

## LETTER IV.

*History of the Affairs of Europe during the Year 1806—Consolidation of the Power of Napoleon—Administration of Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville—Progress of the War—Abolition of the Slave Trade—Expedition to South America—Naples erected into a Kingdom under Joseph Buonaparte—Battle of Maida—New Constitution formed for Holland, and Louis Buonaparte created King—Negotiations for Peace—Death and Character of Mr. Fox—Rupture between France and Prussia—Battles of Saalfeld, Jena, and Auerstadt—Capture of Berlin—Conquest of Silesia—Berlin Decrees—Renewal of War between Russia and France—Battles of Pultusk and Eylau—Capture of Dantzic, Friedland, and Koningsberg—Peace of Tilsit.*

THE events which had taken place on the continent of Europe, during the campaign of 1805, tended much to strengthen the system which Napoleon had recently adopted. The victory of Marengo and the peace of Luneville had given a sanction to the consular government: the victory of Austerlitz and the peace of Presburg consecrated the *empire*—the last remains of the revolution were now abandoned. On the first of January, 1806, the republican calendar, after an existence of fourteen years, was definitively replaced by the common one. The pantheon was restored to religion, and the tribunate even ceased to exist. But the efforts of Napoleon were primarily directed to extend his dominions over the continent of Europe. Ferdinand, the king of Naples, having in his late war violated the treaty of peace with France, his states were invaded, and on the 30th of March, Joseph Buonaparte was declared king of the Two Sicilies. Shortly after, on the 5th of June, Holland, or the United Provinces, was changed into a kingdom, and received for its monarch Louis Buonaparte, another brother of the emperor. There existed no longer any of the republics created by the convention or the directory. Napoleon, who nominated the secondary kings, re-established the hierarchical military régime, adopting the exploded titles of the middle ages. He constituted Dalmatia, Istria, Friuli, Cadore, Belluno, &c. &c. duchies, or grand fiefs of the empire. Berthier was invested with the principality of Neufchâteau—Talleyrand with that of Benevento—the prince Borghese and his wife with that of Guastalla—Murat with the grand-duchy of Clèves and Berg. Napoleon, who had not dared to destroy the Swiss republic, now declared himself its *mediator*; and he finished the organization of his military empire, by placing the Germanic body dependent on himself. On the 12th of July, 1806, fourteen princes on the south and west of Germany were united in the “confederation of the Rhine,” and Buonaparte was recognised as their protector. On the 1st of August, they notified to the diet of Ratisbon their separation from the Germanic body; the German empire itself ceased to exist, and Francis II., abdicating the title, now adopted that of “EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA.”

Buonaparte had now grasped under his dominion all the western part of the continent of Europe. As emperor and king, he was absolute master of France and Italy; and he controlled Spain by the subordination of its court; Naples and Holland by his two brothers; Switzerland by the act of mediation; and he disposed of the kings of Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and the confederation of the Rhine, against Austria and Prussia. He might, after the peace of Amiens, by maintaining a liberal conduct and paying a decent regard to the rights and liberties of mankind, have made himself the protector of France, and the moderator of Europe. But war was his element; he sought his glory in domination, and his enjoyment in conquest; and by this he condemned himself to a long struggle, which, ultimately, could only terminate in laying the whole continent prostrate at his feet, or ensuring his own ruin. This march of encroachment gave rise to a fourth coalition, the particulars of which now claim your attention.

While Austria and Russia were engaged in confronting the power of

France, Prussia maintained a cautious neutrality. She was indeed upon the point of joining the confederates during the campaign of 1805, but the rapidity of the victories of Napoleon had prevented her from putting her designs into execution. Alarmed now by the increase of the French empire, and encouraged by the fine condition of her troops, Prussia joined in a league with Russia to expel the French from Germany. A violation of her territory by a march of the French armies through a part of it, without asking permission, had elicited some marks of resentment, which the English ministry endeavoured to kindle into a flame; but the capture of Mack's army caused the affront to be passed over in an accommodation. A scheme for the recovery of Hanover by Swedish troops in British pay, and commanded by their sovereign, in conjunction with English and Russian troops, was also frustrated by the fatal results of the battle of Austerlitz.

