

country as a democratical state. In the mean while, the necessity for raising the supplies to gratify the rapacity of the French, obliged the provisional government to have recourse to forced loans; and in this manner they inhumanly plundered the duke of Modena (who had fled to Venice for refuge when Buonaparte first entered Lombardy) of his remaining treasure, amounting to one hundred and ninety thousand sequins. (1)

LETTER XXXI.

Affairs of Great Britain from the Return of Lord Malmesbury to the Peace of Amiens, 1796—1802—Suspension of Cash Payments at the Bank of England—Admiral Jervis defeats the Spanish Fleet—Landing of a Body of French Conscripts in South Wales—Mutiny in the British Navy—Insurrection in Ireland—Landing of some French Troops there—Threatened Invasion of England—French Expedition to Egypt—Naval Victory of Aboukir—Siege of Acre—Union of England and Ireland—Expedition to the Coast of Holland—Unsuccessful Attempt on Ferrol—Negotiations for Peace—Attack on Copenhagen—Change of Ministry—Defeat of the French Army in Egypt—Peace of Amiens.

THE situation of Great Britain at this period became in a high degree embarrassing to those who were intrusted with the management of public affairs; for, in proportion as, from an accessory, she became a principal in the war, difficulties and dangers had accumulated around her. She now saw united against her two powerful members of the confederacy with which she at first acted; and she had to fight for her own security, instead of pursuing schemes for humiliating a rival, and dictating in her internal concerns. Those principles of civil society, which had been thought so dangerous to all established governments, that their suppression was the object of a general league, had now taken such firm root in France, that they might bid defiance to external force; and the energy at first excited in their defence had terminated in a spirit of conquest sufficiently formidable to all its neighbours.

The return of lord Malmesbury from his unsuccessful negotiation threw a deep gloom upon the prospects of the country; and the funds experienced a depression beyond that of any period in the American war. An opinion now became prevalent, that the ministry had only pretended a desire for peace, that they might, with less difficulty, obtain supplies for the prosecution of the war. In order to counteract this unfavourable impression, a message from his majesty was brought down to parliament, on the 26th of December, 1796, which was to declare, that the rupture of the negotiation did not proceed from the want of a sincere desire on his part for the restoration of peace; but from the pretensions of the enemy being inconsistent with the permanent interests of the kingdom, and the general security of Europe. At the same time his majesty directed all the memorials and papers which had been exchanged in the course of the negotiation, to be laid before both houses of parliament, which was accordingly done, and various parts of the proceedings were severely censured by the opposition.

But while the certainty of a continuation of the war, with augmented burdens and hazards, was depressing the spirits of the nation, they received an additional shock from a suspension of payment of their notes in cash by the bank of England. That body, which was now become essential to the financial operations of government, had been called upon for such large advances of money for the payment of foreign subsidies, and other exigencies of the state, that, in the course of the past year, the directors of the bank had several times represented to the minister the impossibility of supplying all his demands. The dread of an invasion, which was now seriously apprehended,

(1) History of the Campaigns, in the years 1796—1799, in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, &c. 4 volumes 8vo, 2d edition, 1812. Account of the Fall of the Republic of Venice. Memoires historiques et philosophiques sur Pie VI. et son Pontificat. New Annual Register, 1797.

had farther contributed to the want of specie by a run upon the country bankers; and the governor of the bank of England, on the 9th of February, 1797, informed Mr. Pitt, that to comply with his request of an additional advance of a million and a half to Ireland, by way of loan, would threaten ruin to the bank, and probably force the directors to close their doors. In this state of affairs, the privy council, on the 26th of February, issued an order, prohibiting the directors of the bank of England from issuing any payments in specie, till the sense of parliament could be taken on the subject and measures adopted for supporting the public credit. On the following day the subject was communicated to parliament by a message from the throne, and on the 28th it was taken into consideration. Several warm debates ensued, in which the opposition insisted on the violent stretch of power on the part of the privy council, in thus exonerating a trading company from the payment of its debts, and urged the necessity of an inquiry into the causes of this disaster. In consequence of this, motions were carried in both houses for appointing by ballot a secret committee to examine into the affairs of the bank; and in the mean time, to remedy the inconvenience arising from the want of a circulating medium, a bill was passed authorizing the bank to issue notes of the value of one and two pounds each. The secret committee in each house brought up their report on the 2d and 3d of March, to the following effect:—That there was a surplus of property belonging to the bank of £3,826,890 beyond the total of their debts, exclusive of a permanent debt from the government of eleven millions and a half:—that it had lately experienced a drain of cash, owing to the prevalence of alarm, which there was now reason to suppose would go on progressively increasing; so that it was to be apprehended the bank would be deprived of the means for supplying the cash necessary for the exigencies of the public service; and consequently that it was expedient to continue the measures already taken, for such time, and under such limitations as the wisdom of parliament should direct.

