

up, and an unlimited right of fishery, on the banks of Newfoundland, in the Gulph of Saint Laurence, and in all other places where both nations had been hitherto accustomed to fish, was granted to the Americans.

France thus enjoyed the sterile satisfaction of despoiling Great Britain of those colonies, on which her enemies vainly imagined her commercial, if not her political importance, essentially depended; and of securing to herself, by the erection of a new power across the Atlantic, a grateful and potent ally. This primary object was, therefore, no sooner attained, than the count de Vergennes quickened the negotiations of his own court: on the twentieth of January, the preliminary articles of peace were signed at Paris; and, on the third of September, the definitive treaty was concluded, on the part of their respective sovereigns, by that minister and the duke of Manchester. The conditions of this treaty are comprized in the following articles:

1. There shall be a christian, universal, and perpetual peace, as well by sea as by land, and a sincere and constant friendship shall be re-established, between their Britannick and Most Christian Majesties, and between their heirs and successors, kingdoms, dominions, provinces, counties, subjects and vassals, of whatsoever quality or condition they be, without exception either of places or persons; so that the high contracting parties shall give the greatest attention to the maintaining between themselves, and their said dominions and subjects, this reciprocal friendship and intercourse, without permitting, on either part, any kind of hostilities to be committed, either by sea or land, for any cause, or any pretence whatsoever: and they shall carefully avoid, for the future, every thing which might prejudice the union happily re-established, endeavouring, on the contrary, to procure reciprocally for each other, on every occasion, whatever may contribute to their mutual glory, interests, and advantage, without giving any assistance or protection, directly or indirectly, to those who would do any injury to the high contracting parties. There shall be a general oblivion and amnesty of every thing which may have been done or committed, before or since the commencement of the war which is just ended.

2. The treaties of Westphalia of 1648; the treaties of peace of Nimeguen of 1678 and 1679; of Ryswick of 1697; those of peace and of commerce of Utrecht of 1713; that of Baden of 1714; that of the triple alliance of the Hague of 1717; that of the Quadruple alliance of London of 1718; the treaty of peace of Vienna of 1738; the definitive treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle of 1748; and that of Paris, of 1763, serve as a basis and foundation to the peace, and to the present treaty; and for this purpose they are all renewed and confirmed in the best form, as well as all the treaties in general which subsisted between the high contracting parties before the war, as if they were herein inserted word for word; and so they are to be exactly observed for the future in their full tenor,

tenor, and religiously executed by both parties, in all the points which shall not be derogated from by the present treaty of peace.

3. All the prisoners taken on either side, as well by land as by sea, and the hostages carried away or given during the war, and to this day, shall be restored, without ransom, in six weeks at farthest, to be computed from the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty; each crown respectively discharging the advances which shall have been made for the subsistence and maintenance of their prisoners, by the sovereign of the country where they shall have been detained, according to the receipts and attested accounts, and other authentic vouchers which shall be furnished on each side: and sureties shall be reciprocally given for the payment of the debts which the prisoners may have contracted in the countries where they may have been detained, until their entire release. And all ships, as well men of war as merchant ships, which may have been taken since the expiration of the terms agreed upon for the cessation of hostilities by sea, shall likewise be restored *bona fide*, with all their crews and cargoes. And the execution of this article shall be proceeded upon immediately after the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty.

4. His majesty the king of Great Britain is maintained in his right to the island of Newfoundland, and to the adjacent islands, as the whole were assured to him by the thirteenth article of the treaty of Utrecht; excepting the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, which are ceded, in full right, by the present treaty, to his Most Christian majesty.

5. His majesty, the Most Christian king, in order to prevent the quarrels which have hitherto arisen between the two nations of England and France, consents to renounce the right of fishing, which belongs to him in virtue of the aforesaid article of the treaty of Utrecht, from Cape Bonavista to Cape Saint John, situated on the eastern coast of Newfoundland, in fifty degrees north latitude; and his majesty the king of Great Britain consents, on his part, that the fishery assigned to the subjects of his Most Christian majesty, beginning at the said Cape Saint John, passing to the north, and descending by the western coast of the island of Newfoundland, shall extend to the place called Cape Raye, situated in forty-seven degrees, fifty minutes latitude. The French fishermen shall enjoy the fishery which is assigned to them by the present article, as they had the right to enjoy that which was assigned to them by the treaty of Utrecht.

6. With regard to the fishery in the gulph of Saint Laurence, the French shall continue to exercise it conformably to the fifth article of the treaty of Paris.

7. The king of Great Britain restores to France the island of Saint Lucia in the condition it was in when conquered by the British arms: and his Britannick majesty cedes



and guarantees to his Most Christian majesty the island of Tobago. The Protestant inhabitants of the said island, as well as those of the same religion, who shall have settled at Saint Lucia, whilst that island was occupied by the British, shall not be molested in the exercise of their worship: and the British inhabitants, or others who may have been subjects to the king of Great Britain, in the aforesaid islands, shall retain their possessions upon the same titles and conditions by which they have acquired them; or else they may retire, in full security and liberty, where they shall think fit, and shall have the power of selling their estates, provided it be to subjects of his Most Christian majesty, and of removing their effects, as well as their persons, without being restrained in their emigration, under any pretence whatsoever, except on account of debt, or of criminal prosecutions. The term limited for this emigration is fixed to the space of eighteen months, to be computed from the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty. And for the better securing the possessions of the inhabitants of the aforesaid island of Tobago, the Most Christian king shall issue letters-patent, containing an abolition of the *Droit d'Aubaine* in the said island.

8. The Most Christian king restores to Great Britain the islands of Grenada and the Grenadines, Saint Vincent's, Dominica, Saint Christopher's, Nevis, and Montserrat; and the fortresses of these islands shall be delivered up in the condition they were at the time of their reduction. The same stipulations inserted in the preceding articles shall take place in favour of the French subjects, with respect to the islands enumerated in the present article.

9. The king of Great Britain cedes, in full right, and guarantees to his most Christian majesty, the river Senegal, and its dependencies, with the forts of Saint Louis, Podor, Galam, Argum, and Portendic; and his Britannic majesty restores to France the island of Goree, which shall be delivered up in the condition it was in when the conquest of it was made.

10. The Most Christian king, on his part, guarantees to the king of Great Britain the possession of fort James, and of the river Gambia.

11. For preventing all discussion in that part of the world, the two high contracting parties shall, within three months after the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty, name commissaries, who shall be charged with the settling and fixing the boundaries of the respective possessions. As to the gum trade, the English shall have the liberty of carrying it on, from the mouth of the river Saint John, to the bay and fort of Portendic inclusively; provided, however, that they shall not form any permanent settlement, of what nature soever, in the said river Saint John, upon the coast, or in the bay, of Portendic.

12. As to the rest of the African coast, the English and French subjects shall continue to resort thereto, according to the usage which has hitherto obtained.

13. The king of Great Britain restores to his Most Christian majesty all the settlements which belonged to him, at the beginning of the present war, upon the coast of Orixá and in Bengal, with liberty to surround Chandernagore with a ditch for carrying off the waters; and his Britannic Majesty engages to take such measures as shall be in his power for securing to the subjects of France, in that part of India, as well as on the coasts of Orixá, Coromandel, and Malabar, a safe, free, and independent trade, such as was carried on by the French East-India Company, whether they exercise it individually, or as a company.

14. Pondicherry shall be, in like manner, delivered up and guaranteed to France, as also Karikal: and his Britannic majesty shall secure, for an additional dependency to Pondicherry, the two districts of Velanour, and Bahour; and to Karikal, the four Magans bordering thereupon.

15. France shall re-enter into possession of Mahé, as well as of its factory at Surat; and the French shall carry on their trade, in this part of India, conformably to the principles established in the thirteenth article of this treaty.

16. Orders having been sent to India by the high contracting parties, in pursuance to the sixteenth article of the preliminaries, it is further agreed, that if, within the term of four months, the respective allies of their Britannic and Most Christian majesties shall not have acceded to the present pacification, or concluded a separate accommodation, their said majesties shall not give them any assistance, directly or indirectly, against the British or French possessions, or against the ancient possessions of their respective allies, such as they were in the year 1776.

17. The king of Great Britain, being desirous to give his Most Christian majesty a sincere proof of reconciliation and friendship, and to contribute to render solid the peace re-established between their said majesties, consents to the abrogation and suppression of all the articles relative to Dunkirk, from the treaty of peace concluded at Utrecht in 1713, inclusive, to this day.

18. Immediately after the exchange of the ratifications, the two high contracting parties shall name commissaries to treat concerning new arrangements of commerce between the two nations, on the basis of reciprocity and mutual convenience; which arrangements shall be settled and concluded within the space of two years, to be computed from the first of January, in the year 1784.



19. All the countries and territories which may have been, or which may be conquered, in any part of the world whatsoever, by the arms of his Britannic majesty, as well as by those of his Most Christian majesty, which are not included in the present treaty, neither under the head of cessions, nor under the head of restitutions, shall be restored without difficulty, and without requiring any compensation.

20. As it is necessary to appoint a certain period for the restitutions and evacuations to be made by each of the high contracting parties, it is agreed, that the king of Great Britain shall cause to be evacuated the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, three months after the ratification of the present treaty, or sooner, if it can be done; Saint Lucia (one of the Caribbee Islands) and Goree in Africa, three months after the ratification of the present treaty, or sooner, if it can be done. The king of Great Britain shall, in like manner, at the end of three months after the ratification of the present treaty, or sooner, if it can be done, enter again into the possession of the islands of Grenada, the Grenadines, Saint Vincent's, Dominica, Saint Christopher's, Nevis, and Montserrat. France shall be put in possession of the towns and factories which are restored to her in the East Indies, and of the territories which are procured for her, as additional dependencies to Pondicherry, and to Karikal, six months after the ratification of the present treaty, or sooner, if it can be done. France shall deliver up, at the end of the like term of six months, the towns and territories which her arms may have taken from the English, or their allies, in the East Indies. In consequence whereof, the necessary orders shall be sent, by each of the high contracting parties, with reciprocal passports for the ships which shall carry them, immediately after the ratification of the present treaty.

21. The decision of the prizes and seizures made prior to the hostilities shall be referred to the respective courts of justice; so that the legality of the said prizes and seizures shall be decided according to the law of nations, and to treaties, in the courts of justice of the nation which shall have made the capture or ordered the seizure.

22. For preventing the revival of the law-suits which have been decided in the islands conquered by either of the high contracting parties, it is agreed that the judgments pronounced in the last resort, and which have acquired the force of matters determined, shall be confirmed and executed according to their form and tenor.

23. Their Britannic and most Christian majesties promise to observe sincerely, and *bona fide*, all the articles contained and established in the present treaty; and they will not suffer the same to be infringed, directly or indirectly, by their respective subjects; and the said high contracting parties guarantee to each other, generally and reciprocally, all the stipulations of the present treaty.

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24. The solemn ratifications of the present treaty, prepared in good and due form, shall be exchanged in this city of Versailles, between the high contracting parties, in the space of a month, or sooner if possible, to be computed from the day of the signature of the present treaty.

This treaty was followed by a declaration, on the part of the king of England, and a counter-declaration, on the part of Lewis the Sixteenth. The former set forth, that the terms of the definitive treaty having been finally concluded with his Most Christian majesty, the king of Great Britain would seek every means not only to ensure the execution thereof, with his accustomed good faith and punctuality, but would besides give, on his part, all possibly efficacy to those principles which were calculated to prevent even the smallest foundation of future disputes.

To that end, and in order that the fishermen of the two nations might not give cause for daily quarrels, his Britannic majesty expressed his determination to adopt the most positive measures for preventing his subjects from interrupting, in any manner, by their competition, the fishery of the French, during the temporary exercise thereof which was granted to them, upon the coasts of the island of Newfoundland; and for that purpose, he would cause the fixed settlements which might be formed there to be removed. His Britannic majesty would also give orders that the French fishermen should not be incommoded, in cutting the wood necessary for the repair of their stages, huts, and fishing vessels.

The thirteenth article of the treaty of Utrecht, and that method of carrying on the fishery, which had, at all times, been acknowledged, was declared to be the plan upon which the fishery should be carried on in those parts—a plan not to be deviated from by either party; the French fishermen building only their stages, confining themselves to the repair of their fishing vessels, and not *wintering* there; the subjects of his Britannic majesty, on their part, not molesting, in any manner, the French fishermen, during their fishing, nor injuring their stages, during their absence.

The king of Great Britain observed, that, in ceding the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon to France, he regarded them as ceded for the purpose of serving as a real shelter to the French fishermen, and in full confidence that these possessions would not become an object of jealousy between the two nations; and that the fishery between the said islands and that of Newfoundland, should be limited to the middle of the channel.

With regard to India, Great Britain having granted to France every thing which could ascertain and confirm the trade which the latter desired to carry on there, his majesty relied with confidence on the repeated assurances of the court of Versailles, that the power  
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of surrounding Chandernagore with a ditch for carrying off the waters, should not be exercised in such a manner as to render it an object of umbrage.

The new state in which commerce might, perhaps, be found, in all parts of the world, would demand revisions and explanations of the subsisting treaties; but an entire abrogation of those treaties, at whatever period it might take place, would, it was properly suggested, throw commerce into such confusion as must be infinitely prejudicial to it.

In some of the treaties of this description there were not only articles which related merely to commerce, but many others which ensured, reciprocally, to the respective subjects, privileges, facilities for conducting their affairs, personal protections, and other advantages, which were not, and which should not be of a changeable nature;—such as the regulations relating to the value of goods and merchandize, variable from circumstances of every kind.

It was suggested, therefore, that when the state of the trade between the two nations should be treated upon, it was requisite to be understood, that the alteration which might be made in the subsisting treaties were to extend only to arrangements merely commercial; and that the privileges and advantages, mutual and particular, should be not only preserved, on each side, but even augmented, if that could be done.—In that view his Britannic majesty had consented to the appointment of commissaries, on each side, who were to treat solely upon that object.

In reply to this declaration, Lewis declared, that the principles by which he had been guided, in the whole course of the negotiation which preceded the re-establishment of peace, must have convinced the king of Great Britain, that he had had no other design than to render it solid and durable, by preventing, as much as possible, in the four quarters of the world, every subject of discussion, and every ground of dispute. The king of Great Britain undoubtedly placed too much confidence in the rectitude of his majesty's intentions, not to rely on his constant attention to prevent the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon from becoming an object of jealousy between the two nations.

As to the fishery on the coasts of Newfoundland, which had been the object of the new arrangements settled by the two sovereigns upon that matter. Lewis observed, it was sufficiently ascertained by the fifth article of the definitive treaty, and likewise by the subsequent declaration of his Britannic majesty; on that head he declared himself to be fully satisfied.

He accepted the regulations with regard to the fishery between the island of Newfoundland and those of St. Pierre and Miquelon; and would give the most positive orders,

orders, that the French fishermen should not exceed the bounds prescribed ; being firmly persuaded that the king of Great Britain would give similar orders to the English fishermen.

The king's desire to maintain the peace, extended to India as well as to the other parts of the world ; his Britannic majesty might, therefore, be assured, that he would never permit an object so inoffensive and so harmless, as the ditch, with which Chandernagore was to be surrounded, to give any umbrage to the court of London.

In proposing new commercial arrangements, the king had no other design than to remedy, by the rules of reciprocity and mutual convenience, whatever might be defective in the treaty of commerce, signed at Utrecht, in 1713. The king of Great Britain might judge from thence, that his majesty's intention was not, in any wise, to cancel all the stipulations in that treaty ; he declared, on the contrary, that he was, thenceforth, disposed to maintain all the privileges, facilities, and advantages, expressed in the said treaty, as far as should be reciprocal, or compensated by equivalent advantages. It was to attain this end, so desirable to both parties, that commissaries were to be appointed to treat on the state of the trade between the two nations, and that a considerable space of time was to be allowed for the completion of their work. His majesty hoped that that object would be pursued with the same good faith, and the same spirit of conciliation, which marked the discussion of all the other points comprised in the definitive treaty ; and he expressed his firm conviction, that the respective commissaries would employ the utmost diligence in the accomplishment of that important work.

This open and candid explanation was admirably calculated for the prevention of future disputes ; and the king enjoyed the satisfaction—much greater than any which a mind like his could possibly derive from the humiliation of a rival—of having restored peace to his subjects, and tranquillity to Europe. Nor were the interests of his ally, the king of Spain, neglected upon this occasion ; that country, which had so long been accustomed to witness the gradual restriction of her boundaries, now tasted the sweets of acquisition. Though incessantly baffled in her attempts to reduce the fortress of Gibraltar, her pride was, in some degree, soothed by the cession of the island of Minorca, in the Mediterranean ; and to the extensive possessions which she already enjoyed in South America, were now added the fertile provinces of East and West Florida, on the northern continent. The only retribution which she made, was the restoration of the Bahama islands to Great Britain.

But Holland had engaged too late in the war, and had been evidently influenced by motives of too selfish a nature, to merit such support from the court of Versailles ; the States-general were therefore left to combat the difficulties in which they had involved the republic ; and to afford an example as well to individuals as to mercantile powers,



that where self-interest leads to a violation of plighted faith, it generally defeats its own object, and meets with the punishment it deserves. That close connection which had once subsisted between the English and Dutch, was now dissolved; and the latter discovered, that they had lost an old ally, without acquiring a new one.

Though tranquillity was thus restored to Europe, Africa, and America, Asia, distant from the scene of negotiation, continued still exposed to the ravages of war. Tippoo Saib, who, on the death of his father, had lately succeeded to the government of his extensive dominions, had already distinguished himself by his successive victories over colonel Baillie in the Carnatic, and colonel Braithwaite on the banks of the Coleroon; and his enemies were soon convinced that his accession to royalty had not damped his military ardour. General Matthews, a British officer, had penetrated with a select detachment to Bednure, the capital of the wealthy kingdom of Canore, where his conduct had excited such disgust in the minds of his brother officers, as to induce many of them to quit the service. But before he had time to secure himself in his new conquest, he was alarmed by the approach of Tippoo Saib, who, with an host of cavalry, and the small corps of French under the command of monsieur Lally, pressed forward to chastise his temerity. The English commander marched out to meet the enemy; but neither his strength nor his skill seemed proportioned to his presumption; his ranks were instantly broken by the rapid charge of the French; with the loss of five hundred men he retired within the walls of Bednure, and soon after signed a capitulation, which, on a promise of their lives and liberties, delivered himself and his troops into the power of Tippoo Saib. The capitulation, however, was soon violated by the treacherous and unprincipled victor: the garrison were detained as prisoners; the general himself is reported to have perished by poison; several of the principal officers were barbarously murdered; and the few that were released at the conclusion of the peace, had experienced sufferings that rendered the fate of their slaughtered companions enviable.

The hostile squadrons of France and England had, in order to avoid the destructive fury of the monsoons, retired to their respective harbours; but, as soon as the season would permit, monsieur de Suffrein had proceeded from Trincomalé to Cuddalore; he was there reinforced by twelve hundred European troops, which he dispersed among his ships, and was lying at anchor in the road of Pondicherry, when he discovered the approach of the English fleet under admiral Hughes.

The British squadron had been joined by five ships of the line from Europe, and was now superior in number to the French by two ships of the line. But, undismayed by this disparity, however, monsieur de Suffrein resolved to encounter his rival, and to support the honour of the French flag; the action began about four in the afternoon, and a heavy cannonade was continued until seven; at that hour the conflict ceased, without any decisive consequences; each squadron had to lament the unavailing slaughter of a number

ber of gallant men; and, with this severe trial of his strength, concluded the naval warfare in India. Admiral Hughes soon after retired to Madras, and monsieur de Suffrein, who, throughout the whole war, had maintained the character of a bold and skilful commander, proceeded to Cuddalore to return the land forces with which he had been reinforced, and to which he added two thousand four hundred men from his own fleet.

This succour, though important, was not more than necessary to the immediate defence of the place. The marquis de Bussy, who had lately arrived in India with a considerable body of European troops, found his situation far from enviable; general Coote, whose skill, experience, and enterprising genius had been confirmed and displayed in the course of long service, was indeed no more; and by his death the command of the British forces had devolved on general Stuart. But the marquis de Bussy soon perceived, that though he had lost one formidable competitor, he had found another equally spirited and enterprising; and he was scarce arrived at Cuddalore before he beheld himself invested by the British troops, conducted by their new general, who had eagerly seized the favourable opportunity afforded him by the motions of Tippoo Saib, by whom the Carnatic had been evacuated for the recovery of Bednure.

The fortifications of Cuddalore had been considerably strengthened by the skill and labour of the French; and the marquis de Bussy was still employed in the construction of new works, when his progress was interrupted by the approach of the English, who rapidly advanced to assault the lines before they could be completed. The attack and defence were both maintained with a degree of resolution that had seldom been equalled in that quarter of the globe, and perhaps never exceeded in Europe: the assailants, though frequently repulsed, as constantly returned to the charge; but the French were at length overwhelmed by numbers, and were compelled to abandon their out-posts, with the loss, in killed and wounded, of near six hundred of their best troops.

The arrival of the fleet, under monsieur de Suffrein, and the reinforcement which he landed from the ships, determined the marquis de Bussy to hazard a vigorous sally, in hopes of recovering the posts that he had lost, and of making some impression on the works of the besiegers. The conduct of this enterprize was entrusted to the chevalier de Damas, a knight of Malta, and colonel of the regiment of Aquitaine, and the hour fixed for the execution of it was three o'clock in the morning. But though some advantage was, at first, gained, under cover of the darkness, the English were soon alarmed; and as day approached, the light that enabled them to discover the number of their foes, facilitated the means of repelling them; the French were pushed on every side; a complete rout ensued; the chevalier de Damas, with about one hundred and fifty soldiers, was taken prisoner; and near two hundred fell in the conflict.



It was at this critical juncture that the *Medea* frigate arrived from Madras at Cuddalore, and brought information of the conclusion of peace between the two nations; a mutual cessation of hostilities, and exchange of prisoners, immediately took place; and that tranquillity which the French already enjoyed in the other parts of the globe was now extended to their tottering settlements in the East.

The successes of France during the late war had been dearly purchased by the inconveniencies it had produced. The retreat of monsieur Neckar from the management of the finances, had, as we before had occasion to observe, diminished the public confidence: three different persons who, since his resignation, had transiently occupied the post of comptroller-general, encreased the jealousies of the people; and the failure of the celebrated *Caïsse d'Escompte*, completed the universal consternation.

That bank had been established, by a royal edict, on the twenty-second of September, 1776. The plan was originally formed by a company of private adventurers, and its capital was fixed at five hundred thousand pounds sterling. Its professed design was—as its title implied—to discount bills of exchange, payable at two or three months after date, at the rate of four *per cent. per annum*. But this interest, from which it was necessary to deduct a considerable expence and some losses, could never constitute an equivalent for the capital sunk by the proprietors. An additional power was, therefore, granted them, of issuing notes to the amount of their capital, which, as they were capable, at any time, of being converted into specie, might be often voluntarily taken by their customers from mere convenience. And as the managers of this concern chiefly consisted of the most opulent bankers, together with some receivers-general of the revenues, they were able, by a private agreement among themselves, to take these notes in lieu of cash, to give them a certain degree of circulation and currency. By means of the notes thus issued, their original capital was doubled, and the proprietors were enabled to make an annual dividend of six *per cent.*

The excellent outline of this system seemed to insure its success. There was always in the bank the sum of five hundred thousand pounds, either in cash, or in bills of a short date, equivalent to the notes in circulation. There was beside this the original capital advanced by the proprietors, and never withdrawn, and a part of the dividend was also left in the bank for the purpose of accumulation. These circumstances had given the bank the highest degree of reputation, and occasioned its stock to sell greatly above par. But notwithstanding these flattering appearances, to the astonishment of the nation, on the second day of October, it suddenly stopped payment. The cause assigned was an uncommon scarcity of specie; but the public imagined that the failure originated in a loan secretly made to government; and what confirmed the suspicion was, that government, about the same time, stopped payment of the bills drawn upon them by the Americans.