To pacify the king of Prussia, and if possible embroil him in a war with England, Napoleon, by his own confession, had promised to cede the electorate of Hanover to the former power, and thereby exclude Great Britain from the continent of Europe. He had indeed been promised a considerable subsidy from the latter court, but he was easily persuaded to agree to a secret treaty with France, by which, as an exchange for Hanover, he agreed to resign the dutchy of Clèves and other territories, and to confirm such arrangements as might be stipulated in the ensuing treaty between France and Austria; and thus by his vacillating conduct, his Prussian majesty, who might have turned the scale against Napoleon, meanly consented to be subservient to his interests, and permitted him to reduce the head of the empire to a state of comparative weakness.

The archduke Charles, who, during the negotiation for a definitive treaty, arrived from Italy with a considerable army, and Ferdinand, who had defeated the Bavarian general Wrede on the borders of Bohemia, would gladly have co-operated with Russia in a renewal of hostilities, if the emperor Francis had not persisted in his pacific determination; but this prince was inflexibly bent upon an accommodation. By the treaty which was concluded at Presburg, he was obliged to relinquish that valuable share of the territorial spoils of Venice which he had for some years enjoyed; he agreed to the arbitrary arrangements respecting the principalities of Lucca and Piombino; and acknowledged Napoleon, or his nominated successor, as king of Italy, with a proviso that this crown should be speedily and permanently separated from that of France. He also consented to the cession of the margravate of Burgaw, the principality of Eichstadt, the country of Tyrol, and other valuable districts, in favour of the elector, whom he considered as king, of Bavaria. To the elector of Wurtemberg, whose claims to the royal title he likewise admitted, he resigned a part of the Brisgaw, with other portions of territory; while the elector of Baden was gratified with the rest of the Brisgaw, the Ortenaw, and the city of Constance. The two kings were farther gratified with the permission of seizing, respectively, the city and dependencies of Augsburg, and the county of Borndorf; but in return for those various grants, the king of Bavaria was required to surrender Wurtzburg, as the basis of an electorate, to the archduke Ferdinand, who engaged to resign Saltzburg to his imperial majesty. The defalcations ordained by this treaty must, to a prince like Francis II., who, though not enterprisingly ambitious, was nevertheless fond of extended dominion, have been excessively mortifying, even if no sense of humiliation and disgrace had attended the loss; and when he reflected on that indiscretion which had not only precipitated the war, but had misconducted it in its progress, with the loss or at least the diminution of that high fame which his troops had formerly enjoyed, his feelings must have been poignant in the extreme. He is said to have blamed himself severely for yielding to the impulse of Great Britain, and for admitting too readily the delusions of hope. We now turn to England.

The death of Mr. Pitt, which I have already mentioned to you, occasioned a total change in the ministry. Lord Eldon resigned the seals, and the honourable Thomas Erskine was appointed lord-chancellor, and constituted a  
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cuitous route. But scarcely had they crossed the swamp, when the Spaniards opened a fire from their field-pieces, which at first was well directed; but as the English advanced at a quick pace, in spite of the boggy ground, which obliged them to leave their artillery behind, they received but little injury. A part of the troops having gained the heights in a tolerably good line, the enemy retired from the brow of the hill. The British troops then gained that position, and commencing a fire of small arms, the Spaniards fled with precipitation, leaving behind them four field-pieces and a tumbril. After a halt of two hours, the British advanced in the hope of preventing the destruction of the bridge over the river Chuelo, which lay between them and Buenos Ayres, from which it was distant about three miles. But on their approach it was found to be in flames, and they were unable to prevent its total destruction.