A committee of the whole house of commons, having, on the 9th of March, taken into consideration the report delivered to it respecting the bank, Mr. Pitt moved for a bill to continue and confirm, for a limited time, the restriction of the issue of specie by the bank of England. While this bill was passing through the house, various clauses were proposed by the minister, of which some of the most important were—That the army and navy should be paid in specie; that bank notes should be received in payment by the collectors in every branch of the revenue; and that the offer of a bank note in payment of a demand, should do away the effect of an arrest in the first instance; and that the bank should be permitted to issue a sum in cash, not exceeding one hundred thousand pounds, for the accommodation of private bankers and traders in the metropolis: all which points were carried.

The early part of this year, 1797, was signalized by a brilliant exploit of the British navy. France had now acquired two allies, both of them capable of powerful exertions by sea; and she naturally became inspired with the hope of overthrowing that maritime superiority of England which was so essential to her security as well as her prosperity; and the ascendancy which the French had obtained in the councils of Holland and Spain was employed in urging them to use all their efforts in augmenting their navies. The court of Madrid had used so much diligence in this department, that a large fleet was equipped for the purpose of forming a junction with the French squadron at Brest. Its force consisted of twenty-seven sail of the line; six of them mounting one hundred and twelve guns, and one of one hundred and thirty-six guns. This formidable armament, however, was inadequately manned, a great proportion of the crews being landmen; and a mixture of expert artillerymen could not supply the deficiency of sailors.

The English squadron destined to intercept this threatened junction, was composed of only fifteen ships of the line and some frigates; but it was well manned, and placed under the command of admiral sir John Jervis, an officer of first-rate talents; aided by some of the most distinguished captains in the British navy. On the 14th of February, the English admiral, cruising off cape

elected delegates, and drew up a statement of requisitions to be laid before the admiralty. They were joined on the 4th of June, by four men-of-war from admiral Duncan's fleet off the coast of Holland. At the head of this revolt was one Parker, a man of some education and good parts, and remarkable for a resolute disposition. The admiralty having returned a negative to their demands, as being incompatible with the orders and regulations of the navy, Parker replied with a declaration, that the seamen had determined to keep possession of the fleet till their grievances were redressed. The lords of the admiralty repairing to Sheerness had an interview with the delegates, whose behaviour was so audacious, that they returned without any prospect of agreement. This mutiny was the more alarming, as the position of the ships gave them the command of the navigation of the Thames, and as it was organized in a perfectly democratical form, and exhibited tokens of deep disaffection. It was therefore determined by government, after an ineffectual attempt to bring back the men to duty by an offer of pardon, to employ force for their reduction; and they were confirmed in this resolution by the disapprobation which the Portsmouth and Plymouth fleets manifested at these proceedings. The buoys at the mouth of the river were therefore taken up; batteries were erected on the banks for firing red-hot ball, and a proclamation was issued declaring the ships in a state of rebellion, and forbidding all intercourse with them from the shore. At length, becoming sensible that their fellow-seamen and the whole nation were against them, they began to waver and differ among themselves. One ship after another stole away—the well-affected on board the remainder were encouraged to oppose the more violent—and after some bloodshed among themselves, all the ships submitted. Parker and his fellow-delegates were given up. The former, after a deliberate trial, was capitally condemned and executed, acknowledging the justice of his sentence. Some of the other delegates also suffered, but at length a general pardon was issued to the revolters.

