

breach of hospitality, as to banish from his dominions persons who were not convicted of any misconduct; that in regard to the *ci-devant* bishops of Arras, St. Pol, and others involved in the charges preferred against them by M. Otto, if the facts alleged against them could be substantiated—if it could be proved that they had distributed papers on the coast of France with the view of disturbing the government of that country, his majesty should think himself justified in compelling them to leave his dominions; but that some proof of the fact must be adduced, and that this proof must not be solely that of their having published a justification of their own conduct, in refusing to conform to the new order of things as it respected the church establishment, a proceeding in which they were justifiable on every principle of toleration and equity; but it must be shown, that they had availed themselves of their residence in England to excite the people of France against the authority of that government, whether civil or ecclesiastical.

To the complaints of the first consul against the scurrilities contained in the newspapers, lord Hawkesbury replied,—That it was impossible to read the number of *Peltier's Ambigu*, to which M. Otto had alluded, without feeling indignant, and anxiously wishing that the offender should be made amenable to the tribunal of justice; and that he had thought it his duty to refer the matter in question to his majesty's attorney-general. It was acknowledged that very improper paragraphs had appeared in some of the English newspapers against the government of France; and that publications of a still more improper and indecent nature had made their appearance in England, with the names of foreigners affixed to them. Under these circumstances, the French government would have been warranted in expecting every redress which the laws of this country could afford; but as, instead of seeking it in the ordinary course, they had thought fit to resort to recrimination, or, at least, to authorize it in others, they could have no right to complain, if their subsequent appeal to his majesty had failed to produce the effect that would otherwise have attended it.

Before we proceed with the narrative, it may be proper to explain, that the recrimination alluded to in the former paragraph, relates to certain paragraphs in the *Moniteur*, a paper avowedly official, of which the British government had greater right to complain, than that of France could have of such as were inserted in the unauthorized English newspapers, and other publications to which M. Otto's note had a reference. But the British government considered it beneath its dignity to make any formal complaint on such a subject. The final answer to the complaints of the first consul against the English publications was, that his majesty would never, in consequence of any representation or menace from a foreign power, make any concession, which could, in the smallest degree, be dangerous to the liberty of the press, as secured by the constitution of this country.

At the same time that this spirited reply was made to Napoleon's demand for restricting the liberty of the press in England, lord Hawkesbury intimated, that although the British constitution admits of no previous restraints on publications of any description, yet there are courts of judicature that may take cognizance, not only of libels against the government and magistracy of the country, but also of publications defamatory of those in whose hands the administration of foreign governments is placed. His lordship added, that the British government neither has, nor wants, any other protection, than that which the laws of the country afford; and that, although it is ready to give to every foreign government all the protection against offences of this nature which the laws and constitution will admit, it never can consent to new-model the laws, or to change the constitution, to gratify the wishes of any foreign power. The British secretary of state then proceeded to remind the first consul, that if the French government were dissatisfied with the laws of England on the subject of libels, or if they entertained an opinion that the administration of justice in the English courts was too tardy and lenient, they had in their own power the means of redress, by punishing the venders and distributors of such publications within their own territories, and by that means

prevent their circulation; or, if they pleased, they might exercise the right which they possessed, of prohibiting the importation of any foreign newspapers, or periodical publications, into the dominions of the republic. His majesty would not complain of such a measure, as it was not his intention to interfere in the manner in which France should be governed; but he also expected, that the French government would not interfere in the manner in which the government of his dominions was to be conducted, or to call for a change in the laws with which his people were perfectly satisfied.

With respect to the distinction which M. Otto had drawn between the publications of British subjects and those of foreigners, and the power which his majesty was supposed to have, by virtue of the alien act, of sending the latter out of his dominions, it was remarked, that this act was intended for the preservation of the internal peace and security of the kingdom; and that its application to the case of those individuals of whom the French government complained was unnecessary, as they were, equally with the British subjects in similar cases, amenable to the law of the land, at the instance and on the complaint of foreign governments.

This firm but moderate answer to the complaints of the French government against the English press was far from being satisfactory to the first consul; and though the discussions which subsequently arose related for the most part to points of a very different nature, this was never wholly forgotten. Lord Hawkesbury's communication to Mr. Merry, relative to the line of conduct which his majesty was determined to pursue, was dated the 28th of August, 1802; but the same complaints were renewed by M. Talleyrand, towards the end of January, the following year, in a conversation with lord Whitworth, who had been appointed ambassador from the British court to Paris.