During the night the Spaniards were heard bringing down their artillery, and the British troops were in consequence withdrawn from the bank of the river, as their position seemed too much exposed to the enemy's fire, which had opened upon them from their guns and a considerable line of infantry. At daybreak next morning captain Kennett was sent to reconnoitre both sides of the river, which was scarcely thirty yards wide, when he found that the English had little or nothing to protect them, while the Spanish troops were drawn up behind hedges and houses, and in the vessels on the opposite bank. Circumstances being such as to admit of no delay, general Beresford determined on forcing the pass, and for that purpose ordered down the field-pieces to the brink of the river. The enemy, in the mean time, opened an ill-directed fire of cannon and musketry, the former of which was soon silenced, though the latter was kept up more than half an hour, but so ill-directed that it did very little injury to the British troops, who, by means of boats and rafts, effected the passage of the river in the face of two thousand provincial troops that lined the opposite bank, and made but a feeble opposition. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the greatest part of the troops, with some of the guns, had crossed the river; and general Beresford having learned that most of the Spanish troops had abandoned the city, sent a summons to the governor, on the 28th of June, and the latter, without attempting farther resistance, agreed to a capitulation, of which the principal articles were, security to their religious worship, to the persons of the inhabitants, and to all private property. The amount of the public treasure taken at Buenos Ayres amounted to one million two hundred and ninety-one thousand three hundred and twenty-three dollars; of which, one million eighty-six thousand two hundred and three dollars were embarked on board the *Narcissus*, and the remaining sum, viz. two hundred and five thousand one hundred and fifteen were left in the treasury. In the moment of elation, sir Home Popham transmitted a circular letter to the principal commercial towns of Great Britain, informing them "that a whole continent was laid open to the trade and commerce of this country." This ill-judged measure, which in fact was an unparalleled piece of presumption, gave rise to the most unbounded extravagance of speculation, and proved ruinous to many, both merchants and manufacturers. For, notwithstanding the conquest had been made with so small a force, it was wholly inadequate to retain it, and in a short time Buenos Ayres was recovered by the Spaniards, under the direction of colonel Linieres, a French officer in the South American service; and the English troops, with general Beresford their commander, were made prisoners of war. Sir Home Popham, however, continued to blockade the entrance of the river; and on the arrival of reinforcements from the cape of Good Hope, he made an unsuccessful attempt on Monte Video. Such was the posture of affairs on the La Plata at the close of the year.

Some naval operations took place in the course of this year of sufficient moment to entitle them to a brief notice. In the month of February, a French squadron of five sail of the line was encountered off the coast of St. Domingo by admiral Duckworth, whose force was certainly superior. After a furious action, three of them struck their flags; the other two were driven on shore and burnt. In the East Indies, the French admiral Linois

was captured by sir John Borlase Warren, on board the *Marengo* of eighty guns, with the *Belle Poule* of forty guns, which vessels were on their return home to France enriched with various plunder. A large convoy from Rochefort was intercepted by sir Samuel Hood, and four out of five large frigates were captured with troops on board destined for the West Indies. A remarkably gallant exploit was also achieved by lord Cochrane, who commanded the *Pallas*, in cutting out three Spanish vessels under a heavy fire from the protecting batteries of Avillos.

The state of public affairs throughout the continent of Europe at this eventful crisis was without a parallel in history. The subversion and creation of kingdoms were become simple operations, with which the world was beginning to become familiarized. The territory of the Batavian republic being full of French troops who garrisoned all the fortified towns, an edict from Paris was all that was necessary to create a king, and furnish him with a kingdom. On the 9th of June, 1806, this change in the constitution of Holland was notified to their high mightinesses, the states-general, by M. Verneul, who, being just arrived from Paris, opened the special commission which he had received from prince Louis Buonaparte, as king of Holland. The communication was first made to the grand pensionary, and to the assembly and council of state. A constitution for the new monarchy was then immediately framed, of which the principal features were as follows: The executive power, with the nomination of all offices civil and military, was vested solely in the king; the legislative body to be composed of thirty-three members, delegated from the different provinces, and elected for five years; equal protection was granted to all denominations of religion; and by the authority of the king and the legislature, every thing necessary to ecclesiastical organization, and every kind of worship, was to be determined. No sooner was this new order of things announced than the new king and queen of Holland, on the 24th of June, made their public entry into the Hague. Louis addressed the constituted authorities in an appropriate oration of considerable length, concluding it by repeating his reliance on the honour and virtue of his subjects, assuring them of his affection, professing his zeal for their prosperity, and reminding them that from their loyalty and unanimity alone he could expect the tranquillity, safety, and glory of the kingdom, and the happiness of his life!

Thus terminated the famous republic of the United Provinces, which had existed two hundred and twenty-seven years in that state. The Dutch of the 16th century hazarded their lives and fortunes to establish their independence and republican form of government: their descendants of the 19th resigned, without a struggle, those privileges for which their ancestors had fought during forty years, and for which so many of them had perished in long and sanguinary wars. But the martial spirit of the Dutch had been long extinguished; and the revolutionary principles introduced among them having facilitated the conquest of their country, and rendered it dependent on France, it was no longer possible to shake off the yoke. All resistance was now too late, and they found themselves under the necessity of resigning the form, as they had already resigned the substance, of their constitution.