The subsequent conduct of the seamen, however, speedily effaced this stain from the annals of the British navy. The fleet under the command of admiral Duncan, consisting chiefly of ships which had been engaged in the mutiny, sailed to the Texel, where for some time it blockaded the Dutch fleet. On the latter venturing out, an engagement ensued on the 11th of October, in which the English obtained a complete victory—nine of the Dutch ships were captured, and their admiral, de Winter, taken prisoner. For this important service, the British admiral was raised to the peerage, by the title of viscount Duncan, and other marks of royal and national favour were conferred upon him. In such high estimation was this signal victory held, that a day of thanksgiving being appointed, the king and two houses of parliament went in solemn procession to St. Paul's cathedral, to acknowledge the divine interposition in behalf of the British arms.

During the course of the year 1797, the state of Ireland was calculated to inspire the rulers of France with a degree of confidence which they otherwise might not have assumed in their negotiations with the English minister. The dissensions in that part of the empire, inflamed by a variety of aggravations, had proceeded so far, that the malecontents, who assumed the title of United Irishmen, regularly organized themselves throughout the country, and sent deputies to treat with the French for assistance in throwing off the yoke of England. Not discouraged by the failure of the expedition of general Hoche, at the close of the preceding year, they now laboured more firmly to cement their alliance with France, and establish a regular correspondence with the directory. A memorial was transmitted to the latter, stating that one hundred and fifty thousand United Irishmen were enrolled and organized in the province of Ulster. This statement, calculated to make their force appear worthy of the attention and support of the French republic, was no doubt much exaggerated; but their number was certainly formidable. The consequence was, that new arrangements were made for the invasion of Ireland, and great preparations for that purpose took place at Brest and in the Texel—it being intended that both the French and Batavian republics should unite in the

attempt: but the memorable victory gained by lord Duncan over the Dutch fleet, on the 11th of October, rendered the whole plan abortive. Such, however, was the state Ireland at the close of 1797.

The British parliament assembled on the 2d of November, and was opened by a speech from the throne, of which the principal topics were, the failure of the negotiation for peace, the flourishing state of the revenue, and the naval successes, with the necessity of continuing the most vigorous exertions till a more just and pacific spirit should prevail on the part of the enemy. The state of Ireland became a more prominent object of attention this year, among the concerns of the British empire. The numerous class of the disaffected in that country, though much disconcerted by the failure of their expectations of assistance from France, were so hard pressed by the vigorous and severe measures of government, who had obtained intelligence of their plans, that they resolved no longer to delay making trial of their strength by arms. In the month of February, they had formed a military committee, which drew up instructions for their officers and commanders; but the great body of the lower class were wholly destitute of proper arms and accoutrements, for which they had relied on importations from France and Holland. Such, however, was their ardour, that they crowded to the standards of their chiefs, and during that and the following month, the spirit of disaffection had spread itself over many of the southern districts, while an active correspondence was carried on with those of the north. A general insurrection had been determined on, in which the castle of Dublin, the camp near it, and the artillery, were to have been surprised in one night, and other places seized at the same time. The disclosure of the plot, however, by one of the conspirators, led to the seizure of fourteen of the delegates at a house in Dublin; and the information of a militia officer, who had entered among them as a spy, produced other discoveries which entirely defeated their design. Nothing now remained but an appeal to open arms. On the 24th of May, 1798, they commenced their operations by an attack on the towns of Naas, Carlow, and other places, from which they were repulsed with loss. Next day they proceeded, about fifteen thousand strong, against Wexford, and entirely defeated part of the garrison which sallied out to meet them. On the 30th the town surrendered, after part of the Protestant inhabitants had escaped: those who remained were put under confinement. They also made themselves masters of Enniscorthy by the help of its Catholic inhabitants: but in a furious attack on New Ross, which was defended by a strong division of the army, they were repulsed with great slaughter. Enraged at this defeat, they massacred in cold blood more than a hundred of their Protestant prisoners at Wexford; for the insurrection had now assumed the precise character of a popish rebellion, as in former times, and the foresight of this result prevented any co-operation from the Protestant political malecontents in the north. Several other actions took place, of which the issues were various, until general Lake, who had collected a powerful force, on the 21st of June attacked the main body of the rebels posted on Vinegar Hill, near Enniscorthy. After a vigorous resistance, they were broken and fled; and such was their loss in the battle and during the pursuit, that the whole party were completely disheartened. Wexford, and all the other towns which they had taken, were given up; and in the south of Ireland none remained in arms except a few strolling parties, who subsisted by pillage and plunder. In the north the counties of Down and Antrim had joined in the insurrection, and a force was mustered which ventured to oppose the troops sent against them; but a defeat which they sustained on the 12th of June, near Ballinahinch, reduced them to submission.