The protection of the king was extended to the falling company, and the publication of four royal edicts tended to relieve the distress under which it laboured. By the first of these edicts, dated the twenty-seventh of September, the bank was authorized to pay its notes in bills of exchange, with beneficial discount; the currency of the notes was limited to the Parisian banks; and all prosecution was forbidden, of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, for payment in specie, and of Individuals for debts, the payment of which had been tendered in notes of that bank. By the second—published three days after—the ordinances against the exportation of specie were renewed; the transport of specie from province to province was subjected to inspection and a fee; the bills with which the bank was permitted to pay its notes were specified to be bills payable in three months; and the bank was allowed the option of paying its notes in specie. By the third—issued on the fourth of October—an estimate was declared to have been taken by the king's command, which confirmed the declaration of the first edict, with regard to the property of the bank: the bank was allowed an option of discounting bills as before, whenever they judged convenient; and, as a farther encouragement, a lottery, with a stock of one million sterling, redeemable in eight years, being established, the tickets were made purchaseable in notes of the *Caisse d'Escompte*. In each of the edicts, much repetition is found; and the fourth contains no original matter.

By these expedients, aptly timed, and judiciously administered, the confidence which the public had formerly reposed in the *Caisse d'Escompte* was revived; its business increased; and its stock, in a short time, rose to more than double the original subscription; the bills from America were at the same time put in a train of payment; and public credit was happily restored throughout the kingdom.

A treaty concluded with the United States of America afforded some trifling compensation for the expences that had been incurred during the late war. The states engaged to reimburse France the sum of eighteen millions of livres, which had been advanced in the hour of their distress; and Lewis agreed to consult their convenience, by allowing the space of twelve years for the payment of the money, which was to be received in twelve equal annual instalments.

A. D. 1784, 1785.] But though tranquillity was restored, the situation of the neighbouring powers prevented the nation from exonerating herself from the heavy burdens occasioned by the extent of her military establishment, all deficiencies in which were now filled up with the utmost diligence and vigour. While the four great maritime powers of Europe were exhausting their strength in the prosecution of that war which had occasioned such desolation both in the Old and the New World, Joseph the Second, who now occupied the Imperial throne of Germany, was more happily employed in cultivating the arts of peace, in the improvement of his extensive dominions, and in estab-

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lishing, upon sure and permanent foundations, the power, and, consequently, the security, of his empire.

In the laudable pursuit of these objects, he was not contented with a strict adherence to the beaten tract marked out by others, nor yet with waiting the distant effect of slow and progressive schemes of improvement. His plans, unmarked by that caution which the removal of rooted prejudices almost invariably requires, were no sooner conceived than executed; and, as if he envied posterity the exclusive possession of national advantages, he resolved to participate himself in the benefits he intended for his country. Impressed with these ideas, he was incessantly occupied in the conception, adoption, examination, or execution of numberless projects of regulation and improvement, of less or greater importance, but including some of such magnitude, as to have for their object the essential reform of the first departments of the state and government, whether ecclesiastical, civil, or military. This task, in itself sufficiently arduous, was rendered still more difficult by the nature of his dominions, composed of separate kingdoms, and a number of distinct provinces, obtained by different means, and at different periods, subject to their own peculiar forms of government, and still retaining many of their original rights and institutions. But though much dissatisfaction and complaint were excited by these schemes, which militated with popular opinions and national practices, and tended to the subversion of establishments rendered venerable by their antiquity, and considered as sacred in their institution, this prince, nevertheless, proceeded to enforce his new regulations, with unexampled facility and success.

Soon after his accession to undivided power, by the death of his mother, the empress queen, it became apparent, that the reduction of the exorbitant power of the clergy within his own dominions, and their emancipation from dependence on the court of Rome, with the suppression of the religious orders, and the appropriation of their property, were among the great and determined objects of the emperor's policy.

Though many of his projects were too hastily adopted, without the necessary attention to consequences, resulting from local circumstances, and the progress of mental improvement, the most inveterate enemies of Joseph must acknowledge that some of his plans were well calculated to promote the happiness of his subjects, and the consequent welfare of the state. His regulations, with regard to religious toleration and the liberal extension of the liberty of the press, must ever command the applause of an enlightened statesman, and extort commendation from the advocate for rational freedom. His schemes of ambition appear in a very different light, and will, of course, excite very different sentiments.

The ruinous and unfortunate war, into which the prevalence of the French and republican faction in Holland had precipitated that country with its old and natural ally, England,

England, among its other irreparable ill consequences, was the means of exposing the nakedness of the republic, and, to the astonishment of all Europe, presented such a view of disorder and imbecility in the government, and of radical weakness in the state, as had not before been suspected, even by such of its neighbours as were most celebrated for their acuteness and penetration. The impressions made by this discovery were continually increasing, as almost every day of the war was marked with some new circumstance of misfortune or disgrace. While they were thus exposed to danger from without, the state and the public were convulsed and rent by intestine dissensions, the seeds of which were so numerous and so deeply laid as scarcely to admit the hope of an effective remedy. The differences between the prince Stadtholder and the States were multiplying so fast, and increasing so much in degree and virulence, as to indicate a speedy and alarming crisis; while the violence and animosity of the French and Orange factions, which included, between them, the whole body of the people, and all the departments of government, whether civil or military, by sea or by land, seemed destined to subvert the very foundations of the republic. Upon the whole, it appeared clear to all observers, that the restoration of the republic, in any degree, to its former power and splendour, was a circumstance which would not admit of a moment's speculation; and that some considerable revolution was necessary to preserve the union of its parts.

It could not be expected, upon any foundation of political knowledge and experience, that the unexpected disclosure of such a scene, with the magnitude of the objects which it exhibited, and the prospects of advantage it held out, should not attract the views, and excite the ambition, of a powerful, active, and neighbouring sovereign, whose enterprising disposition, though hitherto subject to considerable restraint, had been, in other instances, rendered sufficiently manifest.

The resumption of the Dutch *barrier* was one of the first advantages which the emperor proposed to draw from the present forlorn state of their affairs. The principal fortresses of the Austrian Netherlands, including several of their most considerable cities, had, ever since the conclusion of the succession war, been deposited in the hands of the Dutch, for the mutual security of the court of Vienna and themselves; for, at the same time that they formed a powerful barrier to cover the territories of the States, they were to be garrisoned and defended by them; and thus served to obviate the dangers apprehended by both from the power and ambition of France.

During the long succeeding depression of the house of Austria, the advantages of this arrangement were repeatedly and fully experienced; and occasions offered, which made it evident, that nothing less could have prevented the Netherlands from being long since wrested out of their hands. But in the extraordinary degree of power and greatness to which that house has, within the memory of man, risen, and, in the usual vicissitude of things, what had before been understood and felt as a substantial benefit, came at length



to be considered as a stigma and a grievance. The present emperor felt his own power to be fully competent to the protection and defence of his dominions. With the great armies he possessed; he could not conceive that he wanted the cover of fortresses to prevent the progress of an enemy. He considered, that it was exceedingly expensive to keep them in repair; that being, accordingly, neglected in seasons of peace and security, they generally fell, with little trouble, into the hands of an invader, at the commencement of hostilities: when, besides the loss of their garrisons, and the great present advantages which they afforded to the enemy, their recovery was frequently attended with more difficulty than any other undertaking of the war.

He, besides, thought it derogatory to his own honour, as well as to the dignity and power of the empire, that a number of his principal cities and fortresses should be garrisoned, and at his own expence too, by foreigners. He considered it as no less than paying a shameful and ignominious tribute for protection and defence; and that it would be, in the last degree, personally shameful and degrading to himself, if now, when the occasion so opportunely offered, he should suffer such a standing monument of past weakness, dependence, or even obligation, any longer to continue.

Nor were several specious arguments wanting, to justify to the Dutch, and to the world at large, the intended measure of taking the barrier into his own hands, and of dismantling the fortresses. It was stated, that the revenues drawn from these cities and their districts were misapplied; that the fortifications were falling to decay, and the garrisons defective; and that the shameful manner in which they were lost to the Dutch, in the war of 1741, was a sufficient evidence of their incapacity to maintain and defend the barrier. But that, independent of all complaints with respect to the discharge of their trust, the circumstances of things, and the state of affairs on all sides, were now so entirely altered, that none of the causes or motives, which originally operated to the establishment of the barrier, were any longer in existence. That France, instead of being the common enemy, as then, was now the common friend of both parties; that her ambition was no longer dangerous, and, if it were, was directed to other objects; that the emperor and she were mutually bound, by the strictest ties of friendship, alliance, and blood; and, even admitting the possibility of a change in this state of connections, his territories would, at all times, form an effectual barrier to Holland, and would afford much greater security to the Dutch by being in his hands, than in their own.

Arguments of great weight, however, were adduced on the other side. The immense expence, in blood and intresure, which Holland, through a long course of successive wars, had endured, for the attainment, the establishment, and the preservation of this very barrier, was a matter of general notoriety. Nor was it to be forgotten, that to the extraordinary exertions of Great Britain and Holland was it owing that the emperor, at this time, held any territory or possession whatever in the Low Countries; that those powers had

had the principal share in wresting from the house of Bourbon these provinces, guarded, as they then were, by the strongest fortresses in the world, and defended by those numerous and veteran armies which had so long been the terror of Europe; that as they were the great leaders in the war, so they compelled France and Spain, by the peace, to submit to the transfer of the Netherlands to the German line of the house of Austria, and had since been the means of securing and preserving them to that family; that the settlement of the barrier was the only return to Holland for all these services, and for the immense expences she had sustained, not only in that part of the war, but in her arduous endeavours to place the ancestor of Joseph upon the throne of Spain. It was farther urged, that the proposed measure, besides being a direct breach of treaty, and violation of faith, would be a shameful dereliction of every sense of past service and obligation; and that the season chosen for its accomplishment, under the present embarrassed and depressed state of the republic, would render it still more disgraceful.

Much more might have been said: but strength of argument can avail but little against the weight of power; and experience has, unhappily, shewn that treaties are considered but as weak obligations, when interest or convenience calls for their violation. Great Britain, the guardian of the barrier, was now an enemy to Holland.

As an opening to this design, the emperor had, in the beginning of the year 1781, peremptorily demanded from the States-General precise accounts of the revenues which they had drawn from the barrier, and of the sums which they had expended in the repair or improvement of the fortresses. This sudden and captious demand, of coming to a settlement upon such old, intricate, and long-neglected accounts, and preferred at a season so critical and peculiar, seemed to betray very different dispositions from those of friendship or good-will to the states; and inspired them with other apprehensions besides those which related to the barrier. Circumstanced, indeed, as they were, it may well be supposed, that this demand contributed not a little to facilitate their subsequent compliance with the cession of an object, so long holden dear by them, and which involved in it the immediate security of their country. Be that as it may, the business was soon decided, nor could many objections have been raised to its conclusion, for the negotiation had scarcely been heard of, when, towards the close of the year, the Dutch garrisons and artillery were almost silently withdrawn from the barrier, and the emperor's order for dismantling the fortresses, and selling the materials, seems to have been the first public communication of the event.

Never was a measure of so much importance, and on which so much depended, carried into effect more smoothly; but, notwithstanding this facility, it was easily seen, that the states were fully aware of its dangerous tendency, although the unfortunate situation in which they were involved compelled them to submit, without a struggle, to a power they were unable to resist. In fact, a general alarm was spread through the United Pro-



vines ; and the great number of hands that were directly employed, and the corresponding measures adopted, for putting their own fortresses on the frontier, particularly those along the Schelde, in an immediate state of defence, sufficiently shewed, that government was no less affected than the public upon this occasion. Thus was Holland stripped of its dearly-purchased barrier, and, by the revolution of politics, exposed to the views of a not less ambitious, and more dangerous, because a nearer, neighbour than France.

But though the court of Versailles had tacitly acquiesced in a claim, which it probably considered as pregnant with beneficial consequences to the French, it did not regard with equal indifference pretensions which the emperor, soon after, preferred, to the free navigation of the Schelde, and to certain territorial possessions, on the frontiers of Holland, which the Dutch had peaceably enjoyed for centuries past. Claims of this nature could not possibly have been made on the republic at a time when she was less able to resist them ; for the peace had neither restored vigour nor unanimity at home, nor reputation or importance abroad. On the contrary, the civil dissensions of the Dutch were daily encreasing in magnitude and virulence, so as to sanction the belief that no remedy could be adopted, that would not at least prove as dangerous as the disease. The protection and *apparent* services which they had received from France during the war had thrown into the hands of that power an evident preponderancy in all the affairs of the republic ; and that influence being unceasingly, though covertly, exerted, in support of the old Lovestein, or republican, faction, of which the French interest in Holland, for the most part, and at most times, consisted, and whose members were the hereditary enemies of the Stadtholderian system of government, as well as of the Orange family, it was now become so strong, that no sufficient counterpoise remained in the state, to restrain the excess and violence incident to the predominance of political parties.

Thus rent by domestic dissensions, and convulsed in all its members, the circumstances and condition of the Republic could scarcely have failed to attract the views, and excite the enterprize of powerful and ambitious neighbours. A dangerous refuge, however, remained, which, in this situation, was eagerly grasped at. France having, through the violence of parties, and the collision of jarring views and interests, accompanied by a series of unexpected and singular events, but all tending to the same conclusion, obtained an unbounded influence in the affairs of the republic, it identified their interests so much, that she was bound, by every principle of policy, to counteract the designs of others, and to afford her protection, at whatever risque or expence. This tended to gratify the utmost wishes of the aristocratical party ; since the state would be protected from danger without, while they were at leisure to new model the internal government.

This peculiar situation of affairs between France and Holland did not seem, in any degree, to operate upon the conduct of the emperor. who placed a greater dependence upon

upon the friendship and closeness of alliance between him and France, than more experienced politicians would have been inclined to do upon the faith of any national connection, when that faith was to be put to the test by superior interests and temptation. That prince repeatedly pressed his demands, in a haughty and imperious tone; and, notwithstanding the conciliatory disposition evinced by the states, proceeded to the commission of an act of open violence and hostility. Towards the latter end of the month of April (1784), without previous declaration or notice, a small detachment of Austrian foot, with four field-pieces, entered the territories of the Republic, and took possession of the fort of Old Lillo. Some few days after, when the negotiations were actually commenced, and the Dutch ministers appeared evidently disposed to give all reasonable satisfaction with respect to the emperor's claims, a detachment of Austrian dragoons advanced to Hartog-Eyk, near Heerle, where they demolished the barriers, pulled down the Dutch flag from the custom-house, and charged the receiver of that department, in the name of his Imperial majesty, not to obey nor execute any orders from the regency of Heerle, who were his legal and natural masters, nor to receive from any person whatever any money upon account or pretence of toll or duty; threatening, in case of disobedience, to send him in fetters to the next Austrian garrison.

These hostile transactions occasioned an universal alarm in Holland, where the troops were immediately put in motion, and every preparation made for repelling such an unprovoked attack. But even in this moment of danger and dismay, when the public safety might have depended so much upon the celerity of movement and promptness of design and action, the measures of defence were obstructed by the disputes between the States and the prince Stadtholder, relative to the rights or limits of the executive power. So deaf and obtuse is the citizen frequently rendered to the most imminent dangers that threaten the state, by the prevalence of civil discord, and the continuance of intestine commotions!!

Lewis the Sixteenth, who was now their only refuge, had been previously solicited by the States, for his friendly interposition with his kinsman, the emperor, in softening his disposition towards the Republic, and to accept the office of mediator, in finally arranging and settling the disputed limits and frontiers, as well as the other matters of dispute between them. He accordingly instructed his ambassador, the duke de Vauguion, to communicate the pleasing intelligence, that he had frankly and readily accepted the desired office of mediation.

But this circumstance did not deter the emperor from pressing, nor even from encreasing his demands; in addition to his former claims he now asserted his right to the absolute and independent sovereignty of the Schelde from Antwerp to Saffingen, and insisted that the Dutch guard-ship which had been usually stationed at Fort Lillo should be withdrawn,



drawn, as he could not think of permitting the exercise of any foreign authority whatever within any part of his sovereignty on that river.

In consequence of a communication made to the court of Versailles by the States-General of the memorial which they had drawn, in answer to the claims and demands made by the emperor, and containing likewise a number of counter-claims set up by the Dutch, the French king took that opportunity, along with many commendations of their past and present moderation, and the desire which they had manifested of preserving the public tranquillity, strongly to recommend a continuation of the same prudent and equitable conduct, particularly cautioning them to abstain from all measures which might, in any degree, be considered as derogatory to the dignity of the emperor. He, likewise, recommended, that, in order to give the greater efficacy to his own conciliatory endeavours, and the better to enable him to enforce all the means which his connections with that sovereign might admit of, they should furnish and support him with such specific propositions as they were willing to make, for laying the foundation of an equitable and lasting accommodation.

This was accordingly done; but the time was not yet arrived when the interposition of France was to produce any favourable effect on the conduct of the emperor. Early in the autumn of 1784 every thing seemed rapidly approaching to the most decisive and alarming crisis; three new and extraordinary demands were added to the emperor's former *ultimatum*. The first was, "The entire and free navigation of the Schelde from Antwerp to the sea," which was to be laid down as a *sine quâ non*; and was accompanied with a declaration, "That in the intermediate time, until matters were finally settled, the emperor's subjects should occasionally exercise their undoubted right of navigating that river; and that two ships were then in actual preparation for the purpose." This was further enforced by the Imperial minister at Brussels, who declared, that the first shot fired upon the Schelde would be considered by his master as a declaration of war, and resented accordingly.

The second article insisted on the demolition of the forts which had been erected by the Dutch, for the maintenance of their monopoly in the navigation of the Schelde.

The third demand was still more extraordinary; being no less than a free navigation and uninterrupted commerce to and in both the East and West Indies. This was in fact claiming a moiety of all the benefits which the Dutch derived from their colonies in the New World, and their conquests and settlements in the East; a requisition which, taken in its full extent, would have reached to their monopoly of the Spice Islands, and even to their trade in Japan, if that fierce and haughty people had not rendered all speculation and adventure upon their forbidden coasts impracticable.

The states of Holland insisted, that several of the emperor's demands were in direct contravention of the most solemn treaties. That by the treaty of Munster, concluded on the thirteenth of January, in the year 1648, with his predecessor, Philip the Fourth of Spain, duke of Burgundy and Brabant, and Earl of Flanders, that prince, besides acknowledging, in the fullest manner, the independence of the United States, not only confirmed to them all such possessions as they already held, and such barrier towns and forts as were then assigned, but renounced, for himself and his successors for ever, all claim and title to any such as they might hereafter, without infraction of that treaty, acquire, by conquest or otherwise: that by the same treaty, he not only irrevocably confirmed the charters and rights of the Dutch East and West India companies, but rendered himself and his successors the perpetual guarantees of their commerce in both parts of the world: that, by the sixth article of the same treaty, it was farther provided, that the said king's own subjects should be restricted to continue their navigation in the East-Indies, in the same manner in which they had hitherto exercised it, and should, on no account whatever, be permitted to extend it beyond those limits:—that, by the fourteenth article of the said treaty, it was expressly stipulated, that the Western or Lower Scheldt, the canal of Sas, the Swin, and other mouths of the sea bordering upon them, should be *kept* closed on the side belonging to the States.

They maintained, that the treaty of Munster had been recognized and confirmed, and the rights of the States fortified and enlarged, by a number of subsequent treaties. That by the barrier treaty, concluded in 1715, between the emperor, the king of Great Britain, and the Republic, the former ceded certain territories therein specified to the latter, in full and complete sovereignty, for the security and better exercise of their sovereignty and rights on the Lower Scheldt, and for facilitating their communications between Brabant and Dutch Flanders:—That the said cession was formally repeated and confirmed, and a small farther addition of territory ceded, for the same express purpose, in the convention which was concluded between the same three powers, in the year 1718.

That, with respect to their commercial rights, the same emperor, Charles the Sixth, having, in derogation of the treaty of Munster, adopted the well-known project of establishing a company to trade from Ostend to India, that prince, notwithstanding, found it necessary, after it had been carried on for some years, to relinquish the design, and to dissolve the company. For, by the treaty of Vienna, concluded in 1731, between the emperor and his Britannic majesty, and to which the States General became parties by an act of concurrence, the former was bound to abolish the said commerce and company for ever. And, with respect to the West-Indies, the said act of concurrence states, on the part of the Dutch, “That they will conform with good faith to the regulations established by the treaty of Munster, in every thing that is therein stipulated with respect to the commerce and navigation of the West Indies.”



It was strongly urged, that the rights of the Republic, and particularly her exclusive sovereignty of the Scheldt, had been confirmed and guaranteed to her by all the treaties which secure the political existence of Europe: that it was now near one hundred and forty years since the conclusion of the treaty of Munster, during all which long period she had holden unclaimed and unquestioned, the exclusive navigation of that river: but that it was no new claim nor novel exercise of sovereignty or right, even at that very time; for that the river had been equally shut up, ever since the reduction of Antwerp, by the duke of Parma, in the year 1585: that, therefore, supposing the treaty of Munster had contained no specific article whatever upon that subject, yet the very omission, in a matter of such vast importance, and the acquiescence in a measure so long and so notoriously established, must have been considered by all mankind as a full acknowledgment and confirmation of the right. Nor did this exclusive right and benefit, already possessed, and thus legalized and confirmed, want the sanction of a fair and full compensation in its purchase; for it was a part of the price paid by Spain for the preservation of those very Netherlands, which are now holden by the emperor, the claims on which would never otherwise have been relinquished by the States of Holland; claims, to the establishment of which they were, both then and after, fully competent.

They farther insisted, that the business of the Scheldt was far from being merely a matter of commerce, as it was pretended: the question of opening that river was much more of a political than of a commercial nature. Things had undergone such changes, and the circumstances of commerce were so totally altered, that Antwerp was not now capable of becoming an object of jealousy or envy: but the opening of the Scheldt would be opening the gates of a broad and great road, into the very heart of their dominions; it would be laying the inmost recesses, and the vital sources of the state, open and exposed; and would at once include, not only the immediate security, but the independence and the very existence of the Republic.

On the other side, it was answered, on the part of the emperor, that the States had been guilty of so many infractions of the treaty of Munster, in all those parts of it which secured the rights, or were in any degree advantageous to the Austrian Netherlands, that they had thereby forfeited all claim to the performance of those stipulations which were in their own favour. That he found himself, therefore, both in reason and equity, perfectly absolved from paying any regard to those provisions on which they now wished so much to insist. That they, however, strained the meaning (as they did in all similar cases) to their own advantage, of that article in the treaty of Munster which related to the Scheldt, and which by no means conveyed that sovereignty and exclusive right that they pretended. But if every thing they advanced upon that or any other ground of treaty had been even admitted, still the shameful yoke which had been imposed upon the Netherlands was too unnatural and too degrading to be lasting; nor could it,

it, from these circumstances, be any longer possibly endured, than while absolute necessity, arising from the unfortunate situation of public affairs, rendered a submission to it inevitable.

