

world, have heard both of him and of the satellites by whom he is surrounded, and it is impossible to discuss fairly the propriety of any answer which could be returned to his overtures of negotiation without taking into consideration the inferences to be drawn from his personal character and conduct.

I know it is the fashion with some gentlemen to represent any reference to topics of this nature as invidious and irritating; but the truth is that they rise unavoidably out of the very nature of the question. Would it have been possible for ministers to discharge their duty, in offering their advice to their sovereign, either for accepting or declining negotiations, without taking into their account the reliance to be placed on the disposition and the principles of the person on whose disposition and principles the security to be obtained by treaty must, in the present circumstances, principally depend? Or would they act honestly or candidly toward Parliament and toward the country if, having been guided by these considerations, they forbore to state, publicly and distinctly, the real grounds which have influenced their decision; and if, from a false delicacy and groundless timidity, they purposely declined an examination of a point the most essential toward enabling Parliament to form a just determination on so important a subject?

What opinion, then, are we led to form of the pretensions of the consul to those particular qualities for which, in the official note, his personal character is represented to us as the surest pledge of peace? We are told this is his second attempt at general pacification. Let us see, for a moment, how this attempt has been conducted. There is, indeed, as the learned gentleman has said, a word in the first declaration which refers to general peace, and which states this to

be the second time in which the consul has endeavored to accomplish that object.

We thought fit, for the reasons which have been assigned, to decline altogether the proposal of treating under the present circumstances, but we, at the same time, expressly stated that whenever the moment for treaty should arrive we would in no case treat but in conjunction with our allies.

Our general refusal to negotiate at the present moment does not prevent the consul from renewing his overtures; but are they renewed for the purpose of general pacification? Though he had hinted at general peace in the terms of his first note; though we had shown by our answer that we deemed negotiation, even for general peace, at this moment inadmissible; though we added that, even at any future period, we would treat only in conjunction with our allies, what was the proposal contained in his last note? To treat for a separate peace between Great Britain and France.

Such was the second attempt to effect general pacification—a proposal for a separate treaty with Great Britain. What had been the first? The conclusion of a separate treaty with Austria; and there are two anecdotes connected with the conclusion of this treaty which are sufficient to illustrate the disposition of the pacificator of Europe. This very treaty of Campo Formio was ostentatiously professed to be concluded with the emperor for the purpose of enabling Bonaparte to take the command of the army of England, and to dictate a separate peace with this country on the banks of the Thames. But there is this additional circumstance, singular beyond all conception, considering that we are now referred to the treaty of Campo Formio as a proof of the personal disposition of the consul to general peace.

He sent his two confidential and chosen friends, Berthier

and Monge, charged to communicate to the Directory this treaty of Campo Formio; to announce to them that one enemy was humbled, that the war with Austria was terminated, and, therefore, that now was the moment to prosecute their operations against this country; they used on this occasion the memorable words, "The kingdom of Great Britain and the French republic cannot exist together." This, I say, was the solemn declaration of the deputies and ambassadors of Bonaparte himself, offering to the Directory the first-fruits of this first attempt at general pacification.

So much for his disposition toward general pacification. Let us look next at the part he has taken in the different stages of the French revolution, and let us then judge whether we are to look to him as the security against revolutionary principles. Let us determine what reliance we can place on his engagements with other countries when we see how he has observed his engagements to his own. When the constitution of the third year was established under Barras, that constitution was imposed by the arms of Bonaparte, then commanding the army of the triumvirate in Paris. To that constitution he then swore fidelity. How often he has repeated the same oath I know not, but twice, at least, we know that he has not only repeated it himself, but tendered it to others, under circumstances too striking not to be stated.