While these things were transacting, negotiations were going forward between the courts of France and England, which for some time afforded a prospect of the restoration of peace. They originated in a correspondence between Mr. Fox and M. Talleyrand, the occasion of which had been the disclosure to the former of an infamous plot for the assassination of the emperor of France, by an emigrant who calculated on the concurrence of the British secretary in the design. Mr. Fox, however, with his characteristic generosity of spirit, thought himself obliged to give warning to M. Talleyrand. In reply to Mr. Fox's communication, an extract was given from a speech of the emperor to the legislative body, on the 2d of March, in the following terms: "I desire peace with England. On my part I shall never delay it for a moment; I shall always be ready to conclude it, taking for its basis the treaty of Amiens." This intimation was clearly understood as



intended for an opening to negotiation, and accordingly, after a short interval, Mr. Fox returned an answer expressive of the cordial disposition of the English government to treat on the general basis of a peace honourable to both countries and their allies; adding, "that the existing ties between England and Russia were such, that England could not treat, much less conclude, but in concert with the emperor Alexander." M. Talleyrand replied "that the emperor Napoleon adopted the general principle laid down by Mr. Fox, but thought there was no necessity for the intervention of a foreign and distant power."

Among the Englishmen detained in France at the recommencement of the war happened to be the earl of Yarmouth, in whose ability and discretion Mr. Fox could confide with entire satisfaction; and to this young nobleman were accordingly transmitted the requisite powers for treating with the French government. His lordship proceeded to Paris to open the negotiation; but he found the difficulty respecting Russia unhappily retarded his progress, though a point of form rather than substance; as the concert, whether acknowledged by France or not, between the courts of London and St. Petersburg was not the less real. The principal subjects of difference, exclusive of the claims of Russia, were Hanover and Sicily. No exchange or indemnity for the first could be hearkened to; and it was not until his despatch of June the 13th, lord Yarmouth informed Mr. Fox of the declaration which M. Talleyrand had at length made, that "considering the extreme stress which England laid on this point, Hanover should make no difficulty." "Authorized by this concession," said lord Yarmouth, "I inquired whether the possession of Sicily would be demanded?" To this M. Talleyrand replied, "You have it; we do not ask it. Had we the possession, difficulties would be much augmented." The French minister also conceded, that a British minister, authorized by the emperor Alexander, should stipulate for both, adding, "the asperity which marked the commencement of the war is no more; and the wish of France is to live in harmony with so great a power as Britain."

So far every thing appeared auspicious for the cause of peace, but an unhappy reverse soon took place. For in a subsequent conversation, the French minister gave lord Yarmouth to understand that Napoleon had received despatches from his brother, and the general officers under his orders, stating that Naples could not be held without Sicily, at the same time intimating the probability which they saw of gaining possession of that island. To this lord Yarmouth answered, that being required to stipulate for the restoration of Naples to the king of Sicily, as a necessary condition of peace, there could be no question of their separation. Talleyrand replied by repeatedly stating the absolute determination of his master, the emperor, not to give up Naples, Venice, Istria, and Dalmatia, nor to alienate any part of his Italian states to form a provision for the king of Sardinia, though he frequently repeated, that Hanover should be restored, and that Malta and the cape of Good Hope should be ceded to Great Britain, observing that the French government considered these cessions as objects sufficient to induce England to conclude a peace. In this posture of affairs, Mr. Fox, on the 26th of June, though at this time rapidly declining in health, addressed an excellent despatch to lord Yarmouth, expressing his astonishment at the shuffling conduct of M. Talleyrand. The recognition of the French emperor, and the other new potentates of his creation, he regarded as a full compensation for the restoration of Hanover. He transmitted to lord Yarmouth his full credentials for treating, on which the French minister had laid so much stress; but with instructions fairly to state to M. Talleyrand that he had no authority to make use of them, until that minister returned to his former ground respecting Sicily. He remarked that if d'Oubril, the Russian ambassador, had offered to treat separately, it was only in the way that lord Yarmouth himself treated, that is, *in form*, but substantially in concert. Naples and Istria, Mr. Fox admitted, were not to be conclusive against agreeing to provisional articles, subject to the approval of Russia, or, as he explained himself, "that those articles should not have effect till a peace should be concluded between France and Russia."