All Europe was much interested in this subject, and the sentiments and opinions of mankind have seldom been so much divided upon a question of a nature so simple and confined as the navigation of a river. The grounds of argument in support of the emperor's claim were very specious, and capable of being dressed in so plausible a guise, and of putting on appearances so interesting and engaging, that they were admirably calculated for seducing the opinions of the generality of mankind; who, taking only a transient view of the subject, were influenced more by sentiment than by any attention to questions of state or policy in their decisions.

The bare relation of the act, that an ancient and respectable people, who had been long renowned for their industry, and celebrated for their spirit and commercial enterprise, had been reduced to ruin and beggary, by the deprivation of their natural right to the navigation and benefits of a river which runs through their territories, seemed at once sufficient to decide the question in the minds of the hearers, and to unite them in a general reprobation of so flagrant an injustice. Upon the same principle, the deliverance of a people from so cruel a mark of bondage, and the restitution of their natural rights and former happiness, seemed an achievement so glorious, as to be worthy and characteristic of a hero. The former greatness, splendour, and opulence of Antwerp, were artfully dwelt upon, by way of appeal to the passions; and, with more effect than either truth or justice, its decline was attributed entirely to this odious measure, to which the Dutch were said to be prompted by their jealousy and avarice, in order to monopolize all commerce, and that Amsterdam in particular might rise to greatness upon her ruins. With an equal view to the passions, and with still less truth or justice, the Scheldt was magnificently represented as the finest river in Europe, as if its beauty could possibly affect the questions of right, or of political necessity. It may easily be supposed, that the general and established character of avaridity attributed to the Dutch, with the harsh, arbitrary, and monopolizing spirit which they had ever displayed in commercial concerns, could not but operate greatly to their disadvantage upon the opinions and prejudices of mankind.

The States, however, had many strong arguments to urge, and many authenticated facts to oppose to representations plausible and artful, or to opinions resulting from prejudice, and hastily adopted. It was said—and *justly* said—to be absurd, in the present state of things and of the world, to recur to what was called *natural rights*, in order to overthrow those special compacts between men, and those political conventions between states, which form the basis and constitute the security of all property, whether public or private.



private. What a picture would Europe exhibit, if all its powers were now obliged to recur to original principles, and to the laws of nature, and to relinquish all those possessions which fraud or force, war or treaty, through the revolution of a long series of ages, had enabled them to acquire ! Such a measure would effect a total dissolution of all the bands by which mankind are united ; throwing them back again into a state of savage nature, and rendering the world a dreadful scene of endless confusion—a wild chaos of universal disorder !

But it was denied that the mere passing of a river, in its inland course, through some part of a prince's territory, constituted any such natural right, when its opening to the sea was in possession of another power. At once, however, to controvert all the pathetic declamation employed upon this subject, it was strenuously insisted, that the whole course of the two branches of the Scheldt, which passed within the dominions of Holland, was entirely artificial ; that it was formed by, and owed its existence to, the hands of Dutchmen ; that its banks were the produce of ages of unintermitted labour, and that they were still maintained by great and continual labour and expence. That if it had not been for those standing monuments of Dutch enterprize, those admirable dykes which excite the astonishment of mankind, the waters of the Scheldt, stagnating in shallow lakes and immense marshes, had never reached the sea in any distinct or sufficient portion for the purposes of navigation. That the Lower Scheldt being thus originally made and still preserved by Dutchmen, as they had before created and still preserved the two provinces of Holland and Friesland, so it was equally their own property. That as it could not even be imagined, that these immense labours were intended for the use of others, so their benefits, as well as the stupendous works themselves, must be considered, upon every principle of natural right, of law, and of justice, as their own exclusive property, independent of all treaties, whatever.

In answer to the tragical representations, by which the degradation and fall of Antwerp from its ancient splendour and greatness were ascribed to the avarice and despotism of the Dutch, particularly in the measure of shutting up the Scheldt, it was observed, that the departure of foreign commerce from that city had originated in various well-known causes, many of them antecedent to, and all of them differing widely from the only one which was now assigned. Antwerp had experienced a rapid decline for more than a century before the commencement of the troubles and wars in the Netherlands. Commerce had branched out into other channels ; and Amsterdam, though long before considerable, had, within that period, from its superior advantages, and other concurring causes, risen to be the first commercial city in Europe. Antwerp, however, continued great and opulent, and, notwithstanding the losses it sustained by its memorable siege, would have been still considerable, if its ruin had not been effected by the same causes and means which spread desolation throughout Bruges, and other great cities of the Netherlands.

Netherlands. The merchants and manufacturers were compelled, by the despotism, cruelty, and religious persecution of the Spaniards, to abandon them all, and to carry their commerce and their arts into other countries. It was observed, as a curious circumstance, with respect to this subject, that Spain, the sovereign of Antwerp, had been no less interested than Holland, in the measure of shutting up the Schelde; for that, as the celebrated statesman John de Witt says in his Memoirs, the greatness and opulence of that city were incompatible with the views of Spanish despotism.

The real cause, however, of their alarm, at the demand of opening the Schelde, was studiously and wisely concealed by the States. The different branches of that river intersected their dominions in such a manner, and established such an open communication with their other numerous waters, that their harbours, docks, naval arsenals, many of their principal cities, and, in a great measure, the whole interior of their country, would be open and exposed to the possessor of the Schelde; so that their very existence ever after must be at the mercy of such an inmate; and they must sooner or later expect to fall, and constantly live under the dreadful apprehension, a sacrifice to ambition, revenge, or even caprice.

The test of war or peace, announced by the emperor, without waiting the result of the negotiations which had been opened at Brussels, or regarding the mediation of France, was now to be put to the issue; although the states, as a proof of their moderation and conciliatory disposition, had removed the obnoxious guardship at Lillo, and had even rejected the proposal of repairing the fortifications of Maestricht—a fortress to which the emperor had preferred a claim—lest its adoption at such a season should give umbrage to that prince. The emperor had, however, previously offered to remit the greater part, if not the whole, of his other pretensions, upon the condition of opening the Schelde, in the manner which he had prescribed, so as that the navigation might be entirely free and unlimited as in the open seas, and no claim nor exercise of sovereignty pretended. On the other hand, the states relaxed so far in this matter, as to offer a limited navigation on it, subject to certain restrictions, and confined to his subjects in the Netherlands.

Alike deaf to the arguments and to the proposals of the States, the emperor directed a brig to proceed down the Schelde from Antwerp to the sea, and, at the same time, confirmed the threat of his minister, by declaring, that he would consider the first insult offered to his flag, on this occasion, as an act of formal hostility, and a declaration of war, on the part of the republic; the brig was however stopped by the Dutch naval officer; on the Austrian commander resuming his course, some shot, though without any fatal consequence to the crew, compelled him to desist; and he was detained for some days by the Dutch admiral at the mouth of the Schelde.



Every thing now tended to an immediate rupture; the Imperial ambassador was recalled from the Hague; the negotiations at Brussels were broken up; the troops in the Netherlands were ordered to be increased to seventy-six thousand men, and immense trains of artillery, and all the other apparatus of war were put in motion. The republic alarmed at these threatening appearances, redoubled their solicitations to the court of Versailles; the duke of Brunswick having been dismissed through the efforts of the faction hostile to the stadtholder, the States were reduced to the necessity of applying to France for a general, whose abilities and experience might enable him to conduct their arms with effect in the war they expected; and Lewis deputed to this service the count de Maillebois, an officer of approved talents, who had served with distinction in the late reign, but whose jealousy of mareschal d'Etrées, in the last German war, had hurried him into intrigues, which had drawn upon him a severe censure from the tribunal of the mareschals of France.

In the mean time, nothing was left untried, either by the States or the court of Versailles, in their endeavours to divert the approaching storm. The former renewed their pacific proposals; and the latter began to use the serious language of exhortation with the emperor. It was observed in a memorial, presented on this occasion, that the sincere friendship which attached the king to the emperor, combined with his wishes for the maintenance of the public tranquillity, rendered it a duty in him to come to an explanation with respect to the present disputes: that while, at the solicitation of both parties, he had employed his good offices for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation, he had carefully abstained from giving any opinion on the foundation of the emperor's first pretensions; a silence, the observance of which he still prescribed to himself; but his concern for the glory of the emperor authorized him to observe, that his first pretensions, and the demand for opening the Schelde, could not be considered under the same point of view:—that the Dutch, in refusing a compliance with that demand, only supported a right which was secured to them by solemn treaty, and which they looked upon as the basis of their prosperity, and even existence. It seemed to be inferred from this reasoning, without an absolute decision in terms, that the affair of the Schelde by no means warranted the breaking off the negotiations, any more than the subsequent proceedings; and if the claim itself were not absolutely condemned, it was considered as having nothing to do with the business at Brussels; from all which a renewal of the negotiations was strongly recommended, and even pressed.

The memorial then stated, that by pursuing an opposite conduct, it was to be apprehended that the emperor would excite a general uneasiness, and that other powers would think themselves obliged to adopt such precautions, and enforce such measures as circumstances and events might require: that the king himself must, in that case, be under the necessity of assembling troops on his frontiers; that he could not by any means be indifferent

ferent to the fate of the United Provinces, nor see them attacked by open force in their rights and possessions: more especially at the present time, when he was on the point of concluding an alliance with the republic, the fundamental articles of which had been settled before these differences commenced:—that if, moved by considerations of such great importance, the emperor could be induced to suspend all marks of hostility, and listen to the voice of moderation and humanity, the king renewed the offer of his mediation to procure an equitable and suitable accommodation, which he would the more zealously endeavour to obtain, as in so doing he should obey the dictates of his personal sentiments with regard to the emperor, and would thereby have the satisfaction to concur in extinguishing, in its first seeds, a war, the consequences of which no human sagacity could calculate.

But the expostulations and remonstrances of France were incapable of subduing the inflexibility of the emperor, on the subject of the Schelde. He expressed, indeed, his willingness to accept the mediation of that power upon all other points of difference, and accordingly to consent to the renewal of the negotiations limited to those objects, but the free navigation of that river he considered as a right so incontrovertible, that it was not even to become the subject of discussion. Lewis, therefore, was compelled to have recourse to other means for extricating his ally from the difficulty in which she was involved.

France, independent of her new connections with Holland, could not, without violating those principles of policy of which interest dictated the strictest observance, behold the ruin of one neighbour, not sufficiently powerful to excite her apprehensions, and the consequent aggrandizement of another, already too formidable. These considerations seem to have weighed with the court as well as with the nation; although the ties of affinity between the two monarchs induced the former to use the most conciliatory measures, and to endeavour, as far as it could be done consistently with reason and policy, to avoid proceeding to extremities; but shewing a full determination as to the part which they would take, if the emperor's obstinacy should render that issue unavoidable. The measures pursued were accordingly in exact conformity to this mode of thinking, and intention of acting. More than half the standing forces of France had been early put into quarters upon the borders of Alsace, Lorraine, and the Netherlands; and as things seemed to ripen to an issue, and appearances became more hostile on the other side, orders were given, and measures taken, to prepare for forming, in the ensuing summer, two camps in Flanders; one of them of eighty thousand men, in the celebrated plains of Lens, which had been rendered memorable by one of the splendid victories of the Great Condé.

The nation, in general, evinced an earnest desire to engage in a war, not so much from their restless temper or military disposition, as from the great and tempting national object



object of annexing the Austrian Low Countries to the monarchy ; an acquisition which, in the event of hostilities, they considered as certain. France had already such a foretaste of the sweets which were to be derived from those rich and fertile provinces, as was sufficient not only to provoke her appetite, but to excite a constant desire for their permanent possession. During the time that she had holden the Netherlands, in the war of 1744, she had drawn, by taxes and contributions, from these provinces, above two millions sterling a year. It cannot, then, excite wonder, that she should cast a wishful eye at so fair and tempting an object, which was just within her grasp ; and which nature, situation, and, at this particular time, a train of concurrent circumstances, as extraordinary as they were unexpected, seemed to destine to her possession.

It is singular that while the emperor was engaged in a scheme of such importance as to sanction the supposition that it must necessarily engross the whole of his attention, his mind should have been bent, at the same time, on the accomplishment of other objects of almost equal magnitude ; nor is it less singular that, at a period when it was of the utmost consequence to his views to conciliate the affections of his subjects, and to court the friendship of the neighbouring powers, he should embark in projects calculated to alienate the esteem of the one, and to provoke the resentment of the other. With a degree of levity that materially affected his reputation as a politician, he opened a new source of jealousy and discord in Germany, by meditating to exchange for the duchy of Bavaria the Austrian Netherlands ; those very Netherlands, upon whose account he seemed on the point of encountering all the hazards of a war, the consequences of which, as had been strongly urged by the court of Versailles, could not even be calculated. By a system of conduct equally impolitic, and still more unjust ; by continual innovations in all the established forms of internal government ; by injudicious and arbitrary infringements on the civil and religious institutions of Hungary, he excited the discontent of the fierce, but loyal, inhabitants of that valuable part of his dominions ; and forced into actual rebellion those brave Hungarians who had signalized their zeal, their patriotism, and their loyalty, by standing forth, in the hour of peril, as the protectors of his infancy, and the guardians of his mother's rights.

While the storm of war was thus unexpectedly turned from the Schelde, the republic of Holland had leisure to recover from its first surprize, and sedulously seized the unhoped for opportunity of providing effectually at home for the worst that might happen, and of endeavouring, at the same time, to ward off the evil and danger by an accommodation. France was, however, her shield of defence ; and, through the ability and firmness of the count de Vergennes, the republic could not have had a more effectual security.

It was impossible that the queen of France should not be deeply affected by a contest, which so closely involved her nearest and dearest connections, and threatened so immediate and

and perhaps irreparable a breach of the harmony and friendship subsisting between them. It was said, that on the morning of a day upon which a grand council was to be holden, the result of which, it was supposed, would be conclusive, with respect to the part that France should take, if the emperor persevered in pushing his designs against Holland to the last extremity, that princess took an opportunity of meeting M. de Vergennes on his way to the council, and, with a countenance deeply expressive of her anxiety and dismay, said, she hoped he would not on that day forget that the emperor was her brother ! to which the minister replied, that he certainly should not ; but that he was bound likewise to remember, that the king of France was her husband, and the dauphin her son.

The interposition and mediation of France was undoubtedly much facilitated in its effect, by the state of affairs in Germany, and by the resolute conduct of the Prussian monarch, who strenuously co-operated with the court of Versailles in resisting the pretensions of the emperor. The inflexibility of Joseph, however, was not easily subdued ; and so many difficulties were thrown in the way of an accommodation, that, through a great part of the year 1785, it yet seemed very doubtful what turn affairs might finally take. But, at length, he assumed the language of moderation, and, having granted an audience to the Dutch deputies, told them, he should order his ambassador at Paris to resume the negotiations, under the mediation of his brother, the king of France ; and he did not doubt but a speedy conclusion would prevent the unhappy occurrences which must be the unavoidable consequence of a farther delay.

The address and abilities of the count de Vergennes contributed to remove every obstruction, and, under his auspices, the preliminary articles of peace were signed at Paris, on the twentieth of September. In less than two months after, the definitive treaty was finally concluded, and signed at Fontainebleau by all the parties, under the guarantee, as well as mediation, of his Most Christian majesty.

The treaty of Munster was laid down as the basis of the present, and its stipulations were to be in all cases binding, where they were not expressly excepted by the new clauses. The principal articles were—That the states acknowledged the emperor's absolute and independent sovereignty over every part of the Schelde, from Antwerp to the limits of the county of Saffingen, conformably to a line drawn in 1664 ; they, of course, renouncing the right of levying any tax or impost on that part of the river, and binding themselves not to interrupt, in any manner, the commerce or navigation of his subjects thereon : that the rest of the river, beyond those limits to the sea, together with the canals of the Sas, the Swin, and the other neighbouring mouths of the sea, were to continue under the sovereignty of the States-General, conformably to the treaty of Munster. That the States should evacuate and demolish the forts of Kruischans and Frederic.



Frederic Henry, and cede the territories to his Imperial majesty. That, to give a new proof to the emperor of their desire to establish the most perfect intelligence between the two countries, the States consented to evacuate, and to submit to his discretion, the forts of Lillo and of Liefkenshoek, with the fortifications, in their present condition; only reserving to themselves the right of withdrawing the artillery and ammunition.

The States also stipulated to pay his Imperial majesty the sum of nine millions and a half of florins, in the current money of Holland, in lieu of all his rights and pretensions on Maestricht and its adjacent territories; and half a million more as an indemnification to his subjects for the damages they had sustained from the inundations when the dyke near Lillo had been broken down by the Dutch. The other articles went to several renunciations of claims or rights on both sides; to mutual cessions of villages or districts; to the adjustment of limits; and to various local or internal regulations. It was settled that no forts nor batteries should in future be raised within cannon-shot of the limits on either side; and that those already constructed should be demolished. All pecuniary claims or debts between the respective states were annulled; and the contracting parties were bound to renounce, without any reservation, all farther pretensions that either might have against the other.

While the count de Vergennes acquired the glory of having brought this delicate and important affair to a successful termination, he was equally attentive to the more immediate interests of his own court. Two days after the treaty of peace between the emperor and Holland had been signed, a new treaty of alliance between France and that Republic was likewise concluded, and, on Christmas-day (1785) was finally ratified; the stipulations were such as might be expected from the gratitude of the States, and the address of the court of Versailles. It included all the principles which can serve to bind and cement, in the closest and most indissoluble union of which they are capable, distinct nations under distinct governments; whereby they might mutually participate, in peace or in war, of good or of evil; and in all cases administer the most perfect aid, counsel, and succour to each other.

Besides the general stipulations, that the parties should contribute every thing in their power for mutual security, and for their respective preservation in tranquillity, peace, and neutrality, they guaranteed each other in the actual possession of all their estates, domains, franchises, and liberties; and mutually bound themselves to protect each other from all hostile attacks in every part of the world. If their united good offices and exertions for the preservation of peace, with respect to either, should prove ineffectual, they were to assist each other, by sea and land, in the following proportions; viz.—France agreed to furnish Holland with ten thousand effective infantry, and two thousand cavalry, with twelve ships of the line, and six frigates; and their High Mightinesses, in case of a marine war, or that France should

be attacked by sea, consented to furnish six ships of the line and three frigates; and, in the event of an invasion of the French territory, the States-General were allowed the option of furnishing their land contingent, either in money or troops, at the estimate of five thousand infantry and one thousand cavalry. The power which furnished the succours, whether in ships or men, was to pay and support them, wherever they might be employed, or for whatever time, by the ally; and they were to be entirely at the disposal of the latter, being immediately subject to their own chief, but in all operations under the commander of the requiring party, and while the auxiliaries remained in the ports or country of the requiring party, they were to be supplied with provisions and necessaries upon the same terms with his own ships and troops. The contracting parties, as soon as either of them should have furnished the stipulated supply, were bound to keep an equal number of ships and frigates armed and in constant readiness, to replace such as might be lost by the accidents of war or sea. If the stipulated succours should prove insufficient for the defence of the requiring party, or for the purpose of procuring a proper peace, they were to be augmented as necessity might require; it was even stipulated that they should assist each other with all their forces, if necessary; it being, however, agreed, that the contingent of troops to be furnished by the States General should not exceed twenty thousand infantry, and four thousand cavalry, and that they were, in all cases, to preserve the option of furnishing money in the place of land forces.

It was agreed, that, in the case of a naval war, in which neither of the parties should be directly concerned, they should mutually guarantee to each other the liberty of the seas, &c. that if either party were engaged in a war, in which the other should be obliged to take a direct part, they should concert together the most effectual means of annoying the enemy, and of obliging him to make peace; *and neither of them should have power to disarm, to make or receive proposals of peace or truce, without the consent of the other*; and that if a negotiation should be opened, it should not be begun and followed by either of the parties, without the participation of the other; and they should make each other acquainted with every thing that passed in the said negotiation. They were mutually bound to keep their forces, at all times, in good condition, and either party had a right to require and obtain from the other whatever satisfaction it might think necessary respecting the state of its military force, and means of defence. Both parties were faithfully to communicate to each other those engagements which subsisted between them and other powers of Europe, which were to remain in *statu quo*; *and they promised not to contract any future alliance or engagement whatever, which should be directly or indirectly contrary to the present treaty.*

With a view to cement the union of the two powers still more strongly, a treaty of commerce was stipulated, by which the subjects on either side were to be treated and considered by the other as the most favoured nation. And by one of the separate articles



of the present treaty, it was stipulated that both parties should, as much as possible, promote their mutual prosperity and advantage, by *rendering each other every assistance, both in counsel and succour, upon all occasions, and not agree to any treaties or negotiations which might be detrimental to each other, but should give notice of such negotiations, &c. as soon as they were proposed.* As the parties were at liberty to invoke such other powers as they thought necessary to join in this treaty, it was evident that Holland might be considered as eventually bound to become a party to the Bourbon family-compact, in its full extent.

Thus, by the successful exertions of Gallic policy, was Holland, after suffering, for a long series of years, all that the ravages of war, and the destructive hand of desolation, guided by the insatiate ambition of the house of Bourbon, could inflict, now converted into the firm ally of that very power, in opposition to whose daring encroachments she had formerly roused the most formidable kingdoms of Europe to arms: and thus, were those systems of policy, which for two centuries had been preserved by the maritime powers, and all the consequent treaties and ties of union, founded on principles that seemed peculiarly calculated to ensure their duration, and formed for the preservation of the balance of power, so essential to the political welfare of Europe, at once abrogated and dissolved; while France, having asserted the independence of America against Great Britain; having rescued the States-General from the unjust attempts of the house of Austria, and having changed an ancient and formidable foe into an useful friend, appeared to have attained that influence over the nations of the earth, to which, of late years, she had been but little accustomed. •

But this influence was more than counterbalanced by the difficulties and embarrassments she had incurred by her efforts to procure it—efforts disproportioned to her power, and pregnant with consequences fatal to her prosperity. Monsieur de Fleury, the successor of Neckar, had retired from the management of the finances, in the year eighty-three, and the subsequent administration of monsieur D'Ormesson had expired before the completion of the year that gave birth to it. On his retreat, monsieur de Calonne, who had successively filled with acknowledged reputation, the office of intendant of Metz, and, afterwards, of the provinces of Flanders and Artois, where the urbanity of his manners and his strict attention to an impartial administration of justice, had rendered him an object of universal esteem, was nominated to the vacant post of comptroller general. But his numerous accomplishments and good qualities, though they procured him the favour of his sovereign, proved inadequate to secure in his new station, that popularity which had invariably accompanied him in all the offices he had hitherto holden; and was necessary to prevent those murmurs, which a repetition of loans was calculated to excite.

The first operations of this minister had, however, extorted the general approbation; and the caisse d'Escompte, which had stopped payment some few weeks before he was called

to the head of the finances, was indebted to his bold and judicious exertions for the restoration of its credit. He still merited a higher degree of applause for the establishment of the Caisse d'Amortissement, or sinking fund, which was formed on a simple and judicious plan; it was to pay annually, by government, into the hands of a board set apart for that purpose, the entire interest of the national debts, whether in stock or annuities, together with an additional sum of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. The annuities that would be extinguished every year were estimated at fifty thousand pounds; and, in that proportion, the sum set apart for the redemption of the national debt, would annually encrease. The operation of this new fund was limited to the term of twenty-five years, and, during that term, the annual receipt of the Caisse d'Amortissement was declared unalterable, and incapable of being diverted to any other object.

