minister he cannot be extolled; his errors exposed him to ridicule, and his misconduct entitled him to censure. If, as has been asserted, he entered on the war with the colonists in repugnance to his private opinion, and allowed a court-favourite to direct him, we cannot but blame his mean servility and time-serving hypocrisy. It is more candid, however, to suppose, that whatever truth there may be in the report of his subserviency to a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself, the war was of that description which suited his prejudices. In private life, he claimed the praise of good-nature and humanity; he was a pleasant companion, and a kind friend. And, however erroneous and hurtful the measures of his administration eventually turned out to be, the blame ought not to be restricted to ministers: the far greater part of it devolves on parliament, who by its approbation sanctioned the acts of government; and to the people themselves, of whom the greater part were eager for commencing and continuing the war. When the nation censures this disastrous and burdensome contest, productive of such an enormous load of debt and taxes, it is proper they should recollect, that the war *originated with themselves.*(1)

From these patriotic efforts at home, we now come to take a view of the national energies abroad; and though these are mingled with a few adverse circumstances, it will present to us the brightest period of the war. Sir Henry Clinton, who resigned the command of the American army, before the end of the year, was succeeded by sir Guy Carleton. The fate of lord Cornwallis, and the news of the state of parties at home, kept the hostile armies in America without a motive to attack each other, from the obvious expectation that peace was not distant. The Spaniards, embarking from Cuba, invaded and seized from us the Bahama islands, which had been left defenceless, having not more than two hundred persons in them capable of making resistance. Nevis and Montserrat, as we have already seen, had followed the fate of St. Christopher's; so that of all our West India possessions, only Jamaica, Barbadoes, and Antigua remained to us at the end of lord North's administration.

The possession of Jamaica had long been the object of Spanish ambition; and a bold attempt to capture it was now made by the count de Grasse, who was to be joined by a Spanish fleet and army for that purpose. At Cuba and Hispaniola, the Spaniards had already mustered twenty-six ships of the line, and a strong military force. The fleets, by forming a junction, would have amounted to sixty ships of the line, and twenty thousand land-forces, independent of de Guichen's expected reinforcement of ships and soldiers from Europe. The British force in Jamaica, consisting of a faithful militia, and

(1) If the writer means that the war *originated* with the people of England, he is mistaken. From the concurrent testimony of all impartial historians, it originated with lord Bute, the early preceptor of George III., and to whose advice the king always yielded the most ready compliance. By that secret influence ever exercised by a favourite minister, he found it not difficult to bring over a majority of the house of commons to co-operate with the designs of the crown. "Thus the parliament of England became the mere creature of the administration, and appeared ready to leap the boundaries of justice, and to undermine the pillars of their own constitution, by adhering steadfastly, for several years, to a complicated system of tyranny, that threatened the New World with a yoke, unknown to their fathers."—AN. ED.