Lord Yarmouth, on the 1st of July, acknowledged his receipt of the full powers with which he was now vested by the British government, and mentioned his reception of them to M. Talleyrand, also, who merely said, "that change of circumstances during a negotiation were always valid reasons for a change of terms: that had any confidential overture been made three months ago, France would have been ready to settle the question of Naples in the manner most satisfactory to Great Britain, the same a month later with regard to Holland." At the close of the conference, lord Yarmouth repeated, "that it was impossible to proceed with the negotiation till every mode of seeking possession of Sicily was entirely relinquished." On subsequently demanding his passports, Talleyrand took the opportunity of offering the Hanse Towns as an establishment for the king of Naples. But on the 5th of July, the day after the receipt of lord Yarmouth's letter, Mr. Fox peremptorily replied, "that the abandonment of Sicily was a point which it was impossible for his majesty to concede. The demand of France was inconsistent with the whole principle on which the negotiation rests: and the proposal of M. Talleyrand is, of itself, quite inadmissible. To the original basis of the negotiation, therefore lord Yarmouth was directed to advert; and if this was not accepted, to state in perfectly civil but decided terms, that he was not at liberty to treat on any other grounds, and therefore to request his passports." Lord Yarmouth having strictly complied with his instructions, M. Talleyrand now offered a farther proposition from the emperor, tendering Dalmatia, and Albania, and Ragusa, as an indemnity for Sicily. This he was assured would not be accepted; however, his lordship consented to wait the return of the messenger, the French minister adding, that if peace was concluded, Germany should remain in its present state. At this critical juncture, the indisposition of Mr. Fox had so alarmingly increased as to render him incapable of attending to business; and the succeeding despatches, transmitted under the sanction of his name, were fairly acknowledged, at a subsequent period, not to have proceeded from his pen, which indeed was but too evident. The elaborate answer of July the 18th, to lord Yarmouth's last despatch, most unhappily and unseasonably wavered upon the grand point of Sicily; and from this moment all was fluctuation and indecision. This departure from a point which Mr. Fox had uniformly insisted on, and respecting which he had declared it *impossible* for his Britannic majesty to concede, naturally induced the supposition that the English cabinet would adhere firmly to nothing; nor did the slightest probability exist that France would yield in exchange what would be likely to obtain "the full and free consent of the king of Sicily."

While lord Yarmouth, conformably to the instructions he had received, was continuing the conferences with M. Talleyrand, M. d'Oubril, the Russian plenipotentiary, concluded a separate treaty of peace with France, to the great mortification of lord Yarmouth, who had not patience to listen to d'Oubril's apology for his conduct, naturally concluding that France would now rise in her demands, and become less manageable in the pending negotiation. The emperor of Russia, however, prudently refused to ratify the treaty which his minister had so precipitately concluded, and thus matters were again placed on the same relative situation as before that event.

The English ministry now thought it advisable to send the earl of Lauderdale to Paris as joint negotiator with lord Yarmouth, who had given unexpected offence to the British government by producing his full powers, though that measure appeared indispensable if peace were really the object in view; and lord Yarmouth being soon after recalled, the negotiation rested wholly with the earl of Lauderdale on the part of England, and with general Clarke and M. Champagny on that of France. It would afford you little interest to go at large into the detail of the various discussions which now ensued, *projets* and *contre-projets* succeeded in abundance, and ended in lord Lauderdale demanding his passports to return to England—each government accusing the other of being the cause of the failure of the negotiations.

At this critical moment, on which peace or war seemed to be suspended,



peer of the realm by the title of lord Erskine. Lord Grenville, whom the king had sent for, and empowered to form a new administration, including Mr. Fox, after his estrangement of twenty years from the royal councils, was appointed first lord of the treasury; and lord Henry Petty, since better known by the title of the marquis of Lansdown, chancellor of the exchequer—earl Fitzwilliam president of the council, and viscount Sidmouth lord privy-seal. Mr. Fox was made secretary of state for foreign affairs; lord Spencer home secretary, and Mr. Windham secretary at war; Mr. Grey first lord of the admiralty, and Mr. Sheridan treasurer of the navy; earl Moira master-general of the ordnance, and general Fitzpatrick secretary for the colonies. The duke of Bedford was appointed lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and Mr. Elliott his principal secretary. Lord Ellenborough was made lord chief justice of the court of king's bench, with a seat in the cabinet. Sir Arthur Pigot and sir Samuel Romilly were nominated attorney and solicitor generals.