Lord Camden, who was at this time viceroy, was now recalled, and earl Cornwallis, an officer of high military character, was appointed to succeed him. He carried out with him a general pardon for all who should submit, with a few exceptions. Some of those who had been apprehended for the conspiracy above mentioned were executed; of others the punishment was commuted, and justice was duly tempered with mercy. Ireland would now

in all probability have been soon tranquillized, had not the French at that moment sent among them a body of about nine hundred regular troops, under the command of general Humbert. These men were landed at Killa, on the 22d of August, from three French frigates, and instantly marched to Castlebar, where they were joined by a small number of Catholics of the neighbourhood. From Castlebar they proceeded eastward into the heart of the country, probably expecting to become the rallying point of all the disaffected in the island. The invaders and those who had joined them crossed the Shannon, the British force following in column to watch their movements. In the mean time, lord Cornwallis advanced with a body of troops to Carrick, and being joined on the 8th of September by general Lake, at a place called Ballinamuck, a short action ensued, which terminated in the surrender of the French, and the dispersion or capture of the rebels.

Another attempt on the part of the French to foment the expiring embers of disaffection in Ireland was made soon after, but with no better success. A squadron, consisting of one line-of-battle ship and eight frigates, with troops and ammunition on board, destined for Ireland, was fallen in with off the north-western coast of that island by the English squadron under the command of sir John Borlase Warren, on the 12th of October, who captured the ship of the line and three of the frigates; and eventually the whole, except two of the frigates, came into possession of the English. This abortive effort terminated the unhappy rebellion in the sister country, an enterprise more alarming than dangerous, and not less weakly conducted than rashly undertaken. Of the number of lives lost in this deplorable contest every estimate that has been made must be vague and uncertain: but a moderate computation will not reduce them below thirty thousand. The British empire, in a war kindled within its own bowels, lost a great number of its bravest troops, who might have been profitably employed against its foreign enemy; and the multitude of insurgents who fell victims to a fatal delusion could not be calculated.

Foiled in all their attempts upon Ireland, the directory, about the end of October, 1797, announced that there should be instantly assembled on the shores of the ocean an army, to be called the army of England, and the citizen-general Buonaparte, now recently returned from Italy, was named to the command of it. The intelligence was received in every part of France with all the éclat which attends the anticipation of certain victory. The address of the directory enumerated all the conquests which France had won, and the efforts she had made; and prepared the French nation to expect the fruit of so many victories and sacrifices when they had punished England for her perfidy and maritime tyranny. "It is at London," said they, "where the misfortunes of all Europe are forged and manufactured—it is in London that they must be terminated." In a solemn meeting held by the directory, for the purpose of receiving the treaty of peace with Austria, which was presented to them by Berthier and Mongé on the part of Buonaparte, the latter, who had been one of the commissioners for pillaging Italy of her pictures and statues, and who, in all probability, looked forward to a new harvest of rarities in England, accepted, on the part of the army and general, the task imposed by the French rulers. "The government of England," said they, "and the French republic cannot both continue to exist—you have given the word which shall fall—already our victorious troops brandish their arms, and Scipio is at their head!"

Buonaparte now made a complete survey of the coast of the British channel, pausing at each remarkable point, and making those observations and calculations which induced him to adopt at a subsequent period the renewal of the project for a descent upon England. The result of his observations decided his opinion, that in the present case the undertaking should be abandoned. The immense preparations and violent threats of invasion were carried into no more serious effect than the landing of a handful of men in South Wales. The demonstrations of invasion, however, were ostensibly continued, and every thing seemed arranged on either side for a desperate collision

between the two most powerful nations in Europe. But while all France and England had their eyes fixed on the fleets and armies destined against the latter country, the directory and their general had no intention of using their preparations, except as a blind to cover their real object, which was the celebrated expedition to Egypt.