Sir, the House cannot have forgotten the revolution of the 4th of September, which produced the dismissal of Lord Malmesbury from Lisle. How was that revolution procured? It was produced chiefly by the promise of Bonaparte, in the name of his army, decidedly to support the Directory in those measures which led to the infringement and violation of everything that the authors of the constitution of 1795, or its adherents, could consider as fundamental, and which established

a system of despotism inferior only to that now realized in his own person. Immediately before this event, in the midst of the desolation and bloodshed of Italy, he had received the sacred present of new banners from the Directory; he delivered them to his army with this exhortation:

"Let us swear, fellow soldiers, by the names of the patriots who have died by our side, eternal hatred to the enemies of the constitution of the third year,"—

—that very constitution which he soon after enabled the Directory to violate, and which, at the head of his grenadiers, he has now finally destroyed. Sir, that oath was again renewed in the midst of that very scene to which I have last referred; the oath of fidelity to the constitution of the third year was administered to all the members of the assembly then sitting, under the terror of the bayonet, as the solemn preparation for the business of the day; and the morning was ushered in with swearing attachment to the constitution that the evening might close with its destruction.

If we carry our views out of France and look at the dreadful catalogue of all the breaches of treaty, all the acts of perfidy at which I have only glanced, and which are precisely commensurate with the number of treaties which the republic has made (for I have sought in vain for any one which it has made and which it has not broken), if we trace the history of them all from the beginning of the revolution to the present time, or if we select those which have been accompanied by the most atrocious cruelty and marked the most strongly with the characteristic features of the revolution, the name of Bonaparte will be found allied to more of them than that of any other that can be handed down in the history of the crimes and miseries of the last ten years. His name will be recorded with the horrors committed in Italy,

in the memorable campaign of 1796 and 1797, in the Milanese, in Genoa, in Modena, in Tuscany, in Rome, and in Venice.

His entrance into Lombardy was announced by a solemn proclamation, issued on the 27th of April, 1796, which terminated with these words:

“Nations of Italy! the French army is come to break your chains, the French are the friends of the people in every country; your religion, your property, your customs, shall be respected.”

This was followed by a second proclamation dated from Milan 20th of May and signed “Bonaparte,” in these terms:

“Respect for property and personal security; respect for the religion of countries: these are the sentiments of the government of the French republic and of the army of Italy. The French, victorious, consider the nations of Lombardy as their brothers.”

In testimony of this fraternity, and to fulfill the solemn pledge of respecting property, this very proclamation imposed on the Milanese a provisional contribution to the amount of twenty millions of livres, or near one million sterling, and successive exactions were afterward levied on that single state to the amount, in the whole, of near six millions sterling.

The regard to religion and to the customs of the country was manifested with the same scrupulous fidelity. The churches were given up to indiscriminate plunder. Every religious and charitable fund, every public treasure, was confiscated. The country was made the scene of every species of disorder and rapine. The priests, the established form of worship, all the objects of religious reverence, were openly insulted by the French troops; at Pavia, particularly, the

tomb of St. Augustin, which the inhabitants were accustomed to view with peculiar veneration, was mutilated and defaced; this last provocation having roused the resentment of the people, they flew to arms, surrounded the French garrison and took them prisoners, but carefully abstained from offering any violence to a single soldier.

In revenge for this conduct, Bonaparte, then on his march to the Mincio, suddenly returned, collected his troops, and carried the extremity of military execution over the country. He burned the town of Benasco and massacred eight hundred of its inhabitants; he marched to Pavia, took it by storm, and delivered it over to general plunder, and published, at the same moment, a proclamation, of the 26th of May, ordering his troops to shoot all those who had not laid down their arms and taken an oath of obedience, and to burn every village where the tocsin should be sounded, and to put its inhabitants to death.

The transactions with Modena were on a smaller scale, but in the same character. Bonaparte began by signing a treaty by which the duke of Modena was to pay twelve millions of livres, and neutrality was promised him in return; this was soon followed by the personal arrest of the duke and by a fresh extortion of two hundred thousand sequins. After this he was permitted, on the payment of a farther sum, to sign another treaty, called a *convention de sureté*, which of course was only the prelude to the repetition of similar exactions.

Nearly at the same period, in violation of the rights of neutrality and of the treaty which had been concluded between the French republic and the grand duke of Tuscany in the preceding year, and in breach of a positive promise given only a few days before, the French army forcibly took possession of Leghorn, for the purpose of seizing the British prop-

erty which was deposited there and confiscating it as prize; and shortly after, when Bonaparte agreed to evacuate Leghorn in return for the evacuation of the island of Elba, which was in possession of the British troops, he insisted upon a separate article by which, in addition to the plunder before obtained, by the infraction of the law of nations, it was stipulated that the grand duke should pay the expense which the French had incurred by this invasion of his territory.