Two months afterward general Andreossi, in the name of the first consul, addressed a letter to lord Hawkesbury, in which a proposition was submitted to the British government, that whatever of this kind should be permitted or prevented in England with regard to France, should be in like manner permitted or prevented in France with regard to England. This proposal, with the former complaints, are sufficient proof of the extreme anxiety of Napoleon on the subject in question. They might have been resolved into his want of acquaintance with the laws and constitution of England, which admit of no restraints on the liberty of the press, were it not that those had been already fully explained to him; and lord Whitworth had assured M. Talleyrand, that until the first consul could so far command his feelings as to be as indifferent to the scurrility of the English prints as the British government was to that which daily appeared in the French papers, this state of irritation of which he complained was irremediable. But the anxiety of Napoleon in regard to these matters may be accounted for from the circumstances of his situation. His authority was recent, and it was natural for him to suppose that his standing was precarious. It cannot, therefore, excite our surprise, that he should have been extremely jealous of whatever seemed calculated to disturb his government or diminish his influence.

Unable, however, to prevail on the British government to violate the laws of hospitality, or to shackle the British press, the first consul now turned the train of the negotiation principally on the subject of Malta. On the 17th of February, 1803, he sent a message to lord Whitworth, intimating that he wished to converse with him. At the hour appointed, his lordship waited upon him at the Tuileries, and was received by the first consul in his cabinet, who told him that he found it necessary to make known his sentiments in the most clear and authentic manner, and that he conceived this might be done more effectually by himself than through any other medium.

In a speech, which was continued through a period of two hours, the first consul began with enumerating the various causes of complaint which he professed to have against England. In the foremost rank he placed the non-evacuation of Alexandria and Malta, declaring that he had rather see the English in possession of one of the suburbs of Paris than of Malta. He next

It was now supposed that the negotiations would terminate in the renewal of war; but they were protracted until the month of May. Various arrangements were proposed by the British government for settling the grand point of dispute concerning Malta; but they were successively met by objections which gave rise to fresh discussions. At length, when lord Whitworth was on the eve of quitting Paris, his departure was delayed at the particular instance of the first consul, who announced that he had a communication to make of the highest importance. He professed his readiness to agree that Malta should be placed in the hands of one of the three powers who had guaranteed its independence, Austria, Russia, or Prussia, provided that some minor arrangements respecting its guaranty were established. In the despatch which contained a reply to this proposition, lord Whitworth was informed, that if his majesty could be disposed to waive his demand for a temporary occupation of the island, the emperor of Russia would be the only sovereign to whom, in the present state of Europe, he could consent that it should be assigned; and that his majesty had certain and authentic information, that the emperor of Russia would, on no account, consent to garrison Malta.

In these circumstances, his majesty adhered to the project already delivered as his ultimatum, stipulating for the occupation of Malta during a term of ten years, provided that his Sicilian majesty could be induced to cede the island of Lampedosa for a valuable consideration. At the end of that period, Malta was to be surrendered to the inhabitants, and declared an independent state; and an arrangement was to be made in the interim for the establishment of the order of St. John in some other part of Europe. To obviate, however, an objection on the part of France, it was now proposed, that the definite term of years might be inserted in a secret article, and the temporary occupation would thus be made to depend on the actual state of Lampedosa. This overture was met by the offer of a counter-project, which lord Whitworth, who was instructed to avoid every thing that would protract the negotiation, did not feel authorized to receive. Having obtained his passports, he quitted Paris, and arrived in London on the 19th of May. His majesty's declaration of war had been issued on the preceding day. (1)

LETTER II.

History of Europe, from the Recommencement of Hostilities—Change of the English Ministry, and Mr. Pitt's Return to Power—Insurrection in Ireland—Affairs of France—Conspiracy to assassinate the first Consul—Arrest of the Duke d'Enghien—Napoleon assumes the imperial Dignity, and is crowned by the Pope—War between Great Britain and Spain. A. D. 1803—1804.

A RENEWAL of hostilities being now determined on, the British parliament took into consideration the measures necessary for the defence of the country, and for prosecuting the war to a successful issue. On the 8th of December, 1802, the secretary at war had submitted his estimates of the force which would be required for a *peace establishment* for the service of the year, namely, an army of one hundred and thirty thousand men, exclusive of fifty thousand already voted for the naval service. The proposition was supported by Mr. Canning and lord Temple, and by Mr. Sheridan also, who, in a speech delivered with great animation, and which was received with considerable applause from the whole house, took occasion to offer his opinion of the conduct and proceedings of the ruler of France. "I find," said this brilliant orator, "a disposition in some gentlemen to rebuke any man who shall freely declare his opinion respecting the first consul of France. He has disco-

(1) Histoire de la Revolution Française, par A. F. Mignet, chapter xv.—History of the Island of St. Domingo; Edinb. 1818.—Captain Rainsford's Account of the Black Empire of Hayti.—Sketches of Hayti, from the expulsion of the French to the death of Christophe, by W. W. Harvey, of Queen's College, Cambridge, London 1827.—Annual Register, 1803, and London Gazette.