Laying aside, therefore, the character of general of the army of England, and adjourning to a future day the conquest of that hostile island, Napoleon turned his eyes and his thoughts eastward, and meditated in the distant countries of the rising sun, a scene worthy his talents, his military skill, and his unbounded ambition. The directory, on the other hand, eager to rid themselves of his perilous residence among them, hastened to accomplish the means of his expedition to Egypt, upon a scale far more formidable than any which had yet sailed from modern Europe, for the invasion and subjection of distant and peaceful realms. It was soon whispered abroad, that the invasion of England was to be postponed, until the conqueror of Italy, having attained a great and national object, by the success of a secret expedition fitted out on a scale of stupendous magnitude, should be at leisure to resume the conquest of Britain.

On the 19th of May, 1798, this magnificent armament set sail from Toulon, illuminated by a splendid sunrise. The line-of-battle ships extended for a league, and the semicircle formed by the convoy was at least six leagues in extent. They were joined on the 8th of June, as they swept along the Mediterranean, by a large fleet of transports, having on board the division of general Dessaix. The 10th of June brought the armament before Malta, where Buonaparte landed some of his troops, and took possession of the almost impregnable fortresses with scarce any opposition. Having established a garrison in Malta, which he destined to be an intermediate station between France and Egypt; on the 19th, the general resumed his expedition. On the coast of Candia, while the *savants* were gazing on the rock where Jupiter is fabled to have been nurtured, Napoleon learned that a new enemy of a different description from the knights of Malta was in his immediate vicinity. This was the English squadron under the command of lord Nelson. This British admiral, uniformly unconquerable on his own element as Buonaparte had hitherto shown himself upon shore, was now in full and anxious pursuit of his renowned contemporary. Reinforced by a squadron of ten ships of the line, a meeting with Napoleon was the first wish of his heart, and was echoed back by the meanest sailor on board his numerous fleet. The French had been heard of at Malta, but as the British admiral was about to proceed thither, he received news of their departure, and concluding that Egypt must unquestionably be the object of their expedition, he shaped his course for the mouth of the Nile. It happened, singularly enough, that although lord Nelson anticipated the arrival of the French at Alexandria, and accordingly directed his course thither, yet, keeping a more direct path than the French fleet had taken, when he arrived there on the 28th of June, he heard nothing of the enemy, who, in the mean time, were proceeding to the very same port. Nelson, therefore, set sail for Rhodes and Syracuse; and thus were the two large and hostile fleets traversing the same narrow sea, without being able to attain any certain information concerning each other's movements. This was partly owing to the English admiral having no frigates with him, which might have been detached to cruise for intelligence; and partly to a continuance of thick hazy weather, which at once concealed the French fleet from their adversaries, and obliging them to keep close together diminished the chance of discovery. On the 26th, according to Denon, lord Nelson's fleet was actually seen by the French standing to the westward, although the haze prevented the English from observing their enemy, whose squadron held an opposite direction.

On the 29th of June, the French fleet came in sight of Alexandria, and saw before them the city of the Ptolemies and of Cleopatra, with its double harbour, its Pharos, and its ancient and gigantic monuments of grandeur. The disembarkation of the French army took place about a league and a half from

Alexandria, at an anchorage called Marabout. It was not accomplished without the loss of boats and men; but as soon as five or six thousand men were landed, Buonaparte commenced his march towards Alexandria, when the Turks, incensed at this hostile invasion on the part of a nation with whom they were at profound peace, shut the gates and manned the walls against their reception. But the walls were ruinous, and presented breaches in many places; and the chief weapons of resistance were musketry and stones. The conquerors of Italy forced their passage over such obstacles, though neither easily nor with impunity. Two hundred French were killed. There was severe military execution done upon the garrison, and the town was abandoned to plunder for three hours.

From the moment that Buonaparte conceived the idea of invading Egypt, the destruction of the power of the Mamelukes must have been determined on as his first object; and no sooner had he captured Alexandria than he announced his purpose. He issued a proclamation, in which he professed his respect for God, the prophet, and the Koran: his friendship for the sublime Porte, of which he affirmed the French to be the faithful allies; and his determination to make war upon the Mamelukes. He commanded that prayers should be continued in the mosques as usual, with some slight modifications, and that all true Mussulmans should exclaim, "Glory to the sultan, and to the French army his allies! Accursed be the Mamelukes, and good fortune to the land of Egypt!"