In the proceedings toward Genoa we shall find not only a continuance of the same system of extortion and plunder, in violation of the solemn pledge contained in the proclamations already referred to, but a striking instance of the revolutionary means employed for the destruction of independent governments. A French minister was at that time resident at Genoa, which was acknowledged by France to be in a state of neutrality and friendship; in breach of this neutrality Bonaparte began, in the year 1796, with the demand of a loan. He afterward, from the month of September, required and enforced the payment of a monthly subsidy, to the amount which he thought proper to stipulate.

These exactions were accompanied by repeated assurances and protestations of friendship; they were followed, in May, 1797, by a conspiracy against the government, fomented by the emissaries of the French embassy, and conducted by the partisans of France, encouraged, and afterward protected by the French minister. The conspirators failed in their first attempt. Overpowered by the courage and voluntary exertions of the inhabitants, their force was dispersed and many of their number were arrested. Bonaparte instantly considered the defeat of the conspirators as an act of aggression against the French republic; he dispatched an aid-de-camp

with an order to the Senate of this independent state: first, to release all the French who were detained; secondly, to punish those who had arrested them; thirdly, to declare that they had no share in the insurrection; and fourthly, to disarm the people. Several French prisoners were immediately released, and a proclamation was preparing to disarm the inhabitants, when, by a second note, Bonaparte required the arrest of the three inquisitors of state, and immediate alterations in the constitution.

He accompanied this with an order to the French minister to quit Genoa if his commands were not immediately carried into execution; at the same moment his troops entered the territory of the republic, and shortly after, the councils, intimidated and overpowered, abdicated their functions. Three deputies were then sent to Bonaparte to receive from him a new constitution.

On the 6th of June, after the conferences at Montebello, he signed a convention, or rather issued a decree, by which he fixed the new form of their government; he himself named provisionally all the members who were to compose it, and he required the payment of seven millions of livres as the price of the subversion of their constitution and their independence. These transactions require but one short comment. It is to be found in the official account given of them at Paris; which is in these memorable words:

“General Bonaparte has pursued the only line of conduct which could be allowed in the representative of a nation which has supported the war only to procure the solemn acknowledgment of the right of nations to change the form of their government. He contributed nothing toward the revolution of Genoa, but he seized the first moment to acknowledge the new government, as soon as he saw that it was the result of the wishes of the people.”

It is unnecessary to dwell on the wanton attacks against Rome, under the direction of Bonaparte himself, in the year 1796 and in the beginning of 1797, which terminated first by the treaty of Tolentino concluded by Bonaparte, in which, by enormous sacrifices, the Pope was allowed to purchase the acknowledgment of his authority as a sovereign prince; and secondly, by the violation of that very treaty, and the subversion of the papal authority by Joseph Bonaparte, the brother and the agent of the general, and the minister of the French Republic to the Holy See,—a transaction accompanied by outrages and insults toward the pious and venerable pontiff, in spite of the sanctity of his age and the unsullied purity of his character, which even to a Protestant seem hardly short of the guilt of sacrilege.

But of all the disgusting and tragical scenes which took place in Italy in the course of the period I am describing, those which passed at Venice are perhaps the most striking and the most characteristic. In May, 1796, the French army, under Bonaparte, in the full tide of its success against the Austrians, first approached the territories of this republic, which from the commencement of the war had observed a rigid neutrality. Their entrance on these territories was, as usual, accompanied by a solemn proclamation in the name of their general:

“BONAPARTE TO THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE!”