The country had the misfortune to see the number of its enemies increase. The politics of Prussia, which had long been vacillating, now assumed an aspect decidedly hostile to Great Britain. On the 30th of January, 1806, his Prussian majesty issued a proclamation, in which he signified his intention of taking possession of Hanover, agreeable to a convention entered into with the emperor of France. This was followed by a second proclamation, dated the 28th of March, ordering the Prussian ports to be shut against the ships and commerce of Great Britain. In consequence of these hostile proceedings, Mr. Fox, on the 21st of April, brought down a message from his majesty, informing the house of commons that he had thought it proper to adopt measures of just retaliation, by issuing orders for the blockade of the Elbe, the Weser, and the Ems, and for the capture of Prussian vessels, of which official notice was given to the ministers of neutral powers. After this declaration of hostilities, a great number of Prussian ships were brought into British ports; but, from the relative circumstances of England and Prussia, the former having no army on the continent, and the latter no ships of war on the seas, the war between the two powers could not be productive of any great or important events. It amounted to little more than a suspension of political and commercial intercourse, and circumstances rendered it of short duration. The British arms, indeed, at this time had little employment. The number of ships and vessels of war in commission was truly enormous—no less than seven hundred and twenty! of which one hundred and twenty-six were of the line; fourteen from fifty to forty-four guns; and one hundred and fifty-seven frigates; the rest were sloops, gun-brigs, &c. &c. But the marine of France was almost annihilated, and the shattered remains of their fleets were shut up in their harbours, not daring to venture beyond the protection of their batteries. The British navy was employed in blockading the hostile ports, and nothing of importance took place on the ocean.

The philanthropist, however, will always regard this season of inactivity as one of the most glorious periods in the annals of Great Britain. History will record an act of humanity and justice passed by her legislature, which redounds as much to the honour of the national character as her most brilliant victories. The traffic in human flesh, carried on with the coast of Africa, had long been regarded by the enlightened and humane as the opprobrium of Englishmen. Yet, infamous as the slave trade is, it had not, until towards the end of the last century, been considered with that attention which a practice so abhorrent to the benevolent principles of Christianity, and the refinement of modern manners, might have been expected to excite.

The names of illustrious writers, in our own country, who had taken every opportunity to reprobate the traffic in man are too many to enumerate. In France they had been seconded by Raynal and Necker, besides many others who stood in the first ranks of genius and talent; and in almost every other country of Europe, persons of distinguished abilities and philanthropy had pleaded the cause of the injured Africans. Yet no individual who stood high in rank and power had vigorously exerted his influence to wipe off this stain by extirpating an evil of so horrible a nature. It had accumulated by

almost imperceptible degrees to a gigantic size, until it became interwoven with the system of European commerce, sanctioned by prescription and public authority in all maritime nations, and rendered familiar to the minds of men by constant and general practice. The finest feelings of the human heart became blunted by a continual repetition of enormities—man was considered as the property of man—natural feeling was outraged, and the God of nature insulted. Europeans had imbibed the false philosophy, that a difference of complexion implied a disparity of intellect, and that the unfortunate negroes were destined by the great Creator for a state of perpetual slavery.

Mr. Granville Sharp was the first individual in England who stood forward as the avowed advocate of the Africans: and with him the first movements towards the abolition of the traffic in human flesh originated. His name deservedly stands recorded in history as the foundation-stone on which is erected this noble monument to the honour of liberty and humanity. From the year 1765 to 1772, he laboured by all possible means to enlighten the public mind on the subject, and draw the public attention to this horrible traffic. In process of time, other philanthropists, inspired with the same Christian spirit, came forward to advocate the cause, and a small select society of private individuals was formed for the express purpose of overturning this monstrous colossus of evil, the African slave trade.