On the 7th of July, the army marched from Alexandria against the Mamelukes. Their course was up the Nile; and a small flotilla of gun-boats ascended the river to protect their right flank, while the infantry traversed a desert of burning sands, at a distance from the stream, and without a drop of water to relieve their tormenting thirst. The army of Italy, accustomed to the enjoyments of that delicious country, were astonished at the desolation they saw around them. "Is this the country," said they, "in which we are to receive our farms of seven acres each? The general might have allowed us to take as much as we chose; no one would have abused the privilege." Their officers, too, expressed disgust and horror; and even generals of such celebrity as Murat and Lannes threw their hats on the sand, and trod on their cockades. It required all Buonaparte's authority to maintain order; so much were the French disgusted with the commencement of the campaign. But to add to this embarrassment, the enemy began to appear around them. Mamelukes and Arabs, concealed behind the hillocks of sand, interrupted their march at every opportunity, and wo to the soldier who straggled from the ranks, were it only fifty yards; some of these horsemen were sure to dash at him, slay him on the spot, and make off ere a musket could be discharged at him.

As the French army advanced they had the mortification to see the whole plain covered with Mamelukes, mounted on the finest Arabian horses, and armed with pistols, carbines, and blunderbusses of the best English workmanship, their plumed turbans waving in the air, and their rich dresses and arms glittering in the sun. Entertaining a high contempt for the French force, as consisting almost wholly of infantry, this splendid barbaric chivalry watched every opportunity for charging them, nor did a single straggler escape the edge of their sabres. Their charge was nearly as swift as the wind, and as their severe bits enabled them to halt, or wheel their horses at full gallop, their retreat was as rapid as their advance. Even the practised veterans of Italy were at first embarrassed by this new mode of fighting, and lost several men, especially when fatigue caused any one to fall out of the ranks, in which case his fate became inevitable. They were, however, soon reconciled to fighting the Mamelukes, when they discovered that each of these horsemen carried about him his fortune, and that it frequently consisted of considerable sums in gold.

After fourteen days of such marches as have now been described, the French army arrived within six leagues of Cairo, and beheld at a distance the celebrated pyramids; but they learned at the same time, that Murad Bey,

with twenty-two of his brethren, at the head of their Mamelukes, had formed an intrenched camp at a place called Embabat, with the design of covering Cairo, and giving battle to the French. On the 21st of July, as the latter continued to advance, they saw their enemy in the field and in full force. A splendid line of cavalry, under Murad and the other beys, displayed the whole strength of the Mamelukes. Their right rested on the imperfectly intrenched camp, in which lay twenty thousand infantry defended by forty pieces of cannon; but the infantry were an undisciplined rabble—the guns wanted carriages, and were mounted on clumsy wooden frames—and the fortifications of the camp were but commenced, consequently presented no formidable opposition. Buonaparte made his dispositions, extending his line to the right so as to keep out of gunshot of the intrenched camp, and have only to encounter the line of cavalry. Murad Bey saw his movement, and, perfectly aware of its consequences, prepared to charge with his magnificent body of horse, declaring he would cut the French up like gourds. Buonaparte, as he directed the infantry to form squares to receive them, called out to his men, "From yonder pyramids, twenty centuries behold your actions." The Mamelukes advanced with the utmost speed and corresponding fury, charging with horrible yells. They disordered one of the French squares of infantry, which would have been sabred in an instant, but that the mass of this fiery militia was a little behind the advanced-guard. The French had a moment to restore order, and they availed themselves of it. The combat then in some degree resembled that which about twenty years afterward took place at Waterloo:—the hostile cavalry furiously charging the squares of infantry, and trying, by the most undaunted efforts of courage, to break in upon them at every practicable point, while a tremendous fire of musketry, grape-shot, and shells, crossing in various directions, repaid their audacity. Nothing in war was ever seen more desperate than the exertions of the Mamelukes. Finding it impossible to force their horses through the French squares, they were seen to wheel them round, and rein them back on the ranks, that they might disorder them by kicking. As they became frantic with despair, they hurled at the immovable phalanxes, which they could not break, their pistols, their poniards, and their carbines. Those who fell wounded to the ground dragged themselves on, to cut at the legs of the French with their crooked sabres; but their efforts were fruitless. The Mamelukes, after the most courageous exertions to accomplish their purpose, were finally beaten off with great slaughter; and as they could not form nor act in squadron, their retreat became a confused flight. The greater part attempted to return to their camp, from that sort of instinct, as Napoleon expressed it, which leads fugitives to retire in the same direction in which they had advanced. By taking this route they placed themselves between the French army and the Nile; and the continued insupportable fire of the former soon obliged them to plunge into the river, in the hope of escaping by swimming to the opposite bank—a desperate effort, in which few succeeded. Their infantry at the same time evacuated their camp without a show of resistance, precipitated themselves into the boats, and endeavoured to cross the Nile, most of whom also lost their lives. The French soldiers long afterward occupied themselves in fishing for the drowned Mamelukes, and rarely failed to find money and valuables upon all whom they could recover.