“It is to deliver the finest country in Europe from the iron yoke of the proud house of Austria that the French army has braved obstacles the most difficult to surmount. Victory in union with justice has crowned its efforts. The wreck of the enemy’s army has retired behind the Mincio. The French army, in order to follow them, passes over the territory of the republic of Venice; but it will never forget that ancient friendship unites the two republics. Religion, gov-

ernment, customs, and property shall be respected. That the people may be without apprehension, the most severe discipline shall be maintained. All that may be provided for the army shall be faithfully paid for in money. The general-in-chief engages the officers of the republic of Venice, the magistrates, and the priests, to make known these sentiments to the people in order that confidence may cement that friendship which has so long united the two nations. Faithful in the path of honor as in that of victory, the French soldier is terrible only to the enemies of his liberty and his government.

“BONAPARTE.”

This proclamation was followed by exactions similar to those which were practised against Genoa, by the renewal of similar professions of friendship and the use of similar means to incite insurrection. At length, in the spring of 1797, occasion was taken from disturbances thus excited to forge in the name of the Venetian government a proclamation hostile to France, and this proceeding was made the ground for military execution against the country, and for effecting by force the subversion of its ancient government and the establishment of the democratic forms of the French Revolution. This revolution was sealed by a treaty, signed in May, 1797, between Bonaparte and commissioners appointed on the part of the new and revolutionary government of Venice.

By the second and third secret articles of this treaty Venice agreed to give as a ransom, to secure itself against all further exactions or demands, the sum of three millions of livres in money, the value of three millions more in articles of naval supply, and three ships of the line; and it received in return the assurances of the friendship and support of the French Republic. Immediately after the signature of this treaty, the arsenal, the library, and the palace of St. Marc were ran-

sacked and plundered, and heavy additional contributions, were imposed upon its inhabitants. And in not more than four months afterward this very republic of Venice, united by alliance to France, the creature of Bonaparte himself, from whom it had received the present of French liberty, was by the same Bonaparte transferred, under the treaty of Campo Formio, to "that iron yoke of the proud house of Austria," to deliver it from which he had represented in his first proclamation to be the great object of all his operations.

Sir, all this is followed by the memorable expedition into Egypt, which I mention, not merely because it forms a principal article in the catalogue of those acts of violence and perfidy in which Bonaparte has been engaged; not merely because it was an enterprise peculiarly his own, of which he was himself the planner, the executor, and the betrayer; but chiefly because when from thence he retires to a different scene to take possession of a new throne, from which he is to speak upon an equality with the kings and governors of Europe, he leaves behind him at the moment of his departure a specimen, which cannot be mistaken, of his principles of negotiation.

The intercepted correspondence which has been alluded to in this debate seems to afford the strongest ground to believe that his offers to the Turkish government to evacuate Egypt were made solely with a view to gain time; that the ratification of any treaty on this subject was to be delayed with the view of finally eluding its performance if any change of circumstances favorable to the French should occur in the interval. But whatever gentlemen may think of the intention with which these offers were made, there will at least be no question with respect to the credit due to those professions by

which he endeavored to prove in Egypt his pacific dispositions. He expressly enjoins his successor strongly and steadily to insist, in all his intercourse with the Turks, that he came to Egypt with no hostile design, and that he never meant to keep possession of the country; while on the opposite page of the same instructions he states in the most unequivocal manner his regret at the discomfiture of his favorite project of colonizing Egypt and of maintaining it as a territorial acquisition.

Now, sir, if in any note addressed to the Grand Vizier or the Sultan, Bonaparte had claimed credit for the sincerity of his professions, that he came to Egypt with no view hostile to Turkey and solely for the purpose of molesting the British interests, is there any one argument now used to induce us to believe his present professions to us which might not have been equally urged on that occasion? Would not those professions have been equally supported by solemn asseveration, by the same reference which is now made to personal character, with this single difference, that they would have then had one instance less of hypocrisy and falsehood, which we have since had occasion to trace in this very transaction?

It is unnecessary to say more with respect to the credit due to his professions or the reliance to be placed on his general character. But it will perhaps be argued that whatever may be his character or whatever has been his past conduct, he has now an interest in making and observing peace. That he has an interest in making peace is at best but a doubtful proposition, and that he has an interest in preserving it is still more uncertain. That it is his interest to negotiate I do not indeed deny. It is his interest, above all, to engage this country in separate negotiation in order to loosen and dissolve the whole system of the confederacy on the Continent, to