Mr. Clarkson, a gentleman of spirit and talents, undertook the tedious and irksome task of instituting inquiries, and collecting evidence on the subject; in consequence of whose investigations a scene of enormities was developed sufficient to make humanity shudder. The magnitude of the evil only required to be known to render it generally detested; and from this period the society found numerous coadjutors. Men in all ranks, and of all religious denominations united to attempt the removal of this national disgrace. Among these the Quakers, both in England and America, who had uniformly expressed their disapprobation of slavery, distinguished themselves among the most strenuous advocates for its abolition; and a petition in favour of the oppressed Africans was presented from that benevolent body to the British parliament. The cause now began to become popular. Numerous pamphlets and tracts on the subject were published and generally circulated. Sermons were preached and published, petitions were presented to the legislature from the two universities, and from several of the most considerable towns and corporations of the kingdom; and the whole British nation at length came to interest itself in the affair. But the slave trade had been too long established, and too many individual interests were concentrated in it, to allow of its being put down without a struggle. It was regarded as the basis of colonial cultivation; the traffic was found to involve a great variety of interests, which consequently gave rise to numerous obstacles and strenuous opposition. Under these circumstances his majesty's ministers thought proper to institute, before a committee of the privy council, an inquiry into the facts and allegations contained in the representations of both parties. The first public notice that was taken of the subject was in the year 1788, when Mr. Wilberforce, who afterward so greatly distinguished himself in the cause of benevolence, communicated to parliament his intention of bringing forward a measure respecting the slave trade; and from that period to the death of Mr. Pitt, the subject was never lost sight of, but from time to time brought forward in parliament, with different measures of success. It however gradually gained ground, and on the 20th of February, 1805, the bill for the abolition was lost in the house of commons by a majority of only seven voices.

The attainment of this great object was reserved for Mr. Fox and his colleagues in office, supported by Mr. Wilberforce and others. With a steady adherence to principles which he had constantly avowed, Mr. Fox, on the 11th of June, 1806, had the honour to carry a resolution in the house of commons for the entire abolition of the slave trade. This motion, so interesting to the cause of humanity, was couched in the following terms: "That this house, conceiving the African slave trade to be contrary to the principles of justice,



humanity, and sound policy, will, with all practical expedition, take effectual measures for abolishing the said trade, in such manner, and at such period, as may be deemed most desirable." The bill met with only a feeble opposition. It was strenuously supported by Mr. Wilberforce and all the members of administration, and carried by a majority of one hundred and fifteen votes, against only fifteen dissenting voices. In the course of the debate the solicitor-general, sir Samuel Romilly, stated, from the documents before the house, that, since the year 1796, that is, during the last ten years, upwards of three hundred and sixty thousand of the natives of Africa, torn from their country by Europeans, had either been sold into slavery, or had miserably perished in their passage to the West Indies. The crimes perpetrated in this traffic had equalled, if they had not exceeded, in horror and enormity, those of the French revolution, and had been constantly repeated during three centuries. An age that could tolerate such barbarities scarcely deserves to be called enlightened; accordingly, the British ministry resolved to wipe off this stain from the national character, and their philanthropic determination will ever hold a place in the hearts and memory of all who revere the principles of justice, humanity, and religion. The abolition of African slavery forms a glorious epoch in the reign of George III., and millions yet unborn will commemorate that happy period in which the rights of human nature were restored in spite of interest, prescription, and prejudice.

Of the foreign military and political events of the year 1806, those that relate to Naples occupy the first place. On the 9th of February, a French army under the command of Joseph Buonaparte, assisted by Massena and other generals, marched for Naples, and on the 15th entered the capital, the garrison in the city and the forts having previously capitulated. The king and queen had retired to Palermo in January, with a part of the Neapolitan army, accompanied also by several of the nobility. The heir-apparent to the throne, who was duke of Calabria, remained in Naples until the approach of the French, when he retired with some troops to Calabria, where general Dumas, a French emigrant, was endeavouring to organize a *levy-en-masse*. General Regnier marched in pursuit of the fugitives, and after several skirmishes, in which the Neapolitans displayed very little martial spirit, the war in Calabria was brought to a close and the whole kingdom of Naples submitted to the French, except Gaeta and another fortress. Most of the principal families in the country, having lost all esteem for their legitimate sovereign, readily attached themselves to the French interest; so that Napoleon did not hesitate to issue a decree conferring the crown of Naples upon his brother Joseph, and his heirs-male, with the proviso, that the crowns of that country and of France should never be united in the same individual. Accordingly, Joseph caused himself to be proclaimed king, on the 30th of March, and exacted an oath of fidelity from all the constituted authorities, the nobles testifying the greatest satisfaction at the change of dynasty. The queen of Naples, however, and the duke of Calabria, for the king himself was a mere cipher, resolved to make an attempt to recover the crown. They accordingly, by means of their emissaries, excited an insurrection against the French in Abruzzo and Calabria, which, for a time, delivered these provinces from French influence. While these disturbances were still subsisting, sir Sydney Smith arrived at Palermo, about the middle of April, and took the command of the English squadron lying there, consisting of five sail of the line, with some frigates and smaller vessels.