vered that we all belong 'to the western family;'" (alluding to an expression which Napoleon was said to have made use of in a conversation with Mr. Fox, who had visited Paris during the peace, and dined with the first consul)—"I confess," said Mr. Sheridan, "I feel a sentiment of deep indignation, when I hear that this scrap of nonsense was uttered to one of the most enlightened of the human race. But to this family party I do not wish to belong. He may toss a sceptre to the king of Etruria to play with, and keep a rod to scourge him in the corner; but my humble apprehension is, that though in the tablet and volume of his mind there may be some marginal note about cashiering the king of Etruria, yet the whole text is occupied about the destruction of this country. This is the first vision that breaks upon him through the gleam of the morning; this is his last prayer at night to whatever deity he addresses it, whether to Jupiter or Mahomet, to the goddess of battles or the goddess of reason. Look at the map of Europe, from which France was said to be expunged, and now you see nothing but France. If the ambition of Buonaparte be immeasurable, there are abundant reasons why it should be progressive."

It was however soon found, that the force which was adequate to a peace establishment was a matter of inferior consideration in the existing posture of affairs; for every day brought with it some additional indication of renewed hostilities. On the 22d of February, 1803, the annual *exposé*, or state of the French republic, was presented to the legislative body. In this declaration, it was said, "The government guarantees to the nation the peace of the continent; and it is permitted to entertain a *hope* of the continuance of maritime peace. For its preservation the government will do every thing compatible with national honour, connected with the strict execution of treaties. Five hundred thousand men will be ready to undertake the defence of France, and avenge its injuries. The government says, with conscious pride, that *England, single-handed, cannot maintain a conflict against France.* But we have better hopes. France and England, rendering their happiness reciprocal, will deserve the gratitude of the whole world." By such gasconade as this, it was intended to practise upon the fears of the English government; and, to redeem their characters from the reproach of pusillanimity, the king's ministers were in danger of resorting to measures of rashness. In this temper of mind, the menaces thus thrown out could not fail to operate as fresh incentives to hostility; in addition to which, the national pride was piqued by the vainglorious boast, that England, single-handed, could not cope with France. Yet the first consul, in his recent conversation with lord Whitworth, had acknowledged that an invasion of the country was the only means of annoyance which he had, and that the chances were a hundred to one against his success. But England had her conscious pride as well as France; and the tide of popularity throughout the kingdom, from this moment, set in with irresistible force in favour of war. Accordingly, in a despatch, dated the 28th of February, lord Hawkesbury plainly declared, "that, sufficient as the considerations relative to the increased dominion, power, and influence of France might be in themselves to justify the line of conduct which his Britannic majesty had determined to adopt, they had received additional force from the views recently manifested by the French government; and that Malta will not be evacuated until substantial security has been provided for those objects, which might be endangered by the removal of the troops." Conformable to this resolution, sir Alexander Ball, then governor of the island, early in the month of March, refused to surrender it to the formal requisition of M. Thomasi, the new grand-master.

To enter into a minute detail of the various bickerings and mutual complaints which now ensued between the two governments, would be insufferably tedious, and communicate but little either for instruction or pleasure. On the 8th of March, a message from the king was brought down to parliament, informing them, that considerable military preparations were carrying on in the ports of Holland and France, and that therefore it would be expe-

adverted to the abuse thrown out against him in the English prints; but more particularly in the French papers published in London. He complained of the encouragement given in England to Frenchmen who were inimical to his person and government, and avowed that its irritation against this country daily increased.

Adverting in the next place to Egypt, he said, that whatever might be his desire to have it as a colony, he did not think it worth the risk of a war, in which he might be considered as an aggressor, and by which he should lose more than he could gain, since, sooner or later, Egypt would belong to France, either by the falling to pieces of the Turkish empire, or by some arrangement with the Porte. Professing his desire to remain at peace, he said that he had nothing to gain by a war with England. An invasion of the country was the only means of offence that he had, and in the event of war he was determined to attempt it, by putting himself at the head of the expedition; but that it could not be supposed, after having gained the height on which he stood, that he would risk his life and reputation in such a hazardous undertaking, unless driven to it by necessity, when the chances were, that he and the greatest part of the expedition would go to the bottom of the sea. He was candid enough to acknowledge, that the chances were a hundred to one against him; but still he was determined to attempt it, should war be the result of the pending discussions; and that such was the disposition of the French troops, that army after army would be found for the enterprise.

The first consul then expatiated on the natural force of the two countries. He observed, that France with an army of four hundred and eighty thousand men, and England with a fleet which made her mistress of the seas, and which he did not think that he should be able to equal in less than ten years, might, by a proper understanding, govern the world, but that by their quarrels they might overturn it. He added, that, to preserve peace, the treaty of Amiens must be fulfilled; the abuse in the public prints must, if not totally suppressed, be at least kept within bounds, and confined to the English papers; and the protection given to his most inveterate enemies must be withdrawn.