Thus were destroyed, in a great measure, the finest cavalry, considered as individual horsemen, that were ever known to exist. "Could I have united the Mameluke horse to the French infantry," said Buonaparte, "I should have reckoned myself master of the world." The destruction of a body hitherto regarded as invincible struck terror, not only through Egypt, but far into Africa and Asia, wherever the Mahometan religion prevailed; and the rolling fire of musketry by which the victory was achieved, procured for Napoleon the oriental appellation of "sultan Kebir," the king of fire. After this combat, which, to render it more striking to the Parisians, Buonaparte denominated "the battle of the pyramids," Cairo surrendered without resistance. The shattered remains of the Mamelukes who had swam the Nile and united

St. Vincent on the coast of Portugal, descried the Spanish fleet under a press of sail. Without a moment's hesitation, he bore down in a line, before the enemy had time to form a regular order of battle, and separating one-third of the Spanish fleet from the rest, he reduced its force nearly to an equality. An attempt by the Spanish admiral to rejoin his separated ships was prevented by commodore Nelson, who at one time had to encounter the admiral and the two first-rates; but from this perilous situation he was relieved by two British ships; when, finding that he could not execute his design, he made the signal for the remainder of his fleet to form together for their defence. The British admiral, however, before they could get into their stations, directed the rearmost of them, some of which were entangled by others, to be attacked, and four were captured. In the mean time, the part of the Spanish fleet which had been separated from the main body had nearly rejoined it with four other ships, two of which were not in the engagement. This was a force more than equal to that which remained of the British squadron, fit, after so severe a contest, for a fresh action. The Spaniards, however, declined to face their enemy in close engagement, and returned to Cadiz. The British fleet bore off the four captured prizes, two of them carrying one hundred and twelve guns each, one eighty-four, and one seventy-four. Sir John Jervis was rewarded for his valour and skill by the title of earl St. Vincent; and Nelson, who now first began to be known to fame, received the honour of knighthood. The action deservedly ranks among those which have most conspicuously illustrated the superior courage and skill of British seamen.

A singular and apparently unmeaning expedition was set on foot by France in the month of February, this year. An armament, consisting of fourteen hundred men, embarked in four vessels, three of which were large frigates; and, sailing from Brest, entered the British channel, where, about the 20th, they anchored in the harbour of Ilfracombe. On being informed that the North Devon regiment of volunteers were marching towards them, they stood over to Pembrokeshire, and came to anchor in a bay near Fishguard. There the soldiers were landed, and on the 23d advanced into a wild country with which they were totally unacquainted. The alarm was immediately given, and people assembled from all parts to oppose them. Upwards of three thousand men were soon collected, among whom were seven hundred well-trained militia. Lord Cawdor, placing himself at their head, marched directly against the invaders; but instead of the expected encounter, he met a French officer bearing a letter from his commander, in which he signified a desire to enter into a negotiation for a surrender. An answer was returned requiring their immediate submission as prisoners of war, which was readily complied with, and on the next day they laid down their arms. They had no field-pieces, but were well provided with ammunition. A great part of them were in rags, and apparently taken out of prison; but what the intention of this strange enterprise was, beyond that of showing how accessible the coast of England is to invaders, remains a mystery. It however afforded a proof of the readiness of the people of England to defend their country.