He began his operations by throwing succours into Gaeta, and afterward taking possession of the isle of Capri; he then proceeded along the coast, exciting a general alarm, and keeping up a connexion with the discontented Calabrians. At length, at the urgent solicitation of the court of Palermo, sir John Stewart, who commanded the British troops in Sicily, embarked a body of about five thousand men, with which, on the 1st of July, he effected a landing in the gulf of Euphemia, near the northern frontier of Lower Calabria. General Regnier, with his troops, being encamped at Maida, some miles distant, sir John Stewart determined upon attacking him before he

could be joined by his expected reinforcements, and accordingly, on the 4th of July, he advanced to the place. The junction, however, had been made the night before; and the enemy, to the number of about seven thousand, descended from the heights, and marched into the plain to meet the assailants. After keeping up a fire for some time, both armies rushed on with the bayonet, when the superior firmness of the British soldiers speedily decided the contest. No sooner had the weapons crossed than the French gave way, and were pursued with terrible carnage. An attempt to retrieve the honour of the day proved ineffectual, and a complete victory remained to the British, whose loss was inconsiderable compared with that of their opponents. The immediate consequence of this brilliant action was a general insurrection of the Calabrian peasantry, and the expulsion of the French from the province.

But efforts of this kind, though highly honourable to the British arms, were totally inadequate to the effecting of any permanent change in the state of the Neapolitan kingdom; and sir John Stewart, sensible that he could not long maintain his ground in Calabria, prepared for returning to Sicily. Having, by one of his officers, obtained possession of the strong fort of Scylla, opposite to Messina, he recrossed the straits, leaving the Calabrian insurgents to contend with an exasperated foe, who treated them as rebels, and every kind of cruelty was practised on both sides in a protracted and desultory warfare. The French, soon after the battle of Maida, reduced the fortress of Gaeta, which had long employed a considerable portion of their force; and general Fox, who took the command of the British troops in Sicily, refusing to concur in the hopeless plans of the court of Palermo for recovering Naples, the new government in that kingdom remained undisturbed, except by some intestine disorders.

About this time an important acquisition was made by the British arms in a distant quarter of the globe. After reducing the cape of Good Hope, sir Home Popham and general Beresford, who had been sent out in the autumn of the year 1805, with a force of about five thousand men, judging it expedient to make an attack on some of the Spanish settlements in South America, embarked a part of the land-forces; and after a passage long and tedious beyond what they had expected, arrived on the 6th of June, at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata. In order to make himself acquainted with the navigation of the river, sir Home Popham proceeded in the *Narcissus* to reconnoitre, as far as circumstances would permit, the different situations on the bank, and to collect as much information as possible relative to the strength of the enemy. The progress of the ships up the river was greatly retarded by the shoals, the adverse winds and currents, the foggy weather, and the inaccuracy of the charts. The laborious and unremitting exertions, however, of the officers and men enabled him to surmount these obstacles; and the squadron, after having occupied nine days in proceeding about eighty miles, came to an anchor off the point of Quilmay, about twelve miles from Buenos Ayres, which the British commanders resolved to attack in preference to Monte Video.

On the 25th of June, in the course of the afternoon and night, a landing was effected without opposition, though a body of the enemy, consisting of about two thousand men, chiefly cavalry, with eight field-pieces, was posted at the village of Redaction, on a height, about two miles distant from the place where the troops disembarked, and directly in their front. The whole intermediate space, as well as to the right and left, was an entire plain, impassable in winter, but represented by the guide as practicable at that time to the march of artillery. It was eleven o'clock next morning before the troops could march off their ground. The Spanish troops were drawn up along the brow of the hill, on which was situated the village of Redaction, covering their right flank. The nature of the ground was such, that the British forces were obliged to march directly to the enemy's front, and to form a line as equal as possible to theirs in length. In this order they advanced with two six-pounders on each flank, and two howitzers in the centre of their first line. Having approached within range of the enemy's guns, a tongue of swampy ground crossing their front, obliged them to halt till their artillery took a cir