From the discussion of these new regulations of finance, the public attention was directed to the conduct of those officers who, during the course of the war, had been entrusted with the naval forces of France. A council of war, which had been commissioned to try the count de Grasse, and other captains of the fleet defeated by admiral Rodney, honourably acquitted the commander, with the majority of the officers, and slightly censured a few, among whom was monsieur Bougainville, the celebrated navigator.

On the more successful courage and conduct of monsieur de Suffrein the most flattering applause was bestowed. All ranks and orders of men vied with each other in marks of gratitude and attachment to the man who had so nobly sustained the glory of the French flag, and who had raised the reputation of his countrymen on an element which had so repeatedly witnessed their defeat and disgrace. The queen displayed at once the sensibility of her character and the elegance of her taste, by the delicate compliment she paid to this distinguished commander: introducing him to the dauphin, then in his fourth year, she added, "This is monsieur de Suffrein, to whom we are under the greatest obligations; observe him well, and remember his name, it is one of the first you must learn to repeat, in order that you may never forget it."

The principal measure which marked the administration of monsieur de Calonne, during the year 1785, was the establishment of an East-India company, in lieu of that which had been abolished in the year 1773. This event occasioned great murmurs among the people, who, from the encreased annual importation from India, since that trade had been thrown open, had adopted the idea that such an establishment would prove prejudicial to their interests. The privilege of the new company was limited to seven years, but with the special proviso, that any years of war which might occur in the interim should be excluded from the computation.



In the preamble of the act, by which the scheme was adopted, it was asserted, "That the commodities of Europe not having been regulated by any common standard, nor proportioned to the demands of India, had on the one hand sold at a low price, while on the other the competition of the subjects of France had raised the price of the objects of importation; that, upon their return home, a want of system and assortment had been universally complained of, the market being glutted with one species of goods, and totally destitute of another; that these defects must necessarily continue as long as the trade remained in private hands; and that, on these accounts, as well as of the capital required, the establishment of a new company was absolutely necessary."

In answer to these reasons, which were far from satisfactory to the mercantile world, it was observed, that the arguments of the preamble were no more applicable to the trade of India than to any other trade; and that, if they were admitted in their full force and extent, they were calculated to annihilate the freedom of commerce. A provision in the act, directing that the prices of East India goods in the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon should be regulated by a tariff to be fixed by the court of Versailles, excited still louder exclamations of discontent; in this instance it was said that the first principles of commerce were violated in a manner the most wanton and absurd; instead of suffering it to find its own level, by the mutual collision of the wants of one party, and the labour of another, it was arbitrarily to be fashioned by a power, whose extreme distance must naturally render its decisions ill-timed and inapplicable: the very mode of introducing the monopoly was considered as a just subject of complaint; it was determined by a resolution of the king in council, instead of assuming the form of an edict, by which means it was exempted from those comments which it would probably have experienced from the parliament, at the moment of registration. This was considered, by the discontented, as a clandestine and surreptitious proceeding, excluding the parties to be affected by the measure from the privilege of being heard in opposition to it.

These murmurs, and the discussions which they occasioned, were far from favourable to monsieur de Calonne, who, in order to make up the deficit in the revenue, was obliged, at the close of each year, to open a loan; a measure, the necessity of which was fully demonstrated by the extraordinary expences that had been incurred, as well during the war, as since the conclusion of the peace. It had been deemed expedient to raise an artificial harbour at Cherbourg, by works of great magnitude, the accomplishment of which task required the expenditure of immense sums; the augmentation of the army, in consequence of the dispute between the emperor and the States of Holland, had been another considerable source of expence; and the strenuous exertions of the marine minister, the marquis de Castries, for maintaining a formidable naval force, had swelled, in no small degree, the ample catalogue of national disbursements.

A. D. 1786.] It was a grand misfortune which attended the administration of monsieur de Calonne, that all the measures which he adopted, with a view to promote the commercial interests of his country, were considered by those persons who might be supposed, from their situation in life, to be most conversant in mercantile matters, as highly detrimental to that trade which they were evidently intended to enlarge and extend. Under this description must be placed the famous commercial treaty concluded with England, which was signed at Versailles, on the twenty-sixth of September, 1786.

The preamble of this treaty states, that his Britannic majesty and his most Christian majesty, being equally animated with the desire not only of consolidating the good harmony which actually subsists between them, but also of extending the happy effects thereof to their respective subjects, have thought, that the most efficacious means for attaining these objects, conformably to the eighteenth article of the treaty of peace signed on the sixth of September, 1783, would be to adopt a system of commerce on the basis of reciprocity and mutual convenience, which, by discontinuing the prohibitions and prohibitory duties which have existed for almost a century between the two nations, might secure the most solid advantages, on both sides, to the national productions of industry, and put an end to contraband trade, no less injurious to the public revenue, than to that lawful commerce which is alone entitled to protection.

The treaty consists of fifty-seven articles; by the first of which it was agreed, that there should be a reciprocal and entirely perfect liberty of navigation and commerce between the subjects of the contracting parties, in all and every the kingdoms, states, provinces, and territories, subject to the kings of England and France in Europe, for all and singular kinds of goods, in those places, upon the conditions settled and adjusted in the subsequent articles of the treaty.

The second article sets forth, that for the future security of commerce and friendship between the subjects of their said majesties, and to the end that this good correspondence may be preserved from all interruption and disturbance, it is concluded and agreed, that if, at any time, there should arise any misunderstanding, breach of friendship, or rupture between the crowns of their majesties—*which God forbid!*—(which rupture shall not be deemed to exist until the recalling or sending home of the respective ambassadors and ministers) the subjects of each of the two parties, residing in the dominions of the other, shall have the privilege of remaining and continuing their trade therein, without any manner of disturbance, so long as they behave peaceably, and commit no offence against the laws and ordinances: and in case their conduct should render them suspected, and the respective governments should be obliged to order them to remove, the term of twelve months shall be allowed them for that purpose, in order that they may remove, with their effects and property, whether entrusted to individuals, or to the state. At the



same time it is to be understood, that this favour is not to be extended to those who shall act contrary to the established laws.

The salutary regulations enforced by this article, which tended to alleviate the evils of war, and to soften, in some degree, the calamities experienced by individuals from national disputes, are deserving of applause, and worthy of imitation. The third article is founded on a similar principle. By that it is agreed, that the subjects and inhabitants of the kingdoms, provinces, and dominions of their majesties, shall exercise no acts of hostility or violence against each other, either by sea or by land, or in rivers, streams, ports, or havens, under any colour or pretence whatsoever; so that the subjects of either party shall receive no patent, commission, or instruction for arming and acting at sea as privateers, nor letters of reprisal, as they are called, from any princes or states, enemies to the other party; nor, by virtue or under colour of such patents, commissions of reprisals, shall they disturb, infest, or any way prejudice or damage the aforesaid subjects and inhabitants of the king of Great Britain, or of the Most Christian king; neither shall they arm ships in such a manner as is abovesaid, or go out to sea therewith. To which end, as often as it is required by either party, strict and express prohibitions shall be renewed and published in all the territories, countries, and dominions of each party whereforever; that no one shall in any wise use such commissions, or letters of reprisal, under the severest punishment that can be inflicted on the transgressors, besides being liable to make full restitution and satisfaction to those to whom they have done any damage; neither shall any letters of reprisal be hereafter granted by either of the said high contracting parties, to the prejudice or detriment of the subjects of the other, except only in such case wherein justice is denied or delayed; which denial or delay of justice shall not be regarded as verified, unless the petitions of the person, who desires the said letters of reprisal, be communicated to the minister residing there on the part of the prince against whose subjects they are not to be granted, that, within the space of four months, or sooner, if it be possible, he may manifest the contrary, or procure the satisfaction which may be justly due.

By the fourth article, it is specified, that the subjects and inhabitants of the respective dominions of the two sovereigns shall have liberty, freely and securely, *without licence or passports*, general or special, by land or by sea, or any other way, to enter into the kingdoms, dominions, provinces, countries, islands, cities, villages, towns, walled or unwalled, fortified or unfortified, ports or territories whatsoever, of either sovereign, situated in Europe, and to return from thence, to remain there, or to pass through the same, and therein to buy or purchase, as they please, all things necessary for their subsistence and use; and they shall mutually be treated with all kindness and favour. Provided, however, that in all these matters they behave and conduct themselves conformably to the laws and statutes, and live with each other in a friendly and peaceable manner, and promote reciprocal concord, by maintaining a mutual and good understanding.

The fifth article is calculated to facilitate the commercial intercourse between the two countries, by authorizing the subjects of either to establish magazines and warehouses, and to purchase and vend merchandize, in the dominions of the other, without molestation or interruption. It terminates thus:—In matters of religion, the subjects of the two crowns shall enjoy perfect liberty: they shall not be compelled to attend divine service, whether in churches or elsewhere; but, on the contrary, they shall be permitted, without any molestation, to perform the exercises of their religion privately in their own houses, and in their own way. Liberty shall not be refused to bury the subjects of either kingdom, who die in the territories of the other, in convenient places to be appropriated for that purpose; nor shall the funerals or sepulchres of the deceased be in any wise disturbed.—Thus was the faint dawn of religious toleration, so friendly to the generation of liberal sentiments, so hostile to the diffusion of noxious prejudices, and so pregnant with benefits of great national importance, opened on that country, which had long, too long, been swayed by the monopolizing spirit of superstition!

In order to ascertain the duties on the different objects of importation, in either country, the following tariff was fixed:

1. The wines of France, imported directly from France into Great Britain, shall, in no case, pay any higher duties than those which the wines of Portugal now pay.
2. The vinegars of France, instead of sixty-seven pounds, five shillings and three-pence, and twelve-twentieths of a penny sterling, which they now pay, shall not, for the future, pay in Great Britain any higher duties than thirty-two pounds, eighteen shillings and ten-pence, and sixteen-twentieths of a penny sterling, per ton.
3. The brandies of France, instead of nine shillings and six-pence, and twelve-twentieths of a penny sterling, shall, for the future, pay in Great Britain only seven shillings sterling per gallon, making four quarts, English measure.
4. Oil of olives, coming directly from France, shall, for the future, pay no higher duties than are now paid for the same from the most favoured nations.
5. Beer shall pay, reciprocally, a duty of thirty *per cent. ad valorem*.
6. The duties on hardware, cutlery, cabinet ware, and turnery, and also all works, both heavy and light, of iron, steel, copper, and brass, shall be classed; and the highest duty shall not exceed ten *per cent. ad valorem*.
7. All sorts of cottons manufactured in the dominions of the two sovereigns in Europe, and also woollens, whether knit or wove, including hosiery, shall pay, in both countries,



countries, an import duty of twelve *per cent. ad valorem*: all manufactures of cotton or wool, mixed with silk, excepted, which shall remain prohibited on both sides.

8 Cambricks and lawns shall pay, in both countries, an import duty of five shillings, or six livres Tournois, per demi-piece of seven yards and three quarters, English measure; and linens, made of flax or hemp, manufactured in the dominions of the two sovereigns in Europe, shall pay no higher duties, either in Great Britain or in France, than linens manufactured in Holland or in Flanders, imported into Great Britain, now pay. And linen made of flax or hemp, manufactured in Ireland or France, shall reciprocally pay no higher duties than linens manufactured in Holland, imported into Ireland, now pay.

9. Sadlery shall reciprocally pay an import duty of fifteen *per cent. ad valorem*.

10. Gauzes of all sorts shall reciprocally pay ten *per cent. ad valorem*.

11. Millinery, made up of muslin, lawn, cambrick, or gauze of any kind, or of any other article admitted under the present tariff, shall pay, reciprocally, a duty of twelve *per cent. ad valorem*; and if any articles shall be used therein which are not specified in the tariff, they shall pay no higher duties than those paid for the same articles by the most favoured nations.

12. Porcelain, earthen-ware, and pottery, shall pay, reciprocally, twelve *per cent. ad valorem*.

13. Plate-glass, and glass-ware in general, shall be admitted, on each side, paying a duty of twelve *per cent. ad valorem*.

His Britannic majesty reserves the right of countervailing, by additional duties on the under-mentioned merchandizes, the internal duties actually imposed upon the manufactures, or the import duties which are charged on the raw materials; namely, on all linens or cottons, stained or printed; on beer, glass-ware, plate-glass, and iron.

And his Most Christian majesty reserves the right of doing the same, with regard to the following merchandizes; namely, cottons, iron, and beer.

And for the better securing the due collection of the duties payable *ad valorem*, which are specified in the above tariff, the said contracting parties will concert with each other as well the form of the declarations to be made, as also the proper means of preventing fraud with respect to the real value of the said goods and merchandizes.

But

But if it shall hereafter appear, that any mistakes have inadvertently been made in the above tariff, contrary to the principles on which it is founded, the two sovereigns will concert, with good faith, the means of rectifying them.

The seventh article declares, that the duties above specified are not to be altered but by mutual consent; and the merchandizes not above specified shall pay, in the dominions of the two sovereigns, the import and export duties payable in each of the said dominions by the most favoured European nations, at the time the present treaty bears date: and the ships belonging to the subjects of the said dominions shall also respectively enjoy therein all the privileges and advantages which are granted to those of the most favoured European nations.

And it being the intention of the two high contracting parties, that their respective subjects should be in the dominions of each other upon a footing as advantageous as those of other European nations, they agree, that in case they shall hereafter grant any additional advantages in navigation or trade to any other European nations, they will reciprocally allow their said subjects to participate therein; without prejudice, however, to the advantages which they reserve, viz. France in favour of Spain, in consequence of the twenty-fourth article of the Family Compact, signed the tenth of May, 1761; and England, according to what she has practised in conformity to, and in consequence of, the convention of 1703, between England and Portugal.

By the eleventh article, it is stipulated, that in case either of the two high-contracting parties shall think proper to establish prohibitions, or to augment the import duties upon any goods or merchandize of the growth or manufacture of the other, which are not specified in the tariff, such prohibitions or augmentations shall be general, and shall comprehend the like goods or merchandize of the other most favoured European nations, as well as those of either state; and in case either of the two contracting parties shall revoke the prohibition, or diminish the duties, in favour of any other European nation, upon any goods or merchandize of its growth or manufacture, whether on importation or exportation, such revocations or diminutions shall be extended to the subjects of the other party, on condition that the latter shall grant to the subjects of the former the importation and exportation of the like goods and merchandizes under the same duties; the cases reserved in the seventh article of the present treaty always excepted.

The twelfth article provides for the revocation of an ancient custom, unauthorized by law, by which a kind of poll-tax was levied upon the subjects of either nation in the other, called, in England, *head-money*; in France, *argent du chef*.

By the thirteenth article, it is agreed, that if either of the contracting parties has granted, or shall grant, any bounties for encouraging the exportation of any articles, being



being of the growth, produce, or manufacture of his dominions, the other party shall be allowed to add to the duties already imposed, by virtue of the present treaty, on the said goods and merchandizes, imported into his dominions, such an import duty as shall be equivalent to the said bounty. This stipulation, however, was not to extend to drawbacks on exported goods.

The sixteenth article supplied a remedy for a grievance that had long called for correction—It stipulates that it shall not be lawful for any foreign privateers, not being subjects of either crown, who have commissions from any other prince or state in enmity with either nation, to arm their ships in the ports of either of the said two kingdoms, to sell what they have taken, or in any manner whatever to exchange the same; neither shall they be allowed even to purchase victuals, except such as shall be necessary for their going to the nearest port of that prince from whom they have obtained commissions.

The twentieth article states, that it shall be lawful for all the subjects of the king of Great Britain, and of the Most Christian king, to sail with their ships, with perfect security and liberty, no distinction being made who are the proprietors of the merchandize laden therein, from any port whatever, to the countries which are now, or shall be hereafter, at war with the king of Great Britain, or the Most Christian king. It shall likewise be lawful for the aforesaid subjects to sail and traffic with their ships and merchandizes, with the same liberty and security, from the countries, ports, and places, of those who are enemies of both, or of either party, without any opposition or disturbance whatsoever, and to pass directly not only from the places of the enemy aforementioned to neutral places, but also from one place belonging to an enemy to another place belonging to an enemy, whether they be under the jurisdiction of the same, or of several princes. And as it has been stipulated, concerning ships and goods, that every thing shall be deemed free, which shall be found on board the ships belonging to the subjects of the respective kingdoms, although the whole lading, or part thereof, should belong to the enemies of their majesties; contraband goods being always excepted; it is likewise agreed, that the same liberty be extended to persons who are on board a free ship, to the end that, although they be enemies to both, or to either party, they may not be taken out of such free ships, unless they are soldiers, actually in the service of the enemies, and on their voyage for the purpose of being employed, in a military capacity, in their fleets or armies.

The contraband goods alluded to in this article are afterwards specified, and, under that denomination are comprehended arms, cannon, harquebusses, mortars, petards, bombs, grenades, sauciffes, carcasses, carriages for cannon, musket-rests, bandoleers, gunpowder, matches, saltpetre, ball, pikes, swords, head-pieces, helmets, cutlasses, halberds, javelins, holsters,

holsters, belts, horses and harness, and other like kind of arms, and warlike implements, fit for the use of troops.

The following merchandizes are exempted from the exception attached to contraband goods: viz.—All sorts of cloth, and all other manufactures of wool, flax, silk, cotton, or any other materials; all kinds of wearing apparel, together with the articles of which they are usually made, gold, silver, coined or uncoined, tin, iron, lead, copper, brass, coals, as also wheat and barley, and any other kind of corn and pulse, tobacco, and all kinds of spices; salted and smoaked flesh, salted fish, cheese and butter, beer, oil, wines, sugar, all sorts of salt, and of provisions which serve for sustenance and food to mankind: also all kinds of cotton, cordage, cables, sails, sail-cloth, hemp, tallow, pitch, tar and rosin, anchors and any parts of anchors, shipmasts, planks, timber of all kinds of trees, and all other things proper for building or repairing ships. Nor shall any other goods whatever—according to the twenty-third article—which have not been worked into the form of any instrument or furniture for warlike use, by land or by sea, be reputed contraband, much less such as have been already wrought and made up for any other purpose: all which things shall be deemed goods not contraband, as likewise all others which are not comprehended and particularly described in the preceding article; so that they may be freely carried by the subjects of both kingdoms, even to places belonging to an enemy, excepting only such places as are besieged, blocked up, or invested.

With a view to the prevention of disputes, on the subject of contraband goods, it is, by the twenty-fourth article, agreed, that in case either of their majesties should be engaged in a war, the ships and vessels belonging to the subjects of the other shall be furnished with sea-letters or passports, expressing the name, property, and bulk of the ship, as also the name and place of abode of the master or commander of the said ship, that it may appear thereby that the ship really and truly belongs to the subjects of one of the princes; which passports shall be made out and granted, according to the form annexed to the present treaty; they shall likewise be renewed every year, if the ship happen to return home within the space of a year: it is also agreed, that such ships when laden are to be provided not only with passports as above-mentioned, but also with certificates, containing the several particulars of the cargo, the place from whence the ship sailed, and whither she is bound, so that it may be known whether she carries any of the prohibited or contraband goods above specified.

The conduct of ships of war to merchantmen, in time of war, is regulated by the twenty-sixth article, which states, that in case the ships belonging to the subjects and inhabitants of the respective dominions of their most serene majesties, either on the coast, or on the high seas, shall meet with any men of war, belonging to their majesties, or with privateers, the said ships of war and privateers, for preventing any inconveniencies, are to remain out of cannon-shot, and to send their boats to the merchant-ship which



may be met with, and shall enter her to the number of two or three men only, to whom the master or commander of such ship or vessel shall shew his passport, containing the proof of the property of the ship, made out according to the form prescribed by the present treaty; and the ship which shall have exhibited the same shall have liberty to continue her voyage; and it shall be wholly unlawful any way to molest or search her, or to chase or compel her to alter her course.

Some farther regulations, with regard to ships carrying contraband goods, are enforced by the two subsequent articles; by the first it is stipulated, that the merchant-ships belonging to the subjects of the two high-contracting parties, which intend to go to a port at enmity with the other sovereign, concerning whose voyage, and the sort of goods on board, there may be just cause of suspicion, shall be obliged to exhibit, as well on the high seas, as in the ports and havens, not only her passports, but also her certificates, expressing that the goods are not of the kind which are contraband, as specified in a former article of this treaty.

By the second, it is agreed, that if, on exhibiting the above-mentioned certificate, containing a list of the cargo, the other party should discover any goods of that kind which are declared contraband, or prohibited by the twenty-second article of this treaty, and which are designed for a port subject to his enemies, it shall be unlawful to break up or open the hatches, chests, casks, bales, or other packages found on board such ships, or to remove even the smallest parcel of the goods, whether the said ship belong to the subjects of the king of Great Britain, or of the most Christian king, unless the lading be brought on shore, in the presence of the officers of the court of admiralty, and an inventory made by them of the said goods: nor shall it be lawful to sell, exchange, or alienate the same in any manner, unless after due and lawful process shall have been had against such prohibited goods, and the judges of the admiralty respectively shall, by sentence pronounced, have confiscated the same; saving always, as well the ship itself, as the other goods found therein, which by this treaty are to be accounted free; neither may they be detained on pretence of their being mixed with prohibited goods, much less shall they be confiscated as lawful prize: and if, when only part of the cargo shall consist of contraband goods, the master of the ship shall agree, consent, and offer to deliver them to the captor who has discovered them; in such case the captor, having received those goods as lawful prize, shall forthwith release the ship, and not hinder her, by any means, from prosecuting her voyage to the place of her destination.

By the twenty-ninth article, it is agreed, that whatever shall be found to be laden, by the subjects and inhabitants of either party, in any ship belonging to the enemies of the other, although it be not contraband goods, shall be confiscated in the same manner as if it belonged to the enemy himself, except those goods and merchandizes which were put on board such ships before the declaration of war, or the general order for reprisals.

With

With a view to prevent depredations on the property of the subjects of either party, by the privateers of the others, it is, very properly, stipulated, by the thirty-first article, that all commanders of privateers, before they receive their patents, or special commissions, shall hereafter be obliged to give, before a competent judge, sufficient security, by good bail, who are responsible men, and have no interest in the said ship, each of whom shall be bound in the whole for the sum of thirty-six thousand livres Tournois, or fifteen hundred pounds sterling; or, if such ship be provided with above one hundred and fifty seamen and soldiers, for the sum of seventy-two thousand livres Tournois, or three thousand pounds sterling, that they will make entire satisfaction for all damages and injuries whatsoever, which they, or their officers, or others in their service, may commit during their cruize, contrary to the tenor of this present treaty; or the edicts made in consequence thereof by their most serene majesties, under penalty, likewise, of having their patents and special commissions revoked and annulled.

By the thirty-fourth article, it is farther provided and agreed, that the ships of either of the two nations, retaken by the privateers of the other, shall be restored to the former owner, if they have not been in the power of the enemy for the space of four-and-twenty hours, subject to the payment, by the said owner, of one third of the value of the ship retaken, and of its cargo, guns, and apparel, which third part shall be amicably adjusted by the parties concerned; but if not, and in case they should disagree, they shall make application to the officers of the admiralty of the place where the privateer which retook the captured vessel shall have carried her.

If the ship retaken has been in the power of the enemy above four-and-twenty hours, she shall wholly belong to the privateer which retook her.

In case of a ship being retaken by any man of war belonging to his Britannic majesty, or to his Most Christian Majesty, it shall be restored to the former owner, on payment of the thirtieth part of the value of such ship, and of its cargo, guns, and apparel, if it was retaken within the four-and-twenty hours; and the tenth part, if retaken after the four-and-twenty hours: which sums shall be distributed, as a reward, amongst the crews of the ships which shall have retaken such prize. The valuation of the thirtieth and tenth parts above-mentioned shall be settled conformably to the regulations above prescribed.