In conclusion, he took a review of the situation of the different European states, with a view of showing that there was no power with which England could coalesce in a war against France. He said, that his unwillingness to excite the jealousy of other powers had prevented him from chastising the Algerines; but he hoped that England, France, and Russia would one day feel that it was their interest to destroy such a nest of thieves, and oblige them to live by cultivating their lands rather than by plunder.

Such are the leading topics touched upon in this memorable philippic. The drift and design of the first consul were obviously to impress upon the British minister the fact, that on Malta the question of peace or war must depend; and at the same time to apprise him of the means which France possessed of annoying Great Britain. As the first consul talked almost incessantly during this long interview, lord Whitworth had few opportunities of reply; but his answers were appropriate to the different points of discussion. At parting, the chief consul rose from his chair, saying that he should give orders to general Andreossi, his ambassador at the court of Great Britain, to enter on a discussion of the business with his majesty's ministers. He then discoursed for a few minutes on different subjects, and retired in apparent good-humour.

Soon after this interview, the preparations in the ports of France and Holland, which, although avowedly intended for colonial service, might, in the event of a rupture, be turned against the British dominions, induced his Britannic majesty, on the 8th of March, to send a message to both houses of parliament, signifying the expediency of adopting additional measures of precaution for the security of the kingdom; which was also notified to the British ambassador at Paris. His majesty, however, expressed his desire for the preservation of peace. M. Talleyrand, when informed of these particu-

lars, assured lord Whitworth that the British government had no reason to be alarmed; that the disposition of the first consul was pacific; that he had no thoughts of attacking his majesty's dominions, but that he should always consider the refusal to evacuate Malta as the commencement of hostilities; and that as England had hitherto hesitated on the subject, he was justified in adopting such measures as might eventually be necessary.

In the evening of the same day, the minister brought a note from the first consul, containing a declaration that the armament at Helvoetsluys was destined for the colonies, remarking at the same time that it was on the point of sailing; but that in consequence of his Britannic majesty's message, its putting to sea was about to be countermanded. This note also signified, that if the French government did not receive a satisfactory explanation respecting the armaments in England, and if they actually took place, the first consul would march twenty thousand men into Holland, and order encampments to be formed on the frontier of Hanover, in the vicinity of Calais, and on different points of the coast; that he should keep up a French army in Switzerland, send a fresh force into Italy, and place the army of France on the war establishment—a step so important, it was added, that it could not fail to agitate all Europe. The prediction was afterward too fatally verified.

The storm which had been for some months gathering, now thickened apace. Only two days after the above notification had been delivered, lord Whitworth had that memorable interview with the first consul of France, March 13th, which has been the topic of general conversation in every political circle since, and which will continue to interest and amuse for ages to come. It shall therefore be given in his lordship's own words, in his letter to lord Hawkesbury.

"The messenger, Mason, went on Saturday with my despatches of that date, and until yesterday, Sunday, I found no one likely to give me any farther information such as I could depend on, as to the effect which his majesty's message had produced on the first consul. At the court which was held at the Tuileries on that day, he accosted me, evidently under very considerable agitation. He began by asking me if I had any news from England? I told him that I had letters from your lordship two days ago. He immediately said, 'And so you are determined to go to war?' No, I replied, we are too sensible of the advantages of peace. 'We have,' said he, 'already waged war these fifteen years.' As he seemed to wait for an answer, I only observed—'That is already too long. 'But,' said he, 'you wish to carry it on for fifteen years more; and you force me to it.' I told him that it was very far from his majesty's intention. He then proceeded to count Markoff and the chevalier Azara, who were standing together at a little distance from me, and said to them, 'The English wish for war; but if they are the first to draw the sword, I shall be the last to sheathe it. They have no regard for treaties: we must henceforth cover them with shame.' He then went his round. In a few minutes he came back to me, and resumed the conversation, if such it can be called, by something personally civil to me. He began again: 'For what reason are these armaments? against whom are these measures of precaution? I have not a single ship of the line in the ports of France. But if you will arm, I will arm likewise: if you will go to war, I shall go to war also. You may perhaps be able to destroy France, but never to intimidate her.' We do not desire, said I, to do either one or the other. We wish to live in good understanding with her. 'It is requisite then to pay regard to treaties,' he replied.—'Wo to those who pay no regard to treaties; they will be responsible for it to all Europe.' He was too much agitated to make it advisable for me to prolong the conversation: I therefore made no answer; and he returned to his apartment repeating the last phrase.

"It is to be remarked, that all this passed loud enough to be overheard by two hundred people that were present; and I am persuaded that there was not a single person who did not feel the extreme impropriety of his conduct, and the total want of dignity, as well as of decency, on the occasion."