The same month added another success to the British arms. The island of Trinidad, one of the largest in the Caribbean cluster, and the nearest to the Spanish Main, was the object of an expedition under the joint command of general Abercrombie and admiral Hervey. The Spaniards, who expected an attack, had collected for its defence a naval force of four ships of the line and some frigates, which were anchored in a bay protected by strong batteries. On the 16th of February, the English squadron arrived with the intention of making an attack; but during the night the Spanish ships accidentally took fire and were all consumed, with the exception of one which was captured. The Spaniards being thus rendered incapable of any effectual resistance, general Abercrombie landed his troops, and with little opposition made himself master of the principal town, after which the whole island surrendered by capitulation.

At this time, a circumstance unprecedented in the annals of Great Britain transpired, and infused a general despondency throughout the nation. The

seamen who had so long been the defence and glory of their country, seemed to threaten her overthrow. Discontents had for some time subsisted among them, the principal cause of which was the smallness of their pay, and of the Greenwich pensions, which had not been augmented from the reign of Charles II. They also complained of the unequal distribution of prize money, and the severity of the naval discipline, rendered more galling by the harsh and haughty behaviour of the officers to those under their command. Some anonymous petitions from ships' companies in the channel fleet under lord Bridport, craving relief from their grievances respecting pay, had been transmitted to lord Howe in the months of February and March, which had occasioned him to make particular inquiries whether discontents were prevailing in that fleet, when he was assured they were not. No sooner, however, had the fleet returned to Portsmouth, than a secret correspondence was set on foot, and a unanimous agreement entered into, that an anchor should not be lifted till redress was obtained.

On the 15th of April, the signal being hoisted to prepare for sea, three cheers were given from the Queen Charlotte, which was answered by the rest, and the mutiny was declared. All the efforts of the officers to enforce subordination among the men were ineffectual. The ships' companies appointed two delegates from each, who held their consultations in the cabin of the Queen Charlotte: and on the 17th an oath was administered to every seaman in the fleet, to stand firm in the general cause. Some officers who were very obnoxious to the crews were sent on shore; but in other respects the strictest discipline was observed, and the most respectful attention to their officers was enjoined, under rigorous penalties. All their proceedings indicated a concerted plan, and fixed determination to carry their point. Two petitions were drawn up and signed by the delegates, one to the admiralty, the other to the house of commons, both couched in the most decorous language, and stating their complaints, the grounds of which appeared not unreasonable. The matter seemed so serious to government, that the board of admiralty was transferred to Portsmouth, and a kind of negotiation was entered upon with the mutineers. It was at length notified to them, that their demands were complied with, and that it was expected all would return to duty. The delegates, however, declared it to be the general resolution, that nothing could be agreed to which was not sanctioned by parliament, and sanctioned by the king's proclamation; and one of the admirals having used menaces on the occasion, the meeting bore a more hostile aspect than ever. At length lord Bridport went aboard, hoisted his flag, and acquainted them that he brought with him a redress of all their grievances, and the king's pardon; the consequence of which was that obedience was immediately restored.

From the 23d of April to the 7th of May, the fleet remained in due subordination, when a fresh mutiny broke out, on a suspicion among the sailors that the promises made to them were not intended to be fulfilled. Lord Howe, whose influence in the navy was greater than that of any other person, then went down: and his addresses and assurances having fully satisfied their minds, they were again reduced to order. In all these measures the seamen lying at Plymouth concurred. On the 8th of May, the ministry laid before the house of commons estimates for the augmentation of pay to the seamen and marines of the navy, the sum of which was stated at four hundred and thirty-six thousand pounds. Mr. Pitt, in moving for this grant, deprecated any discussions on the case, and hoped that the house would pass its judgment by a silent vote. The opposition, however, thought that the ministers had been culpably negligent, in not having sooner applied to the house on the business, and a motion of censure to that effect was made, though afterward withdrawn.

It was now hoped that these concessions would prove entirely satisfactory to a body of men in general so well affected to their country; but they had unfortunately been extorted, not granted, and the same method lay open for farther demands. On the 22d of May, a mutiny broke out in the men-of-war lying at the Nore, the crews of which, taking possession of their ships,