The thirty-ninth article states, that for the greater security and liberty of commerce and navigation, it is farther agreed, that both the king of Great Britain, and the Most Christian king, shall not only refuse to receive any pirates or sea-rovers whatsoever into any of their havens, ports, cities, or towns, or permit any of their subjects, citizens, or inhabitants, on either part, to receive or protect them in their ports, to harbour them in their houses, or to assist them in any manner whatsoever; but farther, they shall cause all such pirates and sea-rovers, and all persons who shall receive, conceal, or assist them, to be brought to condign punishment, for a terror and example to others. And all their



ships, with the goods or merchandize taken by them, and brought into the ports of either kingdom, shall be seized, as far as they can be discovered, and shall be restored to the owners or their factors, duly authorized or deputed by them in writing, proper evidence being first given in the court of admiralty, for proving the property; even in case such effects should have passed into other hands by sale, if it be proved that the buyers knew, or might have known, that they had been piratically taken. And generally all ships and merchandizes, of what nature soever, which may be taken on the high seas, shall be brought into some port of either kingdom, and delivered into the custody of the officers of that port, that they may be restored entire to the proprietor, as soon as due and sufficient proof shall have been made concerning the property thereof.

By the forty-first article, it is stipulated, that neither of their majesties shall permit the ships or goods belonging to the subjects of the other to be taken within cannon-shot of the coast, or in the ports or rivers of their dominions, by ships of war, or others, having commission from any prince, republic, or city whatsoever; but in case it should so happen, both parties shall employ their united force to obtain reparation of the damage thereby occasioned.

The forty-fourth sets forth, that in whatever relates to the lading or unlading of ships, the safety of merchandize, goods, and effects, the succession to personal estates, as well as the protection of individuals, and their personal liberty, as also the administration of justice, the subjects of the two high-contracting parties shall enjoy, in their respective dominions, the same privileges, liberties, and rights, as the most favoured nation.

The next article states, that if hereafter it shall happen, through inadvertency or otherwise, that any infractions or contraventions of the present treaty shall be committed on either side, the friendship and good understanding shall not immediately thereupon be interrupted; but this treaty shall subsist in all its force, and proper remedies shall be procured for removing the inconveniencies, and likewise for the reparation of the contraventions; and if the subjects of either kingdom shall be found guilty thereof, they only shall be punished and severely chastised.

By the concluding article the contracting parties reserve the right of revising and re-examining the several stipulations of this treaty, after the term of twelve years, to be computed from the day of passing laws for its execution in Great Britain and Ireland, respectively, to propose and make such alterations as the times and circumstances may have rendered necessary for the commercial interests of their respective subjects; and this revision is to be completed in the space of twelve months; after which term the present treaty shall be of no effect; but, in that event, the good harmony and friendly correspondence between the two nations shall not suffer the least diminution.

It was a singular circumstance attending this important treaty, that, far from affording general satisfaction, it was much censured by many of the subjects of either power; each nation appeared to think that it had granted too much to the other, or had even been over-reached by it in some parts of the compact, and, particularly, in the rating and adjustment of the equivalents. But this very circumstance must be considered, by impartial observers, as affording a strong indication that the treaty was founded on liberal and equitable principles, particularly when they take into the estimate the deep-rooted prejudices which it had, on both sides, to encounter.

It cannot, however, excite our astonishment, that a difference of opinion should be created on the subject, when we reflect on the multiplicity of objects which it embraces; of interests which it might affect; on its relation to the general system of navigation and trade established in Europe; its interference with the letter or spirit of treaties already existing between the parties and other powers; and the uncertainty of its future operations in many of these respects. But it was natural to suppose that the motives upon which it was founded, and the political effects it was calculated to produce, by the establishment of an amicable intercourse between the rival nations, would extort general commendation. It is certainly evident that a strong desire to bury ancient animosities, to cure national prejudices, and to remove the partialities incident to jarring interests, pervades the whole, and appears to have been the leading objects of the parties. Reciprocity is the grand principle of the treaty, and it seems to have been intended on both sides, that no concession should be made on either, which was not balanced by a supposed equivalent on the other. But it exhibits an object far more interesting to humanity, than mere commercial regulations, which have, invariably, interest for their basis; it shews the powerful kingdom of France freely sacrificing, upon this occasion, her ancient prejudices, civil and religious, which had hitherto seemed so closely interwoven in her nature and constitution, as to appear almost inseparable.

But while France was thus endeavouring to secure the future friendship of her ancient foe, and adopting schemes for the extension of her commerce, both foreign and domestic, she was not so far neglectful of her own security as to overlook those circumstances, which might tend to augment her strength, in the event of a war. She studiously laboured to encrease the number of her naval arsenals and ports on the coast—in which she is by nature so defective—for the reception of ships of the line, and the station of warlike fleets.

The port of Cherbourg, on the coast of Normandy, from its vicinity to England, and its direct opposite position to the coast of Hampshire, seemed immediately calculated for this purpose; and, undoubtedly, could its natural defects be remedied by art, it would prove a most advantageous station to the French fleets in a war with England and could



not fail to become highly detrimental to that power: the scheme was, accordingly, adopted with great spirit, and carried on at an immense expence. For the road, being about a league and a half in length from east to west, notwithstanding the partial cover of a low island, which considerably serves to break the violence of the waves, is still much exposed to the north and north-west winds: to remedy which it was proposed to cover the road entirely by a succession of moles on that side, leaving only two sufficient openings, one for the passage of ships of the largest size, and the other for trading vessels. One of these moles was to be carried through the island (which was mostly overflowed in spring-tides) and the others were to have their foundations laid, and their superstructure raised, in a deep and boisterous sea. The labour was vast, but the object was highly inviting; for, if the fences could be completed, large fleets, composed of the most capital ships, might ride securely at anchor within them in all weathers. Forts, with batteries of the heaviest cannon, were to be erected on the different moles, in such situations as to be themselves impregnable, and to render the approach of an enemy utterly impracticable. A capacious basin, with docks, and all the other appendages to a great naval arsenal, were to be constructed in and adjoining to the harbour and town. The number of hands employed in this vast design was suited to its magnitude and importance; and the removal and placing, by any number, of those immense masses of solid rock, which, in so rough a sea, could alone lay the foundations of such stupendous piles of building, would have appeared impossible to any who had not before seen or heard of similar exertions of human labour and art.

This Herculean labour was deemed of such national importance, that the king, who had never before travelled to any considerable distance from the metropolis, took a journey on purpose to behold its progress. Even now, as it might be said, in its infant state, he could not behold without surprize the stupendous parts of that mighty work which were already visible. The supporters of the moles were in the form of cones, and of so prodigious a bulk, that the timber caskons in which they were enclosed were sixty French fathoms in diameter at the bottom. One of these was successfully launched—on the twenty-second of June—in the king's presence, an event which scarcely afforded greater joy to the architect, than satisfaction to the monarch, who did not attempt to conceal his astonishment at this incredible exertion of human power.

The proof, afforded by some of the stipulations of the Commercial Treaty with England, of the decrease of religious prejudices in France, was happily confirmed by the subsequent transactions of the present year. Instead of those persecuting edicts which the crown had formerly issued against its own subjects, on matters of religion, this propitious period was signalized by an arrêt, inviting strangers, of all Christian nations and religious persuasions whatever, to settle in the country, enabling them to purchase lands, and to enjoy all the common rights of citizens.

It

It afforded a singular object of moral and political consideration, to behold fourteen vessels from North America arrive together in the harbour of Dunkirk, freighted with the families, goods, and property of a colony of Quakers and Baptists (the most rigid, perhaps, in their religious principles of any among the reformed) who came to settle at that place, in a Roman Catholic country, and under the government of the French monarch; two circumstances, the most directly opposite to their ancient sentiments, whether political or religious. These people amounted to about a hundred families, and were destined to the prosecution of the whale and other fisheries, in which they had long been distinguished for their eminence at home. M. de Calonne had the honour of forming the scheme, of inviting them, and of giving them every encouragement they could desire; particularly in every possible security for the preservation of their civil rights and religious freedom. The ruin which befel the American oil trade, and fisheries through their unhappy separation from England, afforded the opportunity on one side, and imposed the necessity on the other.

Another arrêt was issued about the same time as the former, for the encouragement of artists and manufacturers of all nations to settle in France, by allowing them the same privileges which they enjoyed in their native countries, with exemptions from all duties for a limited time, on any importation of the raw materials used in their manufactures, as well as from the payment of taxes, and all personal duties to themselves and their workmen; on these conditions they were bound to continue for a given number of years in the kingdom, and for the greater security were not to form their settlements within seven leagues of the frontier; but at the expiration of the prescribed term they were to be at full liberty to depart, when, and in whatever manner was most convenient to them, and to remove their property as well as their persons wherever they should think proper, the king giving up the *droit d'Aubaine* entirely in their favour.

It would have been a strange solecism in policy to encourage and allure foreign Protestants to settle in the kingdom, without restoring the numerous natives of that persuasion, in some considerable degree, to the rights of citizens. But though the king and government strongly inclined to grant every indulgence to the native Protestants, still a variety of circumstances concurred to prevent a complete restitution of the rights which they formerly possessed. In cases of this nature, it will ever be found extremely difficult to draw so strait and equal a line between the public religious establishment of the country, and that which is only tolerated, as can afford full satisfaction to both parties. The one will, invariably, regard whatever is granted either as an encroachment on, or as endangering its own rights, while the impatience of the other is apt to increase with every advantage or favour, and past concessions only operate as a stimulus to future exertions—as a provocative to fruition more perfect and complete.

Something



Something, however, was done in favour of the French Protestants, though, probably, not so much as was wished, or even intended. The legitimacy of their marriages was admitted, and the rights of inheritance consequently established, under the condition of the former being registered in an office appointed for that purpose at the Hôtel de Ville. They were likewise permitted to institute places of public worship, on condition that such places should bear only the outward appearance of private houses; in those they were entitled to the free exercise of their religious rites, subject to the single restriction of keeping the doors shut during the service. Their pastors were of course exonerated from all the penalties prescribed by former laws. By this means, a considerable opening was made towards affording relief to that numerous body of people, who, after all the losses they had sustained by wars, emigrations, and punishments, and the long and continued oppressions they had endured, still amounted to a fifth or sixth of the whole inhabitants of the kingdom, the lowest estimates rating their number at four millions.

Some indulgencies were also extended, at this period, to the peasantry in France; that most valuable order of men, who constitute the foundation of strength, wealth, and power, in every community that possesses them, and who had too long been despised and oppressed, with an equal disregard of natural justice and political wisdom, not only in France, but in most other countries. They were now relieved from that intolerable bondage and continued oppression to which they had so long been subjected, under the arbitrary domination of inferior mercenary officers—invariably the worst of tyrants!—with respect to the heavy labour to which they were bound in the repair and construction of the roads; these petty ministers of the civil power, either harassing them by the most shameless extortion of money, which their poverty could so ill spare, or compelling them, in an arbitrary manner, to attend with their carts and draught cattle to the duty of the roads, at seasons when the state of their crops more peculiarly called for their care and attention. A new system was adopted with respect to the roads; the farmers were discharged from the duty, and the work was to be performed by labourers hired at the public expence.

An edict was likewise passed which afforded a security that was greatly wanting to the community in general, but more particularly to the trading and manufacturing part with respect both to their persons and property. Many cities and corporations possessed the municipal authority of arresting the persons and detaining the property of strangers who came transiently within their jurisdiction, for real or pretended charges of debt preferred against them by persons at any distance, and sometimes in the remotest provinces. The most doubtful documents were received as sufficient grounds for these actions; and the general necessary consequence was, that the defendant, if far from home, and no powerful connection at hand, was totally ruined, at the suit, perhaps, of an unknown and unheard of plaintiff, before he could find means to extricate his person or property. The enormity

enormity was so glaring, that its existence for any length of time would appear almost incredible, if similar instances of the long sufferance of evil, through the supineness of rulers, and the defect of spirit or power in the injured, had not been observable in all countries; it was now, however, abolished, and this crying grievance effectually redressed<sup>7</sup>.

But though these edicts evinced a strong disposition in the government to alleviate the distress, and promote the prosperity of the subject, yet were the people but little inclined to submit to those burthens which the situation of the kingdom rendered indispensably necessary. When the edict for registering the loan at the conclusion of the preceding year, which amounted to the sum of three millions, three hundred and thirty thousand pounds, was presented to the parliament of Paris, the murmurs of the people, and the remonstrances of that assembly, seemed to threaten a determined resistance to the measure. The king, however, signified to the select deputation that were commissioned to convey their remonstrances to the throne, that he expected to be obeyed without farther delay; accordingly the royal mandate was complied with, and the ceremony of the registration took place on the next day; but it was accompanied with a resolution, importing that public economy was the only genuine source of abundant revenue, the only means of providing for the necessities of the state, and restoring that credit which was almost annihilated by frequent borrowing.

As soon as this proceeding was known, the king required the attendance of the grand deputation of parliament; he erased from their records the resolution that had been adopted, and observed, that, though it was his pleasure that the parliament should communicate, by its respectful representations, whatever might interest the good of the public, yet he never would consent that they should so far abuse his confidence and clemency as to erect themselves into the censors of his administration; he expected in future that they should confine their expressions within the limits of wisdom and loyalty; he declared himself satisfied with the conduct of the comptroller-general, and determined on no account to suffer groundless apprehensions to interfere with those plans which had for their exclusive object the good of the state and the ease of the nation; and, more strongly to mark his displeasure at their expostulations, he directed the dismissal from farther

<sup>7</sup> It is worthy of remark, inasmuch as it exhibits a singular and unexampled instance of change in the sentiments of the Western world, that the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris this year elected, as one of their foreign correspondents, a Mr. Lissel, a free Black, of the Isle of France, who had distinguished himself by a series of curious and extremely well-calculated meteorological observations; thus breaking down, in some degree, the strong and long-established line of distinction between colours, and holding out encouragement to future Africans to cultivate philosophy and the sciences, by shewing them that the way was opened to academical honours, whenever merited, without any regard to the country or natural hue of the ingenious proficient.



service of one of their officers who had appeared most active in forwarding the late resolution.

Though monsieur de Calonne could not fail to be highly flattered by the approbation and support of his sovereign, yet the opposition of the parliament, at a period when their assistance was peculiarly necessary, mortified him most sensibly. The alarming state of the finances demanded the most serious attention. The taxes, though numerous, were wholly unequal to the supply of the current expences of the state, and to the discharge of the interest or annuities rising on the various funds. The expenditure of course greatly exceeded the revenue<sup>s</sup>; and, as new funds could not be raised, recourse was had to the desperate measure of withholding the payment of the annuities to the public creditors, for a sum equal to the amount of the deficiency. The distress and calamity occasioned thereby to numbers of people, excited great discontents; and the murmurs were increased by the undue preference supposed to be given to those classes whose payments were not stopped.

The crown, with respect to all that lay within its own immediate cognizance and power, acted the noblest part during this state of public embarrassment and distress. Incapable of comprehending the complicated details, and the perplexed situation of the national finances, the king endeavoured to alleviate the distresses of the people, by curtailing the expences of his court, household, and even of his royal person. But though these reductions were so great as to trench deeply upon the long-established splendour of the crown, and though the savings were accordingly very considerable, yet they failed of answering the patriotic and generous intention of the monarch, when plunged into the abyss of public debts, demands, and necessities. The free gifts granted by the clergy, and other public bodies, produced as little permanent effect; and, amidst the multitude of demands, could scarcely afford relief to any pecuniary necessity of the court.

These circumstances, with the alarming clamour and discontent which they produced, rendered the adoption of some speedy and decisive measure indispensably requisite. The

<sup>s</sup> It appears, from the statement annexed to M. de Calonne's "Requête au Roi," published in 1787, that in the year 1783, the expenditure exceeded the revenue, eighty millions of livres; in 1784, eighty-five millions; in 1785, one hundred millions; and in 1786, one hundred and twelve millions, or upwards of four millions six hundred and sixty-six thousand pounds sterling; and that in order to cover this deficit, to pay off the navy debt, which alone exceeded nine millions sterling, and other extraordinary expences incurred by the late war, and since the peace, six hundred and fifty millions of livres, or upwards of twenty-seven millions, eighty-three thousand pounds sterling, had been borrowed within the space of three years. This circumstance arose from the extreme unwillingness of the king to impose additional burthens on the people, and his consequent anxiety to protract the evil hour, as long as possible;—an injudicious measure, though proceeding from the best of motives. It is a remarkable fact—but not more singular than true—that the humanity of this unfortunate prince, almost invariably, proved prejudicial to his own interest and happiness, and not unfrequently detrimental in its effects, to the welfare of the state.

crown, wearied out by the repeated failure and disappointment which it had experienced in the schemes and undertakings of ministers, and finding its difficulties every day encreasing, and becoming more insupportable, determined at length to throw itself upon the affection and wisdom of the nation for succour and support. Though this salutary measure was proposed by M. de Calonne, it was adopted by the king with so good a grace, that it seemed to flow spontaneously from his own good disposition and will; and it would have proved a most happy circumstance for France—had she known how to profit by it—that her present monarch neither possess the obstinate, overbearing, arbitrary temper of some of his predecessors, nor had consigned his power into the hands of mistresses and favourites, and suffered his mind to be corrupted by the vanity and pleasures of a voluptuous court.

The pecuniary difficulties of the state have, in many countries, rendered it necessary for monarchs to apply to the collective resources and collective councils of the nation. The modification of regal authority, and the admission of the public into a participation of that authority, has generally been attended with consequences easy and happy to both. Few kings, however, have had recourse to this expedient until they had exhausted every other means of supply; they most commonly consulted their subjects after the adoption of irregular or violent measures for encreasing the revenue they already possessed, and thus lost the merit of a generous reliance on the approbation and affection of their people, seeming rather to be driven to them by necessity, than to be turned to them through choice. This was not the case with the present government of France. Little resort, in comparison with the exactions of former reigns, had been had to compulsory loans, arbitrary extension of taxes, alteration in the value of the coin, or to any of those modes of violence and chicane which had been so frequently adopted by the French monarchs. On the contrary, from the moment Lewis the Sixteenth turned his attention seriously to the improvement of his revenues, the object had been to establish a basis of public credit. This was begun, as we have before shewn, under the administration of Mr. Neckar, by a general exposure of the finances. The public were solemnly called in to the council of the monarch; and desired to judge for themselves in a concern of such great and general importance. A great step, not to the forms but to the substance of public liberty, and, perhaps, the greatest advance that ever was made by a king towards the establishment of a free constitution. With more or less regularity, this system had been pursued ever since, until, by its natural operation, combined with the growing necessities of the government, it led to the calling of the assembly of the *Notables*, and, from thence, to a more universal application to the sense of the nation.

The writs for calling together the assembly of the *Notables*—whose object (to use the words of M. de Calonne) was to enlighten the nation with regard to the state of the finances, and to impress on the minds of the people the necessity of a strong and efficacious



remedy for the disorders that prevailed therein<sup>9</sup>—were dated on the twenty-ninth of December, 1786; they were addressed to seven princes of the blood, nine dukes and peers of France, eight field-m Marshals, twenty-two nobles, eight counsellors of state, four masters of requests, eleven prelates, thirty-seven of the heads of the law, twelve deputies of the *Pays d'Etat*, the lieutenant-civil, and twenty-five magistrates of the different towns of the kingdom. The number of members was one hundred and forty-four; and the twenty-ninth of January, 1787, was the day appointed for their opening.

A. D. 1787.] The sickness and death of M. de Vergennes, a minister whose political intrigues and extensive views, joined to a very intimate knowledge of the respective strength or weakness of foreign states, and of those invisible springs of action by which they might be swayed or divided, rendered his loss, at this critical period, of the utmost consequence to the state, occasioned the meeting of the assembly to be postponed to the twenty-second of February. In the mean time, the marquis de Montmorin, who had been long initiated in the political principles and designs of the count de Vergennes, was, at his own special recommendation, appointed to be his successor as minister for foreign affairs.

The king went in the greatest magnificence, accompanied by the princes of the blood, and attended by all the great officers of the state and household, to dignify the opening of the new assembly of the Notables.

In laying before this body the various matters which were to become the subjects of their deliberation, it was necessary that the minister should give a satisfactory explanation of those causes which opened the way to the present state of public embarrassment and distress. In doing this, M. de Calonne, with proper address, endeavoured to make a favourable impression on the minds of his audience, by exhibiting the pleasing and bright side of the picture, before he was under the necessity of displaying the reverse. With this view, in his introductory speech, he enumerated the various great and glorious, as well as the patriotic and beneficial acts, of the present reign: in this summary, he particularly ascribed to the king the creation of a marine which had rendered the French flag universally respected, and the protection and confirmation of the liberties of a New World, which, in consequence of its separation from a rival power, was now become a friend and ally; after having terminated an honourable war by a solid peace, his majesty, he averred, had proved himself worthy to be considered as the moderator of all Europe: he had not then given himself up to a barren inaction; he was too sensible how much still remained to be done for the happiness of his subjects; and the assuring to his people a free and extensive commerce abroad, the procuring a good administration at home, with the encouragement and establishment of useful arts and manufactures, were the objects

<sup>9</sup> Requête au Roi, p. 136.

of his invariable pursuit, and should ever continue the point to which his views would be directed. The new treaties of commerce, concluded with Holland, England, and Russia, were adduced as illustrations of these positions.

After this exordium, which he dwelt on with complacency, the minister had to reverse the scene, and exhibit the dark side of the picture. He, accordingly, entered into long details, to shew the deplorable state in which he found the finances, when he was called to the head of that department, at the conclusion of the American war. A vast unfunded debt; all annuities and interest greatly in arrear; all the coffers empty; the public stocks fallen to the lowest point; circulation interrupted, and all credit and confidence destroyed. He then shewed the measures which he had pursued, and the happy effects they had produced—so far as his means could reach—in remedying this complication of evils. Through these efforts public credit was re-established, the stocks brought a fair price at market, money was plentiful, and the *Caisse d'Escompte* had now settled its credit upon a firm basis. Great and expensive public works, of the utmost national importance and utility, had likewise been undertaken, and were now far advanced towards completion; it would be needless to repeat to that assembly what had been done, and was doing, with respect to the harbours of Cherburgh, Havre, Rochelle, and Dunkirk.

But with all these pleasant circumstances and favourable appearances, an evil still remained behind of the most alarming and ruinous nature: an evil which must every year encrease in its magnitude, and, at length, become fatal in its effect, if not timely corrected: this was the great annual deficiency of the public revenue, with respect to the supply of the current public expence. It was an evil which went far beyond the reach of ministers, and baffled all schemes of industry and economy. Eternal borrowing would necessarily operate as an eternal aggravation of the evil; additional taxes would oppress the people, whom the king most anxiously wished to relieve; anticipation on the revenue of subsequent years had already been carried to a ruinous extent; and with respect to economy, and the reform of expences, the king had already, not only in his household, but in other departments, carried these points as far as could be done without weakening the state and government. It was then in the reform of abuses, that the king and his ministers trusted principally to find resources for exonerating the crown and the nation from this intolerable grievance and evil. In the abuses themselves would be found a great fund which the king had a right to reclaim. This was a subject, the importance of which necessarily demanded all the collected wisdom, attention, and sagacity of the assembly, and it was accordingly recommended, in the strongest terms, to their deliberation.

