

conduct had equalled the reputation of his talents. The king's nomination, therefore, was unanimously approved; and on the 1st of November, Bernadotte was installed in due form. On this occasion he addressed an admirable speech to the diet, expressing in unaffected language his sincere gratitude for the high and unexpected honour conferred upon him, with his unfeigned wishes that the reigning monarch would long afford him the advantage of learning from his conduct the arduous and important lessons of government. "Sound policy," said Bernadotte, "must have for its basis justice and truth. Such are the principles of the king; they shall also be mine. I have had a near view of war and its ravages: and I know that there is no conquest which can console a country for the blood of its children shed in a foreign land. Sweden has sustained great losses, but her honour is without taint. Let us submit to the decrees of Providence, and recollect that we possess a soil sufficient for our wants, and a sword to defend it." In the ensuing month, a declaration of war was issued against Great Britain; but the pacific intention of the court of Stockholm was sufficiently apparent; and the war, to the disappointment of Napoleon, proved little more than nominal. The hostility of Denmark was indeed real and great, but her power was circumscribed; and in the course of the summer a British squadron took possession of the Danish isle of Anholt, situated in the sea called the Cattegat. (1)

## LETTER XI.

*Affairs of Great Britain, A. D. 1810—Parliamentary Inquiry into the Expedition to the Scheldt—Sir Francis Burdett sent to the Tower—Riots in the Metropolis—Naval Expeditions and Successes—Derangement of the King, and Appointment of a Regency. A. D. 1810, 1811.*

THE British parliament assembled on the 23d of January, 1810, and never did the political atmosphere in this country exhibit a deeper gloom. Russia, the only continental power which could singly cope with France, was in strict alliance with the French emperor. Austria had been once more laid prostrate at his feet. The resistance of Spain, in the general opinion, had become nearly hopeless; and all the other powers of Europe were in a state of perfect vassalage. Yet, under these unfavourable circumstances, the speech delivered by the lord-chancellor, in his majesty's name, expressed a just confidence, under divine Providence, in the wisdom of his parliament, the valour of his forces, and the spirit of his people. His majesty hoped that material advantages would be found to result from the demolition of the docks and the arsenals of Flushing. The expulsion of the French from Portugal, and the splendid victory obtained by lord viscount Wellington at Talavera, had contributed to check the progress of their arms in the peninsula. The speech went on to state that his majesty had received assurances of the friendly disposition of America, and that the state of the national commerce of Great Britain was flourishing, and the produce of the revenue increasing.

The Walcheren expedition, as may naturally be supposed, constituted a prolific topic of declamation to the leaders of opposition in both houses of parliament. The appointment of lord Chatham to the command having been made one of the principal topics of blame, Mr. Perceval, in his reply, contented himself with saying, that the result of the inquiry, if any inquiry were thought necessary, would in a great measure decide the question of the propriety or impropriety of the appointment of that noble lord to the command of the expedition. Adverting to the overture made, by command of the king, to lords Grey and Grenville to form a part of the administration, he declared that he did not wish for the situation which he then occupied. The circumstances of the times required a strong and extended administra-

(1) Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoleon*, vol. vii.—*Histoire de la Revolution Francaise*, par A. F. Mignet.—*Sketch of the Reign of Gustavus IV.*—*Dr. Aikin's Annals of George III.*—*Edinburgh Annual Register*, 1810.

tion, and he had entertained hopes that the application would have been successful. Had he been at liberty to state his proposals, the first would have been to resign the treasury to their disposal. After a variety of other proceedings, in which the same subjects were brought under discussion, lord Porchester, on the 26th of January, moved in the house of commons that a committee be appointed to inquire into the policy and the conduct of the late expedition to the Scheldt, which was carried by a small majority, and a committee of the whole house was fixed on for the purpose. His lordship then moved for an address to the king for copies of instructions given to the commanders, with other documents relating to this ill-fated expedition, which was also agreed to, and a secret committee was nominated for the inspection of such confidential communications as were deemed improper to be made public.

Among the papers thus submitted to inspection, there was found "A copy of the earl of Chatham's statement of his proceedings, dated October the 15th, 1809, and presented to the king, February the 14th, 1810." This document, from its contents, appeared to be an appeal to his majesty by the commander of one part of the expedition against the conduct of the commander of another part, and the circumstance occasioned much debate in the house. Mr. Whitbread moved an address to the king, requesting that there might be laid before the house copies of all reports and other papers submitted at any time to his majesty by the earl of Chatham, relative to the late expedition, which was carried. The answer to this address acknowledged that the king had received a report from lord Chatham, on the 15th of January, which he kept till February the 10th, when it was returned to the earl in consequence of his desire to make some alterations in it; that the report thus altered having been again presented to the king on the 14th, it was, by his majesty's orders, delivered to the secretary of state, and no copy of it kept by the king. Mr. Whitbread, on the 2d of March, moved two resolutions respecting this matter: one stating the fact, as now mentioned—the other, a strong censure of the same. After a long debate, the previous question was moved, but negatived; and the first resolution being thus carried, Mr. Whitbread consented to waive the second, admitting a modification of it proposed by Mr. Canning. It was then determined that the resolution should be entered on the journals of the house; the result of which was that lord Chatham resigned his office of master-general of the ordnance.

When the proceedings relative to the Walcheren expedition first came before the house of commons, Mr. Yorke moved an enforcement of the standing order for the exclusion of strangers, which he continued to move from day to day. This induced Mr. Sheridan to move a revision of the standing order, so that the decision should not rest on the caprice of any individual member, which was vehemently opposed by Mr. Windham, who indulged himself in a wild and furious invective against the reporters of the debates in parliament. He professed, indeed, to know nothing of them personally; but he understood them to be a set of men who were chargeable with the most corrupt misrepresentations; that among them were to be found persons of all descriptions, bankrupts, lottery-office keepers, decayed tradesmen, and even serving men. Those gentry, he said, had their favourites; and his honourable friend Mr. Sheridan was esteemed and hailed by them as a patron of the liberty of the press; but he exhorted the house to maintain their ancient rules and orders! This singular tirade was answered with spirit and temper by Mr. Stephens, an eminent civilian, who had himself, in his earlier days, been a reporter of the debates in parliament.

Another circumstance, incidentally connected with the debates on the Walcheren expedition, was productive of consequences which rendered the present session memorable in parliamentary history. There existed at the moment a debating society in London, under the name of the British forum, of which the president was John Gale Jones. On the 19th of February, a placard appeared in the streets of London, informing the public that a question had been debated at the British forum, "which was the greater outrage on the public feeling, Mr. Yorke's enforcement of the standing order of the house