The four principal objects to which the attention of the assembly was invited, and on which the minister had placed a great reliance for the redress of those evils on which he



he had strongly expatiated, were—The establishment of a general and equal land tax, from which no rank or order of men was to be exempted: the possessions of the clergy, and their exemption from imposts: the state of internal taxation: and the raising of money by mortgaging the demesne lands of the crown. But the grand and essential object of reform, and that which the court had particularly at heart, was an equalization of the public burthens, by rendering the taxes general, which would have made them bearable, and comparatively easy, instead of their falling upon the lower and most useful classes of the people, to the discouragement and ruin of enterprize and industry, whether with respect to manufactures or agriculture. The ancient nobility and clergy had ever been free from all public assessments, and, considering this as one of their most distinguished privileges, it was of course the most difficult to be resigned. Had the evil great as it undoubtedly was, gone no farther, it might still, perhaps, have been patiently endured, from the mischief it produced, being confined within certain fixed and customary limits; but through the shameful custom of selling patents of nobility, such crowds of new noblesse started up, that every province in the kingdom was filled with them; for the first object with those who had acquired fortunes rapidly, by whatever means, was, next to the purchase of an estate, that of a patent, which, besides the gratification of a vanity so peculiarly predominant with such people, afforded an exemption to them and their posterity from a proportionable contribution to the exigencies of the state, or from alleviating the distresses of the public which many of them had contributed to augment. The magistrates, likewise, throughout the kingdom, who were exceedingly numerous, enjoyed their share of these exemptions; so that the great weight of the taxes fell upon those who were the least able to bear them.

That nothing could be more just and noble than the project of equalizing the public burthens, was unquestionably true; but how the minister could hope for success in a measure which required the sanction of those very persons who were immediately interested in opposing it cannot easily be conceived. The event was such as might have been expected; the most decided opposition appeared in the assembly; the very necessity for the reforms so strenuously urged by M. de Calonne was denied by those in whom personal interest superseded every other consideration; and the statement of the finances, which differed, in some points, from the *Compte Rendu* of M. Neckar, was opposed by monsieur de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, (the friend of that financier) whose ambition led him to aspire to the place now occupied by M. de Calonne.

But the enemies of the minister, not content with arraigning his understanding, impeached his integrity: and the count de Mirabeau, who, in the subsequent events of the revolution, is destined to appear in a very conspicuous light, did not scruple to rank the comptroller-general among those sordid wretches, who preferred their fortune to their honour; he added, that all his operations bore the stamp of despotism and personal interest;

terest; and he called upon the Notables, to address their sovereign in the honest language of truth. "Let them tell him," said he, "that a man who was estranged from every principle of good faith, of fidelity in engagements, of respect to property, was unfit to be entrusted with the direction of commerce, of contracts, and of law. Let them tell him, that pliancy of spirit, facility of study, correctness of style, the elegance of his preambles, the charms of his elocution, were but so many new crimes in a minister, who developed, with skill, the principles of an honest policy, and eluded and insulted them in his practice." But the petulant invectives of a man whose neglect and violations of all social, moral, and religious duties, were proverbial, would have had little effect on the reputation of de Calonne, had not a combination of concurring events given force to the arguments, and efficacy to the measures, of his adversaries.

The united efforts of the nobility, the clergy, and the magistracy, were successfully exerted to promote the destruction of a man who had conceived the salutary project of destroying such of their privileges as were hostile to the public welfare. The people were brought to believe, that he intended to load them with new taxes; and thus the blind and giddy multitude were rendered instrumental to the ruin of the first minister who had ever attempted to do them any essential service. Such has in general, but unfortunately, been the reward of those who—without having established a previous confidence, which is indeed, not often gained without the aid of some specious deception—have attempted to serve the public at large. Effectual measures, were, at the same time, used for diminishing the king's confidence in the minister, which would, probably, have been sufficiently shaken, without such insidious attempts, by the public clamour.

M. de Calonne, finding it impossible to stem the torrent, or in any manner to screen himself from the obloquy, which was directed against him from all quarters, not only found it necessary to resign his office, in the middle of the sitting of the Notables, but to retire to England for refuge, from this storm of persecution, which he saw gathering with the most malignant aspect. This event took place on the twelfth of April, and, after some temporary appointments, the archbishop of Toulouse, was, in the month of May, appointed to the vacant office of comptroller-general of the finances.

While the mind of Lewis was assiduously occupied by the rising spirit of discontent at home, his new ally, the republic of Holland, presented a scene of anarchy and faction, that called for his most serious attention. The prince of Orange had been stripped of all authority, by the adverse party, who, forgetful of the obligations they owed to his illustrious ancestors, to whom they were indebted for the establishment of their independence, and the security of their freedom, had reduced him to the necessity of flying from the Hague, and returning to Nimeguen, where he maintained the shadow of a court; yet feeble as  
his



his influence might appear in the united provinces, he was still formidable from his powerful connections. His brother-in-law, the new king of Prussia, for Frederic the Great had closed his long and splendid career, was indefatigable in his efforts to promote the interests of the Stadt-holder, and had offered, in concert with France, to undertake the arduous task of composing the differences which distracted the republic.

The court of Versailles had, before this period, presented to the states, by way of precaution, a memorial couched in very equivocal terms, in which, after many professions of friendship, regard, and attachment, the king of France declared his wishes to see those abuses reformed, which had occasioned internal dissensions in the republic, and observed, that he should be happy to see tranquillity restored upon the true principles of its constitution; but that, without pretending to interfere with the internal government of the seven provinces, he would, on the contrary, use his utmost endeavours to prevent their high mightinesses, from being troubled from without, as well as within; it was now deemed expedient to adopt a different tone, and the proposal of the king of Prussia being embraced, with apparent cordiality, monsieur de Rayneval, who had already acquired considerable credit in negociation, particular in concluding the late treaty of commerce with England, was appointed to be the representative of Lewis, in the office of mediation.

But fair and flattering as these appearances were, it was little hoped by those, who looked closely into the state and nature of things, that this negociation should produce the effect so ardently wished for by every true friend to the republic. They could not believe that France, who they knew to be not only the nurse, protectress, and encourager of the adverse faction, but to have been the prime fomentor and instigator of all their violences, should now at once undo the effects of all her former craft and labour, by becoming the instrument of restoring the prince of Orange to any thing near that share of weight and power which he before held in the republic. This would have been to sacrifice her own immediate interests to the gratification of the Prussian monarch, to abandon one of the dearest objects of her policy, to miss the only opportunity that had ever occurred of her establishing a supreme and permanent controul in the affairs of the republic, and for ever to lose, without benefit or effect, all that gold which she had, for several years, so profusely bestowed in supporting her influence in Holland, and in feeding the contention. This was a source of expence, so abundantly supplied, that a writer, who appears to have possessed very unusual sources of information, and more than a common share of political acumen, has ventured to assert, that one half of her money thus expended, if it had been properly applied in the Stadt-holder's court, would have produced an influence there, infinitely more beneficial in advancing and establishing her purposes, than any thing she derived, or could derive, from the services of the republican leaders, on whom it was bestowed<sup>10</sup>.

It was contended, that such a coincidence on the part of France with the views of the king of Prussia would not merely be a dereliction of the cause and party which she had so long espoused, but a scandalous act of treachery. She had urged them to the adoption of violent and indefensible measures, and consequently involved them in circumstances of great danger; and now to abandon them in the instant of their warmest hopes, when the object of their long and mutual pursuit seemed nearly within their grasp, would shock the feelings of all mankind, and appear alike foolish and infamous. The crooked policy which she had too long pursued, by which she became to be considered as the common disturber of the tranquillity of Europe, and as sacrificing all faith and principle to her own advantage, had been the means of involving her in the greatest difficulties and most dangerous situations, so that her very existence at one time seemed little less than trusted to the chance of a die. She seemed of late, it was said, to adopt a fairer policy, and to be studious of establishing a different character; but if she relapsed now, it would have a worse effect than merely overthrowing what she had hitherto done for that purpose.

The event soon confirmed the opinion of those who had placed no confidence in the success of the present negotiation. The terms sought to be imposed on the Stadtholder by the republican faction were such, as, if granted, must have completely secured to France that ascendancy in the councils of Holland which it had been her constant object to obtain; but however unequal the prince of Orange might be considered to the difficulties that surrounded him, every deficiency was supplied by the genius, the spirit, and the abilities of his royal consort, who inflexibly adhered to the resolution she had formed, not to sacrifice, to the seditious efforts of a faction, any of the lawful rights that had been attached to the office of Stadtholder. M. de Rayneval, finding all his insidious endeavours thus completely frustrated, broke off, in an abrupt manner, the correspondence which had been maintained between the Hague and Nimeguen, and returned to Paris about the middle of January, 1787.

The failure of this treaty produced, between the contending parties, the utmost acrimony of recrimination, and the greatest bitterness of reproach. On the side of the Stadtholder, it was entirely ascribed to the precipitate arrogance, the haughty affectation of superiority, and the imperious spirit of the French minister. It was said, that he would listen to no terms but those he prescribed himself, or such as were dictated by the adverse faction; that he appeared rather as the chosen advocate of that party, than in the character of a common friend, or a cool and impartial mediator: that he rather seemed to consider the Stadtholder as a guilty person interceding for favour and forgiveness, than as a prince, who was placed by the constitution at the head of the republic, claiming his just rights, and demanding redress for the injuries he had sustained.



On the other side, it was insisted, with great warmth, that the failure of success proceeded entirely from the inflexible obstinacy of the court of Nimeguen. That, far from paying any deference to the states of Holland, who were his lawful sovereigns, the Stadtholder had insisted, in the most peremptory manner, upon every part of his claims, shewing no greater disposition to relax in the most inconsiderable than in the most material articles: that he displayed no willingness to accommodate himself to the unfortunate situation in which he was involved, nor to the temper and circumstances of the times: that he had not shewn the smallest regret for any of the unjustifiable measures into which he had been precipitated, but on the contrary, seemed disposed pertinaciously to support and defend them to the last: and, in a word, that a single concession had not even been hinted at from his court; but that all the advances which had been made, and all the instances of moderation, at any times given, had been displayed by the States of Holland.

It was about this period that the republican party brought forward the proposal of stripping the Stadtholder of those great offices of which he had not yet been despoiled in the province of Holland; the question was agitated with the utmost warmth and acrimony for two successive days; but those who had proposed it found, to their surprise, the opposition so formidable, and the aspect of the independent members so doubtful, that they did not choose to hazard the decision of a vote.

It is highly probable, that the absence of Van Berkel, the first pensionary of Amsterdam, greatly contributed to this defeat; he had long been the oracle and soul of the republican party, and was well qualified, by his various talents and endowments, to become the leader of a faction: his ambition was boundless, but his lust of wealth even exceeded his love of power, and, stimulated by avarice, he had sacrificed his influence at home to the lucrative appointment of representing the republic as minister to the United States of America.

The absence of this celebrated demagogue tended to embarrass the counsels of his party, whose situation now became extremely critical. In all their late measures they had been completely foiled. In the senate of Amsterdam their influence was lost; in that of Rotterdam they had been out-voted by a considerable majority; the provinces of Zealand, Friesland, Utrecht, and Guelderland, were decidedly against them; and they were now left in a minority in the assembly of the States of Holland; so that the small provinces of Groningen and Overijssel alone remained firmly attached to them.

Convinced by the situation of their affairs, that their very existence, as a party, depended on the adoption of measures the most prompt and decisive, they determined to lay aside all appearances of moderation, and to bring matters to a crisis. For this purpose they had recourse to the turbulent multitude. Associations were formed, and large sums of money subscribed; and the burghers, provided with arms, soon proceeded to acts of open

open violence and outrage. At Rotterdam they surrounded the senate-house, compelled the senate to depose seven of their body, whom they considered as most adverse to their designs; and, veiling their violence under the form of an election, they filled the vacant places with seven of the most zealous of their own party; and as the degraded senators comprised the deputies of the city in the assembly of the provincial states, the representation of Rotterdam was of course totally changed.

On the very same day that the senate of Rotterdam was purged, in this summary manner, by the armed burghers, similar measures were pursued by their turbulent brethren at Amsterdam. They surrounded the senate-house betimes in the morning, and the affrighted magistrates entered into a negotiation with them, which was protracted till the evening; when, finding that they had no alternative, they were obliged to submit to the demand of the burghers, by declaring that nine members of their assembly, whom the republican party had proscribed, had abdicated their offices. Among these victims to the revolution, were three deputies to the assembly of the provincial states, who had lately voted, on some occasion, on the side of the Stadtholder. At the same time that they were clearing the senate from their adversaries, the four colonels of the city militia, and consequently the only legal commanders of the burghers, were destined to experience their persecution, and obliged to send in their resignations.

Hitherto the court of Versailles had solid grounds for exulting in the success of their party: the republican faction seemed, by the energy of its measures, to have recovered its lost influence; the trembling adherents of the prince of Orange daily expected to be overwhelmed by the torrent; but the turbulent disposition of the people, evidently directed to the subversion of the constitution, had at length aroused from their lethargy the States-General, who had hitherto preserved the most guarded neutrality through the whole course of these dissensions. In fact, by the constitution of that body, though their powers and authority were great, they were directed rather to general than to particular objects. Their high-mightinesses were the guardians of the republic as a whole; it was their peculiar province to regulate its transactions with foreign nations; to watch the approach of danger from without; to estimate its degree; and to make a timely provision for the public security. In war, their powers were extensive, and their authority, in a great measure, conclusive; and, in peace, they were to prescribe the force to be supported by sea and land, to inspect the state of the fleets and armies, and to look to every part of the public defence at home and abroad. But with respect to internal affairs, or the differences between particular states, their powers of controul, if not absolutely limited, are at least unknown, as their exertion appears to be without a precedent. But in cases of extreme necessity, even with respect to internal affairs, where the peace or unity of the republic was endangered, the occasion would doubtless sanctify the application of these undefined powers.



The presumption of the city of Utrecht, in withdrawing its allotted quota of revenue from their disposal, seemed an object that merited immediate chastisement; and a body of troops was commanded by the provincial states to besiege and humble the factious inhabitants of that wealthy capital. A skirmish took place, on this occasion, between the detachment of regulars, which was wholly inadequate to the purpose it was sent to effect, and the armed burghers, in which the latter acquired that advantage which a superiority of numbers generally affords. But the triumph of the party was of short duration; almost immediately after the skirmish near Utrecht, the province of Holland was alarmed by the defection of two-thirds of its regular forces, who quitted their posts, and declared in favour of the prince of Orange. To supply this deficiency, the volunteers and armed burghers were summoned to the defence of their country, and were appointed to guard the frontiers.

While things were in this situation, an event took place which introduced new and more important actors on the stage, and absorbed, in its magnitude, every other consideration. The princess of Orange, whether from a confidence founded in a sense of her abilities, or on the influence which she expected might be derived from her sex, dignity, and family, adopted the resolution of proceeding, unaccompanied by the prince her husband, from Nimeguen, whither she had been driven by the violence of the adverse party, to the Hague, with the intention, as she declared, of communicating with the States-General, and bringing forward such conciliatory propositions, in the name of the prince, as might, if possible, avert the evils and horrors of a civil war.

But the adverse party, viewing this measure with a jealous eye, determined to impede her journey; and, accordingly, the princess had scarce passed Schoonhoven, on the borders of Holland, before she was surrounded by a party of armed burghers, and was conveyed, with every mark of licentious brutality, to a small town at a considerable distance; she was thence escorted by the same guards to Schoonhoven, and, hopeless of being permitted to pursue her journey to the Hague, she set out the next day for Nimeguen.

The king of Prussia, who had hitherto remained a quiet, though certainly not an indifferent, spectator of the commotions in Holland, eagerly seized the opportunity of interference afforded him by the insult offered to his sister. He transmitted orders to his ambassador to present a strong memorial to the states of Holland, insisting on satisfaction the most speedy and ample; and at the same time he represented the indignity he had suffered, in the person of the princess, to the court of Versailles. In order to counteract the effects of this representation, the republican party were equally alert in laying before that court their answer to the Prussian memorial, together with the justificatory detail of the transactions, included in the resolutions which they passed upon the occasion. But great was their mortification, on finding that the French king, their boasted ally

ally, their great supporter and friend, had, in strong terms, condemned the treatment experienced by the princess, and justified the king of Prussia's demand of satisfaction<sup>21</sup>.

The states of Holland, however, still implicitly relied on the faith of France; and subsequent events sufficiently demonstrated, that they had strong grounds for their belief that she would finally interfere in their favour. During the whole summer of 1787, she was incessant in her endeavours surreptitiously to afford every possible assistance to the republican party. Great numbers of French officers daily arrived in the province of Holland, and either received commissions in the service of the states, or acted as volunteers in their army. But this being deemed insufficient, several hundreds of veteran soldiers, of approved valour, whose fidelity and discretion could be relied on, were selected from different regiments, and, being furnished with money for their journey, were dispatched in small parties to join the troops, and help to discipline the volunteers and burghers of Holland. It was a new circumstance, that a corps of engineers should be smuggled, in disguise, from one country to another; and it was rendered still more extraordinary, by the respective countries not immediately bordering in any part. Yet this was now done. The private men were supplied with cloaths of the common colours, money, and proper answers to make to any troublesome enquiries; and, thus equipped, they were to proceed, in very small parties, to the place of their destination; officers being stationed in some of the principal towns on their way, to afford any farther succour or advice that might become necessary.

As soon as this influx of French officers and soldiers into the territories of the Republic became, from their number, an object of general notice, the States-General lost no time in endeavouring at least to impede the growing progress of this enormity. For this purpose, they not only issued proclamations strongly forbidding the intrusion, but they made very serious complaints on the subject, both to the French minister at the Hague, and directly to the court of Versailles, by their own minister at Paris. But these proceedings had little effect on the republican party, who still rejected all language of submission, and issued orders that every preparation should be made for laying the country under water, the moment any foreign troops should enter the territories of the republic.

The court of Berlin, finding all her remonstrances ineffectual, disposed her troops for immediate action, nine thousand Prussians lined the frontiers of the duchy of Cleves, bordering on the Dutch territory; the governor of Wesel received orders to prepare

<sup>21</sup> The conduct of the French court, in this instance, appears rather extraordinary, for the insult they represented as requiring the most complete satisfaction was sanctioned by the presence of a French officer of rank, who attended the seizure of the princess — It is probable, however, that this apparent contradiction arose from the king's refusal to justify on some occasions, the conduct of his ministers, to whom the more violent proceedings must generally be ascribed.



accommodations for the reception of an army of sixty thousand men; and the celebrated hereditary duke of Brunswick, who had lately succeeded to the dominions of his father, was called from his retreat, to command the forces of his royal kinsman, the king of Prussia.

The prince of Orange himself had not remained inactive during these transactions. Having assembled a small army, he possessed himself by a *coup de main*, of the fortified town of Wick, sometimes called Duerstede, in the province of Utrecht; a place eminently noted, in the course of these troubles, for its early rejection of all lawful authority, its adoption of violent republican principles, and its inveterate animosity to the Stadtholder. This town was, particularly from its situation, an acquisition of great importance to the prince; being established on the borders of Holland, within twenty-four miles of Amsterdam; commanding the course of that part of the Rhine, here called the Lech, on which it stands; and possessing the command of several sluices. The Stadtholder soon after reduced Harderwicke, a town in Guelderland, erected on the Zuyder-Sea, was acknowledged by the city of Middleburg, and the whole province of Zeeland, which declared, without reserve, in his favour; blocked up the city of Utrecht; and repulsed an attempt that was made by a superior number of the garrison and inhabitants on one of his out-posts.

These successes probably served to accelerate the motions of the Prussians, who, to the amount of eighteen thousand men, commanded by the duke of Brunswick, and furnished with a train of light artillery, advanced from the duchy of Cleves, and, about the middle of September, entered the province of Guelderland, in three columns: that on the right, which directed its course to the northward, was under the command of general Lottum; the centre was entrusted to the conduct of generals Waldeck and Gaudi; and the left, which pointed its march to the south, was led by the duke in person.

The success of each division was such as might be expected from the dread conceived of the Prussian arms; and no superiority of numbers could encourage either the regular or irregular forces of the province to sustain any thing like a contest, even with the light troops of the enemy. Gorcum, though in a good state of defence, and under the government of the celebrated colonel and chamberlain Capelle, so distinguished for the violence of his republican principles, surrendered after a few shots, and the garrison and governor yielded themselves prisoners of war to the duke of Brunswick. Nieuport and Schoonhoven, both capable of a long resistance, were hastily evacuated; Dort, Leyden, and Haarlem, submitted on the first summons; and Rotterdam, on the appearance of the Prussians, threw open her gates, and received them with the loudest acclamations.

Nor was the progress of the centre column less rapid or successful; on its approach, the factious city of Utrecht was thrown into the utmost dismay; the desire of escape  
and

and the preservation of property superseding every other consideration, the place was evacuated by all orders of armed men; the artillery, which they had in vain endeavoured to render useless, was left on the works without centinels or guards, and the prince of Orange, without opposition, possessed himself of a city which had long been considered as the great bulwark of the province of Holland, and, next to Amsterdam, as the principal seat and grand citadel of the republican party.

The column led by General Lottum on the right, met with rather more resistance: Naarden, a strong place, situate at the south end of the Zuyder Sea, within thirteen miles of Amsterdam, rejected the summons of the Prussian commander, and prepared for a vigorous defence. But general Lottum, whose detachment was by no means provided for a siege, turned aside from the walls, and received the submission of Nieuwerfluis, a strong fortress, with a garrison of near eight hundred soldiers, who surrendered themselves prisoners of war.

But, during these military transactions, an unexpected revolution had taken place at the Hague, which greatly changed the face of internal affairs in the province of Holland. The inhabitants of that town, the residence of the States of Holland, were yet strongly attached to the person and interests of the prince of Orange; and the governing party, well aware of this disposition, had introduced a strong body of volunteers to keep the ordinary garrison in subjection; but, under the consternation and dismay, which the progress of the Prussians, and the failure of the French succours, excited on the republican side, it was easily seen that the volunteers would not be long able to overawe so populous a place; and several of the principal persons of that party accordingly retired for safety to Amsterdam.

The event justified their precaution. The Swiss soldiers, who formerly composed the Stadtholder's state guard, boldly assembled, and carried off the two pieces of cannon that had been assigned for the support of the volunteers. Their zeal soon communicated to the inhabitants; the republicans on every side were disarmed; the most violent members of the States fled to Amsterdam; and the rest of the assembly immediately sent a deputation to solicit the return of the prince of Orange.

An invitation thus flattering and unexpected could not fail to be accepted with transport; and the Stadtholder and his consort having been received at the Hague with every demonstration of joy, the former was immediately restored by the States to all those offices and rights from which he had been suspended, and all proceedings which had been instituted against him in that province were consequently annulled. The States also dispatched an express to the court of Versailles, with information that the disputes between the province of Holland and the Stadtholder were now happily terminated; and that,



that, as the circumstances which occasioned their application to the king no longer existed, so the succour which they had requested from his majesty would now be unnecessary. They likewise issued an edict forbidding all attempts to inundate the country, and strictly commanding the governors of all cities to give free admission to the Prussian troops. In consequence of this, baron Matha, governor of Naarden, opened the gates of that city, on the same principle of duty on which he had before kept them closed.

All opposition was now confined to the city of Amsterdam and its environs, whither the most active and obstinate of the republican faction had fled from all quarters. That proud capital, undismayed by the general defection, made every preparation for the most desperate resistance. The surrounding country was laid under water; strong batteries were erected on every side; all the posts which commanded the roads leading to the town were entrenched and fortified; and the citizens expressed their determination of defending themselves to the last extremity.

The danger was, indeed, already at their gates; the duke of Brunswick having established round the city a chain of posts wherever the nature of the ground and the intersection of the dykes would admit; and though a transient negotiation had produced a temporary suspension of arms, he no sooner found the spirits of the party unsubdued, than he determined to force their boasted barriers. By a series of judicious manœuvres, wisely planned, and courageously executed, he carried his point; the numerous fortified posts of the republicans were assailed at the same point of time; and notwithstanding, a resistance more vigorous than had yet been experienced, the Prussians were completely successful.

The proud city of Amsterdam was now, for the first time, delivered to the discretion of a victor, and, open on every side to bombardment, reluctantly descended to the language of submission. The magistracy declared themselves obliged by the impending danger to subscribe conditions to which they yielded, lest others more severe might be imposed. Sixteen persons, proscribed by the prince of Orange, as the leaders of the republican faction, were deprived of their respective offices; the members of the regency, who had been tumultuously deposed for their attachment to the Stadtholder, were immediately restored; the burghers and all persons in the town, except the legal militia, were to be disarmed; and the Leyden gate was delivered up to the Prussians, to facilitate the performance of this last stipulation.

In order to facilitate the operations of the Prussian monarch, Great Britain had fitted out a strong squadron at Portsmouth; a circumstance which roused the jealousy of the French government, who immediately sent orders to equip sixteen sail of the line at Brest, and recalled a small squadron of evolution which was then exercising naval manœuvres on the coast of Portugal. But in these preparations the king of France seemed rather

rather to regard his own dignity, than to be actuated by any hope of affording effectual relief to his allies. All opposition in Holland might be already considered as extinguished; and the official notification to the court of Versailles, from the States assembled at the Hague, appeared to have removed every pretext for interposition. The republic had adopted a new system of policy, and however great the mortification which France might experience on losing the fruits of her labour and exertions, it was no longer in her power to undo what was already done in Holland, nor by any means to recover her former influence.

Under these circumstances, and in the distracted state of her internal affairs, France could only wish to extricate herself, with the best grace she could, from the difficulty in which she was involved, and to soften her warlike aspect as soon as the appearance of a similar disposition on the other side should afford a fair opportunity. As there was nothing now remained to excite a quarrel, this opportunity was soon offered by the British ministers at Paris, who presented a declaration, in which they observed, that as the affairs of the United Provinces no longer left any subject of discussion, and still less of contest, between the two courts, they were authorized to ask, whether it was the intention of the king to carry into effect the notification made by his minister, which, by announcing that succour would be given in Holland, had occasioned the naval armaments made by his Britannic majesty, and which had since become reciprocal?—That, if the court of Versailles were disposed to explain itself on this subject, and upon the conduct to be observed towards the republic, in a manner conformable to the desire which had been expressed on both sides, of preserving the good understanding between both crowns; and it being likewise understood that there is no view of hostility towards any quarter in consequence of what has passed, their master, ever anxious to concur in the friendly sentiments of his Most Christian majesty, would agree with him, that the armaments, and all warlike preparations in general, should be discontinued on both sides, and that the armies of both nations should be again placed upon the footing of the peace establishment, as it stood on the first day of the present year.

This produced a counter-declaration, on the same day, signed by monsieur de Montmorin, the minister for foreign affairs, in which the king declared, that he never had any intention of interfering by force in the affairs of the republic; the notification was palliated, and it was acknowledged that the motives by which it had been influenced no longer existed; he declares, that he readily agrees to give no effect to it; concurs in the sentiments of his Britannic majesty for the preservation of harmony between the two courts; and accedes with pleasure to the proposal, that the armaments, and, in general, all warlike preparations, should be discontinued on both sides, and the navies placed upon the peace establishment proposed. A short instrument, being in some sort a summary and confirmation of the foregoing documents, was then signed by all parties, in the names of  
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their respective sovereigns; and thus all occasions of difference for the present between the two nations were happily removed.

The facility with which this accommodation was effected may be chiefly ascribed to the distracted state of affairs in France, where the seeds of internal discord had not only burst into life, but were hastily advancing towards maturity. By the dismissal of M. de Calonne, the kingdom was left without a minister, and almost without a system. In the assembly of the Notables, much debate, but little agreement, had been produced by the proposed territorial impost, an object which the court was peculiarly anxious to accomplish. Independent of the particular and individual interests by which this salutary measure was opposed, whole provinces objected to it, as a direct infraction of their rights, and a violation of those original capitularies which they had entered into with the crown, for the preservation of their ancient immunities, and on the faith of which they became members of the kingdom. Upon this subject the attorney-general of Provence had the boldness to declare, that neither that assembly, the parliaments, nor the king himself, could assess any such impost in the country which he represented, as being directly contrary to the specific and indefeasible rights of the people.

The impossibility of reconciling such a variety of discordant interests rendered it manifest that the present convention was unequal to the greater objects for which it had been assembled, and that nothing less than an assemblage of the States-General of the kingdom, assisted by the instruction or advice of the respective provincial states, particularly in all that related to their own peculiar rights and privileges, could effectually remove the present grievances, by such permanent arrangements of the public revenues and expences, as should render the crown for the future easy in its pecuniary affairs, and the burthens of the people as light as their nature would admit.

But though the convention of the Notables were unable to complete the grand object of reform, they nevertheless proposed many useful and beneficial regulations, which were adopted by the court, both with respect to several of the taxes and Gabelles themselves, to the mode of levying them, to the persons employed in the collection, and to the boards or offices which were to regulate and govern the assessments. But as these only extended to parts, and to the removal of the more glaring and obvious grievances, they did but tend more clearly to evince the necessity of such an efficient power as would be finally conclusive, and of acting upon a system of reform so comprehensive as to embrace the whole aggregate of grievance and evil.

Whatever the future good effects might be to the nation, the crown could not but be grievously disappointed at the failure of the grand object for the accomplishment of which it had summoned the convention, viz.—the obtaining immediate relief for its present

present most urgent necessities; it had been intended to raise a loan of one hundred and twelve millions of livres upon the expected land tax; but though the ministers had declared it to be a matter of such indispensable necessity, that government could scarcely otherwise exercise its necessary functions, the turn which affairs had taken in the assembly rendered it impossible.

The king, however, bore the disappointment with such admirable temper, that the convention and he parted with every appearance of the most perfect confidence and cordiality on both sides. In his speech, on dissolving the assembly, (on the twenty-fifth of May) he acknowledged, that they had fulfilled his expectations in assisting him with their counsels, and delivering their sentiments with that freedom and truth which he was ever willing to hear; that he was thoroughly satisfied with their indefatigable zeal and attention, in examining the objects he had communicated to them: that they had not only instituted proper enquiries into a variety of abuses, but had suggested the means for reforming them: that they had done much towards the attainment of the grand object, of reducing the expences of the state to a level with the public revenue, by the accurate enquiry which they made into the deficiencies and their causes, by pointing out the different economical savings which might properly be effected, and in affording time for the effect to operate, by the temporary provisional taxes which, for the intermediate time, they had recommended as the most proper to be laid upon his subjects. He concluded by declaring that it afforded him great consolation to think, that the form and method of these new imposts would not be so burthensome as those of former times; the only wish of his heart being that of rendering his people as contented and as happy as possible.

Lewis, being disappointed of the relief which he had expected to derive from the Notables, and having only received from that assembly such assistance as was wholly inadequate to supply the immediate urgent necessities of government, was obliged to have recourse to the usual mode of raising money, by the promulgation of royal edicts. Among the measures proposed for this purpose, was the doubling of the poll-tax, the re-establishment of the third-twentieth, and a stamp-duty. The parliament, however, remonstrated, in strong terms, against the whole, insisting, that, before they granted, or concurred in raising any money, a true account of the state of the finances, and of the purposes to which such money was to be applied, should be laid before them. The tax upon stamps became the immediate object of contention; and the parliament determined not to register the edict, and presented the following spirited remonstrance to the crown:

“ A most respectful address, Sire, together with the just claims of the nation, has  
 “ been humbly laid at the foot of the throne, by your majesty’s most dutiful and faith-  
 “ ful subjects. • The bare proposal of a duty on paper has alarmed every individual.  
 “ After a glorious peace of five years, and a progressive increase of at least one hundred  
 “ and thirty millions of livres in thirteen years, it seems as if the name of impost should



“ never issue from the mouth of a beneficent monarch, except in rendering it less onerous,  
“ or diminishing the number of these already existing. What was our surprize, then,  
“ Sire, when we were told that new taxes were projecting by the Notables; and that a  
“ new one, of a most distressing kind, was to be offered for the *approbation* of parlia-  
“ ment!

“ The first reflection that naturally occurs at the very mention of a new duty, is to  
“ enquire into the actual state of the finances. What an administration must the last  
“ have been, if the evils that result from it require such a desperate remedy!—Your  
“ majesty must remember how we strove, in 1784 and 1786, to give you a faithful pic-  
“ ture of the real situation of the state, which seemed then (or your ministry endeavour-  
“ ed to make it appear so) as if inclined to take a better turn; but the truth was, that  
“ the state was more involved in difficulties than ever. Your Parliament then, Sire, did  
“ every thing in their power, but in vain, to set truth in its clearest light; some of your  
“ ministers were too deeply interested in the concealment of it from your majesty; all  
“ our humble remonstrances proved useless; and there were some of your council who  
“ went so far as to make you suspect the purity of our patriotic intentions: the dread-  
“ ful situation of affairs, however, required a speedy and efficacious remedy. The Not-  
“ ables, assembled by your majesty’s orders, have withdrawn the veil that covered that  
“ undermining administration: a dreadful spectacle presented itself to the eye of the af-  
“ tonished nation; an immense deficiency was very visible in the treasury; and every  
“ body hastened to propose the means of filling it up, and affording a speedy remedy.  
“ How grievous to the paternal heart of your majesty must such a discovery have been!  
“ How must your astonishment and sorrow have increased, when you reflected on the  
“ fatal errors in which your ministers had long and purposely kept you!

“ Such is the consequence, Sire, when the choice of ministers falls on persons that are  
“ obnoxious to the nation in general: such is the great, but sad, example, that teaches  
“ monarchs how far they must respect the public opinion, seldom susceptible of error,  
“ because men united together rarely give or receive an impression contrary to truth.  
“ In point of administration, Sire, the purest hands are scarcely pure enough. A first  
“ condescension, or rather, a first wrong step, leads to a second; no bounds can circum-  
“ scribe the imprudent minister, when once he swerves from his duty; successive abuses  
“ produce an utter confusion, and a fatal disorder; the deep wounds inflicted on the  
“ constitution demand a remedy; and this, even when certain, will operate but a slow  
“ cure.

“ O! may your majesty deign to pause awhile on one of those salutary reflections  
“ the importance of which has been acknowledged by all good monarchs.—Evil may  
“ happen in a single instant, but whole years are scarce sufficient to repair the mischief  
“ it

“ it occasions. The vices of an administration, or, which is the inevitable effect of  
“ them, the involuntary error of a just monarch, will sorely distress whole generations.

“ It is not the intention of your parliament, Sire, to grieve your majesty's most feeling  
“ heart, by expatiating at present on a subject so afflicting, and recalling a thought so  
“ unpleasant; but they take the liberty of humbly intreating your majesty to weigh  
“ often these important reflections, in some of those moments devoted to silent medita-  
“ tion on the welfare and happiness of your subjects. It now behoves your parliament  
“ to enter with a noble freedom, upon a subject proposed by your majesty yourself; we  
“ mean the projected retrenchments and schemes of economy. We earnestly entreat  
“ you, Sire, to be upon your guard against the emotions and propensities of your tender  
“ heart, in order that the economy already begun may continue, and those reforms adopt-  
“ ed and settled be of constant duration. When a pure and enlightened administration en-  
“ deavours to establish certain principles of economy, it generally meets with some an-  
“ cient customs that seem to have been long attached to the constitution, and to enjoy  
“ the right of prescription. If the minister acts with firmness, he is immediately  
“ blamed for his imprudence; if with precaution, the world will censure his weakness!   
“ What difficulties will not then, in such a case, surround the monarch, and be incessant-  
“ ly multiplying about him! Courtiers will publicly approve of, nay applaud, the pro-  
“ jected reforms; but, in secret, they will try to weaken, and even prevent, their ef-  
“ fect; all means will be employed to deceive him; it is then, that art, address, and  
“ finess, appear in a thousand different forms, actuated by the most imperious of all  
“ motives, personal interest: the sovereign, thus beset, and attacked on every side by  
“ claims, suits, and petitions, is forced to listen to importunate clamours, and, through the  
“ goodness of his heart, often grants what could never be obtained through his justice.

“ The moment the word *economy* is mentioned, it echoes through the room; the  
“ cunning courtier apparently adopts the plan, and wishes to be numbered among the  
“ great characters of the nation, whose example he affects to imitate; but he calculates  
“ at the same time how long the economical reform may subsist, and how he may render  
“ abortive the retrenchments that diminish either his credit or his revenues: all expences  
“ but his own seem susceptible of diminution: in a vast administration, the weakest pre-  
“ texts are easily tinged with the colouring of reason; and that economy, which has  
“ been so often courted, and always expected, appears and disappears in an instant, leaving  
“ a black cloud over the beautiful countenance of truth, which some faint rays had be-  
“ gun to render conspicuous.

“ These reflections, Sire, written in the annals of every nation, are the faithful his-  
“ tory of the human heart: never could the meditation on them be more interesting to  
“ your majesty than at present, for the application suits exactly to the urgent circum-  
“ stances of the times. The more vigour and firmness your majesty shall shew for the  
“ intended.



“ intended reforms, and salutary resolutions, the more difficulties and obstacles will cer-  
 “ tainly impede the way ; and experience may, perhaps, have already proved, that the  
 “ persons interested in these economical views begin to hint as if the proposed sums were  
 “ equivocal and precarious, and the deductions agreed upon incompatible with old cus-  
 “ toms, and unlikely to be of long duration.

“ It is in your majesty’s power to enforce, with a laudable perseverance, the order that  
 “ must permanently establish this essential reform. Every thing should undergo the  
 “ strictest enquiry. Your majesty’s justice, which is to us the surest and most sacred pledge,  
 “ emboldens your parliament to lay before you, without danger of incurring your royal  
 “ displeasure, some of those remarks and observations which must naturally have occur-  
 “ red to you. Had you known, Sire, the real state of your finances, you doubtless  
 “ would not have undertaken those immense edifices that are now building, nor made so  
 “ many acquisitions, onerous to the state ; you would not have permitted so many ex-  
 “ changes of the crown lands, nor granted those excessive liberalities which the impor-  
 “ tunate and intriguing seldom fail to obtain. The facility of procuring money from  
 “ the treasury (the fatal bane of all administrations) would never have been suffered to  
 “ encrease, for it incessantly exposes the sovereign to some dangerous surprize ; it squan-  
 “ ders secretly the public revenue, and can never overbalance, with its pretended utility,  
 “ the great inconveniences that invariably attend it ; your majesty would, certainly,  
 “ never have consented to have Paris surrounded with such a magnificent wall<sup>11</sup> ; to see  
 “ palaces erected for your excise-officers, at an exorbitant expence, in order to coincide  
 “ with the views of the farmers-general, who, in expectation of a precarious and distant  
 “ gain, expend annually those sums that should be appropriated to wants of more real  
 “ necessity.

“ All these objects, Sire, and many others, the enumeration of which would excite  
 “ your astonishment, are susceptible of correction : some require a considerable diminu-  
 “ tion ; others an entire suppression. But it is not the total only of each department  
 “ that should be properly diminished ; every part of it should be scrupulously examined,  
 “ and divested of all its superfluous charges ; it should be reduced to the simple and abso-  
 “ lutely necessary expence : in so doing, your majesty might easily double the intended  
 “ reform of forty millions of livres, and this might then prove a real relief to your  
 “ suffering subjects.

“ These are honourable economies, Sire, that, far from diminishing the splendour of  
 “ a throne, add to its lustre, and encrease its dignity. Majesty itself may submit to pri-

<sup>11</sup> The capital had been recently enclosed with a wall, at the expence of the farmers-general, in order to prevent the evasion of the heavy duties imposed upon almost every article that entered Paris.

“ vations. The sovereign is always great when his subjects are happy ; and the sight of  
 “ happiness spread over a whole people is so pompous and brilliant, that it commands  
 “ public admiration, and extorts universal applause.

“ These diminutions, suppressions, reforms, and economies, so often solicited by your  
 “ parliaments, demanded by the Notables, and promised by their spirited and just perse-  
 “ verance, are daily wished for and expected by the unhappy husbandman, whose tears  
 “ bedew the very field that contributes to so many useless expences before it has furnished  
 “ the necessary subsistence for himself and family, to the person who sowed it ; and  
 “ who, deprived of the common necessities, is forced to take from his poverty itself  
 “ something towards supplying the exigencies of the state.

“ These unhappy beings, Sire, Frenchmen by birth, and MEN, have a double right to  
 “ enjoy their sacred property, even in the bosom of indigence ; but as they cannot claim  
 “ it themselves at your majesty's feet, let their claims and their rights be ever present  
 “ before you ; let their complaints find their way to the throne, and reach your royal  
 “ person : let them hear your gracious answer, and let them know that your majesty's  
 “ goodness and justice are the firmest supporters they can hope to find near the throne.

“ *The French never consult any interest inseparable from the throne ; they are always biassed*  
 “ *by their sincere attachment to their monarch, in their fervent zeal and enthusiastic ardour*  
 “ *for the royal cause, they have been capable of the greatest sacrifices ; and they may*  
 “ *fancy the ways and means of the nation as unbounded as their affection. These ways*  
 “ *and means, therefore, must be properly managed, and used at proper times. It should*  
 “ *be likewise considered, that the contributions proceeding from the imposts granted to*  
 “ *the monarchs are only intended as subsidies to the state, and that the sovereign is but*  
 “ *the distributor of whatever is not employed for the public weal, which naturally be-*  
 “ *longs to those who co-operate in levying the contributions, and, if they are directed*  
 “ *from their chief and primitive intent, their fertile source will soon become insuffi-*  
 “ *cient, and, in a short time, exhausted, particularly if the expences encrease in pro-*  
 “ *portion to the receipt.*

“ All kinds of imposts should be proportioned to the necessary wants of the nation,  
 “ and end with them. Each citizen contributes part of his property for the sake of  
 “ maintaining public safety and private tranquillity. The people, on such principles,  
 “ founded on the rights of mankind, and confirmed by reason, should never increase their  
 “ contributions but when the expences of the state have undergone all the savings, al-  
 “ terations, and retrenchments, of which they are capable. It is for this reason, there-  
 “ fore, that your parliament, Sire, look upon the duty on stamped paper as entirely op-  
 “ posite to these primitive notions. It would affect the private tranquillity, by neces-  
 “ sarily



“ fairly opening a way to errors, and would thereby prove far more dangerous than the  
“ *Gabelle*, which was liable to open frauds. The most close and habitual attention  
“ could hardly be sufficient to distinguish the numberless stamped papers that are to serve  
“ for each respective act of justice or common transaction.

“ What mistakes will not the greatest part of your subjects be liable to, by inter-  
“ changing these papers, and making use of the one for the other ! Many writings, by  
“ such involuntary faults, may appear counterfeited in the eye of justice ; and the un-  
“ wary individual will find himself daily exposed to pay exorbitant fines, or to encounter  
“ disagreeable and burthenfome suits at law.

“ Such a duty, Sire, is likewise incompatible with public safety, as it would deeply  
“ wound that mutual confidence which constitutes its surest foundation. Individuals  
“ would be afraid of producing unstamped bills or notes before a tribunal ; and, in this  
“ age, where there are such frequent instances of persons taking all sorts of advantages,  
“ and commencing or prolonging vexatious and endless suits, a wise legislature should be  
“ very careful not to introduce new subjects of chicanery. Besides, our public trust,  
“ Sire, and our national dignity, absolutely forbid the introduction of such a dangerous  
“ duty.

“ The moment a declaration is issued, which is generally vicious in almost all its dis-  
“ positions, a seducing facility of extending its meaning or duration occurs, and pre-  
“ tences are not wanting for imposing plausibly on the public. Experience supplies us  
“ with too many examples of this nature. The two sous and the eight sous per livre,  
“ for instance ; the second warrant for the poll-tax, and so many other inventions,  
“ which the fertile genius of financiers has imagined, and is never at a loss to find for  
“ overcharging the subjects, are but a continuation and extension of a duty, simple in  
“ its origin ; and such an extension, Sire, is often divested of any legal authority, and  
“ only collected in virtue of the minister's mandate. Without mentioning, Sire, the  
“ multiplicity of marks, precautions, and fines, annexed to and attending the duty on  
“ stamped paper, it is certain that it would cause a delay in public and private business,  
“ and obstruct the common daily transactions. All delay is dangerous, and all obstruc-  
“ tion must produce delay. A bill of exchange, improperly stamped, would be liable to  
“ a fine ; the fine must be paid immediately by the possessor of the bill ; he, therefore,  
“ would be obliged to advance the sum for the time, pay instead of receive, and lie out  
“ of his money until the expiration of his unlucky bill. He would be a sufferer for the  
“ faults of others, and such faults might be renewed several times in one and the same  
“ day, in the very same hour ; his payments must be affected by it, and his credit called in  
“ question. Thence mistrust and doubts will necessarily arise ; and you know, Sire,  
“ that there subsists a kind of chain in the course of exchanges, that strongly binds all  
“ the

“ the commercial part of mankind in the known world. Our trading towns would lose,  
 “ in the eyes of a foreigner, that level or advantage they were wont to enjoy. In short,  
 “ were not such a duty extremely onerous in itself, its unlimited duration must excite a  
 “ general alarm. We have often seen taxes, limited in time, prolonged even after the  
 “ intention of the supply had been amply fulfilled; but we did not expect to see one  
 “ that is to last perpetually, at the very time when a certain period was mentioned for  
 “ diminishing the national debt.

“ Lewis the Fourteenth established the Poll-tax in 1695, and the Tenth in 1710. The  
 “ misfortunes that marked the latter end of his reign, the heavy losses he then sustained,  
 “ and the invasion of the kingdom, induced him to venture on the adoption of a mea-  
 “ sure, the success of which he very much doubted in his own mind. That *Great*  
 “ monarch, finding himself obliged to impose such a duty, seemed to be doubtful whether  
 “ he had a right to impose it; and if parliament then thought it their duty to have it  
 “ registered, it was because the contribution was to last but a short time; it was chiefly  
 “ because the exigencies of the state seemed to require a speedy redress; had it not been  
 “ for these substantial reasons, Sire, Lewis the Fourteenth would have acknowledged,  
 “ that it was the nation alone, re-united in the three general states, that could give the  
 “ necessary consent for establishing a perpetual tax—that parliament were never invested  
 “ with such a power<sup>12</sup>, and that, *charged by the sovereign to announce his will to the*  
 “ *people* they had never been charged by the people *to represent them so implicitly.*

“ This is what your respectful parliament now takes the liberty of mentioning to your  
 “ majesty; and, penetrated with this truth, alarmed at the enormous deficiency, and  
 “ stricken with the deplorable disorders that have produced it, and might render it per-  
 “ petual, they wish very much to see the whole nation assembled, before they register  
 “ any new impost. The nation, alone, thus assembled, and acquainted with the true  
 “ state of the finances, can extirpate the great abuses which now exist, and afford such  
 “ efficacious resources as will prevent their return.

“ 'Tis for you, Sire, that the honour was reserved of renewing those national assem-  
 “ blies which rendered the reign of Charlemagne so great and illustrious; assemblies

<sup>12</sup> Lewis the Fourteenth, with regard to whom the parliament here adopts the adulatory language of his age, by affixing to his name the appellation of *Great*, would, most certainly, not only have denied that the parliament were ever invested with the power of establishing a perpetual impost, but that they had ever possessed even the negative power of preventing the establishment of any tax; he would probably have limited their functions to the administration of justice, and have confined their privileges to those which were immediately annexed to their office as magistrates; with respect to the registration of fiscal edicts, he would have considered them as only “ charged by the sovereign to announce his will to the people;”—and as to the power of granting or withholding supplies, directly or indirectly, he would have adopted the idea of Voltaire, that there was no more affinity between *les Parliemens de France* and the Parliaments of England, than between a commercial consul at Smyrna, and a consul of ancient Rome. Had the parliament forgotten this circumstance—that when a magistrate was delivering a long speech in the presence of Lewis the Fourteenth, in which were these words “ *The king and the state*”—that monarch interrupted the orator in a manner the most abrupt, by exclaiming—“ *The state! Why, that's me!*”



“ that repaired all the disastrous calamities of king John, and concurred with parliament  
 “ to re-establish Charles the Seventh on the throne. All the world is now convinced  
 “ of the truth of this maxim—*that mystery generally accompanies weakness and mistrust—*  
 “ *that the greater authority is, the more confidence and candour it should inspire—and that*  
 “ *entrusting the provincial assemblies with part of the administration, instead of weakening it,*  
 “ *would enlighten it, and encrease its activity.* Your Notables, Sire, so wisely selected by  
 “ your majesty, have assisted the throne with their councils, and unveiled the long-  
 “ hidden countenance of truth, which you were determined to see. How happy now are  
 “ the members of this assembly in presenting you, Sire, with the effusions of that truth  
 “ they strongly feel in their hearts!—*The monarch of France can never be so great as when*  
 “ *surrounded by his happy subjects: he has nothing to fear but the excess of their attachment.*  
 “ *he has no other precaution to take but to be upon his guard against issuing orders that may be*  
 “ *beyond their power to fulfil.* By a perfect union between the sovereign and the people,  
 “ each party will be a gainer; and a monarch can never err in following the steps of the  
 “ hero of the second race, who forced from the unanimous lips of admiring Europe the  
 “ name of Great, which he certainly deserved by protecting justice and his people with  
 “ the same arm which struck terror to his enemies; nor those of a Charles the Fifth,  
 “ whom posterity, the impartial judge of kings, has dignified with the title of Wise;  
 “ nor those of Lewis the Twelfth, who, in one of those assemblies, had the sweet sa-  
 “ tisfaction of hearing himself proclaimed the Father of his People; nor those, in short,  
 “ of Henry the Fourth, whose name, still so dear to the French, is an honour to hu-  
 “ manity, and daily receives from our grateful hearts a copious tribute of tears.

“ Your parliament, Sire, waiting with impatience for the happy and long-wished for  
 “ moment, when a just monarch will deign to spread his benign influence over a faithful  
 “ nation, and grant their requests, most respectfully entreat your majesty to recall and  
 “ annul the declaration of the stamp-duty, as altogether incompatible with the present  
 “ situation of affairs; a duty that, were it to be enforced, would cause universal discon-  
 “ tent and sorrow to all the realm; and the bare mention of which has already spread a  
 “ general alarm through the kingdom.”

This remonstrance, though it contains much good reasoning, and many salutary admonitions, was by no means conclusive as to the point of parliamentary interposition. The advice to assemble the states was indisputably wholesome, and demanded the most serious attention of the monarch; but the necessity of the case would not admit of delay, and Lewis was obliged to apply, as the last resort, to his absolute authority, by holding a bed of justice, and compelling the parliament to register the disputed edict<sup>13</sup>.

On

<sup>13</sup>. It was upon this occasion, that the count d'Artois, the king's youngest brother, who had before stood favourably in the public opinion, completely forfeited his claims to popularity. The first president of the parliament having,

On the seventh of August, the day after the registering of the edict, the parliament entered a formal protest, endued with a new and extraordinary extent of operation, against this concession which had been extorted from them. They declared, that it had been registered against their *approbation and consent*, by the king's express command; that the edict neither ought to, nor *should*, have any force; and that the first person who should presume to attempt to enforce its execution, should be *adjudged a traitor, and condemned to the galleys*. This conduct was still more unconstitutional than the arbitrary exertion of regal authority, sanctioned, as it was, in this instance, by the imperious plea of necessity; the assumption of *legislative* power, by a court of justice, was an innovation of the most alarming nature,—an innovation not more dangerous than it was preposterous. The parliament seem to have lost their wisdom with their temper; their protest breathes a very different spirit from their remonstrance; and the manner in which they now conducted their opposition tended to annihilate even that lawful authority which by the constitution was vested in the crown;—that opposition too was rendered still more formidable by its receiving the sanction of all the other parliaments, who, alas! were little aware that, by this means, they contributed to raise a flame which was destined to consume themselves.

Such was now the situation of affairs, that the king was reduced to the absolute necessity of either proceeding to extremities in the support of his authority, or of giving up, for ever, the power of raising money upon any occasion, however immediate or urgent, without the consent of the parliament. In the mean time, every circumstance that occurred served to indicate an approaching storm. Paris had, since the commencement of the disputes, been so filled with troops, that it rather wore the appearance of a military camp, under military law, than that of a great and peaceable capital, under the government of a civil magistracy, and its own municipal laws. All the avenues to the *Palais*, where the different chambers of parliament held their meetings, were occupied by soldiers; and the members, in their way to and from the places of their residence, were obliged to pass through rows of bayonets. Indeed, the Parisians afforded, in some degree, a colour for this measure, by the unprecedented and unrestrained licence they assumed, in speaking, writing, and acting, upon public and political affairs. So great was the interest they now took in those matters, such was the freedom of their speech in discussing those topics, that a stranger, but for the appearance of the troops, might easily have fancied himself in the capital of a republic. This licence was carried to far by the populace, that even a military force proved inadequate to the protection of the count

ing, in a very spirited speech, declared the causes upon which that body grounded their refusal of registering the stamp-tax, that prince exclaimed, with vehemence, that if he were king, they should comply; upon which the president, making a low bow, replied, "If you were king, I should say what I have now said; my heart is the people's; my understanding is my own; and my head is the king's."



d'Artois from the most unequivocal marks of public indignation and hatred; while monsieur (the king's next brother) by pursuing a different line of conduct, was loaded with praises and benedictions whenever he appeared.

Some few days after the parliament had entered the protest, an officer of the French guards, with a party of soldiers, went, at break of day, to the house of each individual member, to signify to him the king's command, that he should immediately get into his carriage and proceed to Troyes, without writing or speaking to any person out of his own house before his departure. These orders being served upon all at the same instant, and carried into immediate execution, all disorder was thereby so effectually prevented, that the parliament was far advanced on its way to the scene of banishment, before the Parisians were apprized of the circumstance.

But the stop put to public business, and the disorders occasioned by the banishment of the parliament, were so sensibly felt, and the dissatisfaction of the people upon that event was so great, that the crown could not long persevere in maintaining that hostile mark of its resentment. The court was also in itself so apparently weak and divided, and such continual changes took place in the different departments of state, that it evidently wanted every thing that could confer dignity on its conduct, or afford stability to its measures. Some appearance of vigour was, however, assumed by the publication of an edict, by which the late resolutions of the parliament were declared to be illegal and null; but no measures being adopted for giving effect to this edict, nor any attempt made to enforce the taxes, it passed as nothing. But the turbulence of the Parisians was effectually curbed by a guard of twelve thousand men, stationed in the capital, and besides the continual patrols by night and day, subaltern officers, with small detachments of soldiers, were posted at the corners of every street. The king, in the mean time, was employed in the laudable task of making continual retrenchments in his household, and other departments.

The chamber of accounts and the court of aids having likewise protested against the new taxes, and petitioned the king to convene an assembly of the States-General, as the only means of restoring the public confidence and tranquillity; the monarch, in some parts of his answer, seemed to disdain the lofty language of his predecessors, by entering into what appeared like some justification of his conduct, without a formal assumption of that name or character. He began, however, by telling them that it was not the business of his courts of justice to demand a convocation of the States-General; it belonged to him alone to determine whether it was proper; and as he saw it was not necessary, they should not have renewed their demand; that he had already done more for his people than they now required: that he had granted them provincial assemblies, which were the most competent to make known the wants and wishes of the whole kingdom; that he should

should never oppose whatever the wants of the people might require: that he had transferred his parliament from Paris to Troyes, because that assembly had excited a ferment among his people, which their presence would only serve to nourish and encrease: that he should judge of the time proper for its restoration: that his principal object had ever been the discovery of the truth: that it was his duty to insist on his full power in having his edicts registered: if there were any inconveniences in the execution of them, his parliament was wrong in not making him acquainted with them: that he should receive with pleasure the remarks and supplications of the two petitioning courts, who might expect every thing from his justice, and his regard to his people; but that they ought to consider the combination of circumstances, and to observe, that he was under the necessity of pursuing such measures as would best enable him faithfully to fulfil his engagements.

While things were in this situation, the unexpected arrival, without leave or notice, of the first president of the parliament from Troyes at Versailles, while it excited general astonishment, afforded a gleam of satisfaction and hope to the public. The president was dispatched by that body to the king, to represent, in strong colours, the ruinous situation to which his country would be inevitably reduced by a perseverance in those measures which he had been advised to pursue; that all public business was at a stand; and that, though the consequences of such a state of affairs could not be precisely ascertained, yet it was evident that disorder, confusion, and perhaps danger to the public tranquillity, were the probable results. As the court wished for the occasion, a negotiation immediately commenced, and an accommodation soon took place. The king agreed to give up the stamp duty, and the territorial impost, and to give satisfaction to parliament in some other respects. This was an impolitic measure, as it sanctioned, in a certain degree, the encroachments of parliament, and might be construed into a tacit acknowledgment of their right—a right they had assumed in direct violation of the fundamental principles of the French constitution—to annul, by withholding their approbation and consent, the edicts of the crown. A vigorous government would easily have crushed their opposition, for the two edicts in question had been enregistered according to the usual forms in a bed of justice, which, from the undisputed sanction of ages, conferred on them all the efficacy and force of laws; but the enfeebled state of the court, the want of vigour in its councils, along, probably, with an ill-founded hope, and an *ill-timed* desire of accommodation, served altogether to induce the king to submit to this dangerous inroad upon his authority, and to relinquish these decrees, which could alone have enabled him to conduct the business of government with security and effect.

The president of the parliament, in a speech to the king, conveyed the most ample acknowledgments from that body of their grateful sense of his equity and justice, and of his affection for his subjects in withdrawing the obnoxious edicts, accompanied with assurances of their grateful concurrence in all his majesty's beneficial views for relieving the people,



people, and rendering them happy. The king's answer was exceedingly gracious, containing professions of the most perfect confidence in the fidelity and loyalty of the parliament, and of the greatest affection for his subjects.

But these indications of a conciliatory disposition in the contending parties too soon disappeared, and the flame, that was smothered for a while, burst forth with additional violence. A determined opposition to the measures of government was displayed in the provinces, which seemed to vie with each other in the boldness and energy of their proceedings. Among various instances of this spirit of resistance, the parliament of Grenoble passed a decree against *Lettres de Cachet*, by which it was rendered a capital crime for any person, under any authority, to attempt the execution of those letters within their jurisdiction. This decree, though calculated to promote a salutary purpose, inasmuch as *Lettres de Cachet* were the most dreadful instruments of arbitrary power,—instruments which the law reprobated, and the constitution disavowed—was highly deserving of censure, since it betrayed the most unwarrantable assumption of legislative authority; an authority as repugnant to the spirit of the constitution, and as liable to abuse, as the despotic power which had been assumed by the crown, since the days of the fourth Henry.

The necessities of the state meanwhile continued, nor could the deficiency in the revenue be stopped but by extraordinary resources, or a long and uninterrupted course of frugality. The king, therefore, was reduced to the necessity of providing for the immediate exigencies by the establishment of a loan. For this purpose, in a very full meeting of the parliament, (on the seventh of November) attended by all the princes of the blood, great officers of state, and peers of France, he repaired to the *Palais*; and presented for registration two edicts; one for a new loan of four hundred and fifty millions of livres, (about eighteen millions seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling) and the other for the re-establishment of the Protestants in all their ancient civil rights; a measure which had been some time in agitation, but the progress of which had been impeded by the late disputes. The monarch introduced his edicts by the following speech;

“ Gentlemen, I am come to this assembly to recall to my parliament those principles  
 “ from which it ought never to deviate, and to hear what you have to say upon two  
 “ great acts of administration and legislation, which to me have appeared necessary.  
 “ The principles which I mean to recall to your recollection, constitute a part of the es-  
 “ sence of the monarchy, and I will not suffer them to be unknown or changed. I had  
 “ no need of solicitations to assemble the notables of my kingdom. I shall never be  
 “ afraid of being among my subjects. A king of France is never more happy than  
 “ when he enjoys their love and fidelity; but it is I only who am to judge of the use  
 “ and

“ and necessity of those assemblies, and I will not suffer myself to be indiscreetly im-  
“ portuned for that which ought to be expected from my wisdom, and the love I bear to  
“ my people, whose interests are inseparable from my own. The act of administration  
“ which I propose to myself is an edict, containing a creation of successive loans for five  
“ years. I wished to have no farther recourse to the aid of loans ; but order and econo-  
“ my must have time to make them effectual. Limited and well-calculated loans will  
“ retard the operations of the former, but they will not prevent them. No new imposts  
“ will be established, and my engagements will be fulfilled. I will ever maintain, by  
“ the most constant and undivided protection, the holy religion in which I have the hap-  
“ piness to have been born, and I will not permit it to suffer the smallest diminution in  
“ my kingdom. But I am of opinion, that this same religion commands me not to  
“ leave a part of my subjects deprived of their natural rights, and what the state of soci-  
“ ety promises them. My parliament ought to reckon upon my confidence and affection;  
“ but they ought to merit them, by confining themselves within the functions confided  
“ to their execution by the kings my predecessors ; being careful not to depart from, nor  
“ refuse them, and more particularly never to fail in giving to my subjects an example  
“ of fidelity and submission. My keeper of the seals will communicate to you my in-  
“ tentions.”

This speech, to say the least of it, was certainly ill-timed : exertions of vigour, with regard to the unconstitutional encroachments of the parliament, should have been made at the time such encroachments were committed ; the arguments here adduced would then have been well-applied ; but after an accommodation had taken place, all retrospective remarks should have been avoided, as hostile to that conciliatory spirit which it was the interest of all parties to promote. The censure cast upon the parliament, for their conduct in soliciting an assembly of the Notables, was highly improper, as in so doing they had strictly discharged their duty, and only exerted that right of petitioning, which every subject in the kingdom indisputably possessed.

As soon as the king had finished his speech, permission was announced for every member of the assembly to deliver his sentiments *without restraint* ; a licence which produced, as might naturally be supposed, a very warm debate on the subject of the loan, that was supported with equal perseverance by the court-party, and by that which opposed the registration. The discussion had continued till six o'clock in the evening, when the king, who had sat nine hours without taking any refreshment, being wearied with the length of the arguments, and pressed by hunger, suddenly rose, and commanded the edict to be registered without farther delay. This summary mode of proceeding was, most unexpectedly, opposed by the duke of Orleans, who, considering it as a direct infringement of the rights of parliament, immediately protested against the whole proceedings of the day, as being thereby rendered null and void. The king astonished,  
however



however repeated his orders, and then quitting the assembly, returned to Versailles without breaking his fast.

Upon his departure the parliament resolved, that as the votes had not, according to their standing orders, been regularly counted, and as their deliberations had been interrupted, they could not consider themselves as having any share in the business of that sitting; thereby confirming the protest of the duke of Orleans, and rendering the proceedings totally void. On the evening of the following day, the baron de Breteuil presented a letter to the duke of Orleans from the king, in which he was concisely informed, that his majesty had reason to be dissatisfied with his conduct; that he ordered him to retire to Villars-Cotteret (one of his seats, about fifteen leagues from Paris) where he was to receive no company except that of his own family; that he should depart immediately, and sleep at Reincy, four leagues from Paris, where, for the present night, he should see none of his family, nor any person belonging to his house. On the same day the Abbé Sabatier, and monsieur Freteau, both members of the parliament, and who had both distinguished themselves in the late debate, were, notwithstanding the freedom of speech which was then proclaimed, both taken up and sent off guarded, under the authority of *Lettres de Cachet*, the first to the prison of Mount Saint Michael—an impregnable and almost inaccessible rock on the coast of Normandy,—and the other to a prison in Picardy.

The parliament did not rest contented under these acts of oppression offered to their members, and the crown had now injudiciously afforded them but too just grounds of complaint. On the following day they waited on the king at Versailles, where the first president, in a short speech, declared their astonishment and concern at understanding that a prince of his own royal blood had been exiled, and two members of their body imprisoned, for having declared in his presence what their duty and consciences dictated to them in a sitting wherein his majesty himself had announced, that he came to take the sense of the assembly by a plurality of suffrages: that, lost in consternation as they were at this incident, they humbly supplicated his majesty to restore to a prince of his blood, and to the two magistrates, the liberty which they had thus lost.

To this the king answered, that when he put away from his presence a prince of his blood, his parliament ought to have believed, that he had very strong reasons for so doing:—that he had punished two magistrates with whom he had reason to be dissatisfied.

This laconic rebuff did not prevent the parliament from presenting a very long, and a very spirited address two days after, in which they declared, that the public affliction had preceded their approach to the foot of the throne: that the exile of the first prince of his blood, and the imprisonment of two magistrates, without any known cause, had excited universal

universal consternation and grief:—Could it have been a crime to speak the truth in the presence of his majesty?—to speak it with a respectful frankness, which might have merited his approbation? His majesty had come among them to demand their free suffrages: to give them on every occasion was the *right* and the *duty* of parliament, and the interest of the king. He had come to the parliament, that he might sit encircled with the love and with the wisdom of his subjects. It was true the keeper of his seals had expressed to them his majesty's sentiments; but if they allowed that circumstance to form any distinction, they should do injustice to the simplicity of truth, and the real dictates of his majesty's heart. If such principles were to be established, their counsel would, indeed, no longer come within the sanctuary of justice, the asylum of law; but as truth must be heard, it would break forth from the abode of terror and silence. If the duke of Orleans was guilty, they were also. It was worthy the first prince of the blood to represent to his majesty, that he was transforming a meeting of the parliament into a bed of justice: his declaration only announced their sentiments; his feelings had judged of theirs; and if, by the effect of that concord, which nothing could destroy, between the wishes and the duty of parliament, the duke of Orleans had shewn a courage worthy his birth and rank, he had no less manifested a heart zealous for his sovereign's glory.

“In fact, Sire, strangers cannot conceive, posterity will not believe, that we could be exposed to any danger in telling your majesty that truth which you have demanded in person. Your presence is always accompanied with favour: must it henceforth produce fear and affliction? A bed of justice would be less terrible than a sitting of parliament. Our loyalty to your majesty could not prevent the suppression of our opinions, if our confidence, encouraged by yourself, were no other than the signal of our exile or imprisonment.”

They represented, in colours and terms equally strong and pathetic, the cruel and unworthy treatment which the two suffering magistrates had received on the occasion of their imprisonment, from those basest of mankind, the instruments of arbitrary power and of the police; as well as the state of their confinement in horrid and loathsome prisons, where life was a continual punishment.—“If their exile be the recompence of the fidelity of the princes of your blood; if outrages and captivity threaten the uprightness of the first magistrates of the kingdom, we may ask ourselves, with terror and grief, what will become of the laws, the public liberty, the national honour, and the manners of your majesty's subjects; *those manners so mild, so necessary to be preserved for the common interest of the throne, and of the people.* Such designs, Sire, are foreign from your heart: such examples are not the principles of your majesty. They arise from another source. Your parliament, Sire, most humbly beseeches your majesty, as you value your glory, your high renown, to remove those afflicting counsels, to consult and listen only to your own heart; and then justice with humanity, encouraged by the return of the first prince of your blood,



“ and by the release of your two magistrates, will begin to efface an example, which  
“ would end by the destruction of the laws, the degradation of the magistracy, univer-  
“ sal discouragement, and the triumph of the enemies to the honour of France.”

A deputation, which returned, on the twenty-sixth of November, received for answer that they had already been informed by the keeper of the seals, that the more goodness his majesty shewed when he followed the inclinations of his heart, the more firmness he discovered when he thought he perceived any attempts to abuse that kindness. This would be a sufficient answer to their supplications: but he would add, that if he did not blame the concern they seemed to give themselves about the detention of the two magistrates, he could not but disapprove of their exaggeration of the circumstances and consequences of that measure, and of the disposition they betrayed to ascribe it to motives, which the freedom of opinion he allowed did not permit them to suggest. He owed no explanations to any body of the motives of his resolutions; desired them to endeavour no longer to join the particular cause of those whom he had punished, with the interests of any other subjects, or with that of the laws. All his subjects knew that his goodness was continually awake to their happiness, and they felt its effects even in the acts of his justice. Every one was interested in the preservation of public order, and it essentially belonged to his authority. If those who had been charged with the execution of his orders had behaved in a manner contrary to his intentions, he would punish them. If the places where the two magistrates were detained was prejudicial to their health, he would order them to be removed. The sentence of the two magistrates was in consequence changed from imprisonment to exile, M. Freteau being sent to one of his country seats, and the abbé Sabatier to a convent of Benedictines; but it seems that this concession was not obtained until a promise, on the part of the parliament, had been made that the edict for establishing the loan of four hundred and fifty millions of livres, which had been the ostensible cause of this unfortunate difference, should be registered:—a promise, that was immediately fulfilled.

Still, however, the parliament betrayed a disposition to insist on those points against which they originally remonstrated; at an assembly of the great chamber of parliament, attended, as they informed the king, by the princes and peers of the realm, having taken his majesty's answer into consideration, they were charged to lay before him their representations on the subject.

The boldness of opinion and energy of language displayed in this remonstrance, which was improperly termed a *petition*, greatly surpassed any attempt that had yet been made to establish an unlimited freedom of discussion on political topics. The monarch was openly and unequivocally told, that the magistracy of his kingdom, as well as every true citizen, were astonished at the reproaches contained in his answer, and at the principles which

which it manifested; though they were far from attributing them to his personal sentiments. The parliament supported and confirmed their former charge, relative to the indignities offered to their two members; and said, that public decency had received a severe wound in the choice of the persons who executed his orders on that occasion. They stated, that in devoting themselves to the public service; in promising to release his majesty from the first duty which he owed to the nation, namely, that of justice; in bringing up their children to be subject to the same sacrifice, they never could have supposed that they were exposing themselves and their children to misfortunes, and still less to outrages of so heinous a nature. “But we do not come so much to claim your compassion, as the protection of the laws. It is not to your humanity alone we address ourselves; it is not a favour which your parliament solicits; it comes, Sire, to demand *justice*.—That justice which is subject to regulations, independent of the will of man; even kings themselves are subservient to them; that glorious prince, Henry the Fourth, acknowledged that he had two sovereigns, God, and the laws.

“One of these regulations is to condemn no one without a hearing; it is a duty in all times, and in all places; it is the duty of all men; and your majesty will allow us to represent to you, that it is as obligatory on you, as on your subjects.”

They observed, that the glorious privilege of shewing mercy to criminals belonged to the crown, but the act of condemning them was not one of its functions; the laws had placed that odious office in other hands; that painful and dangerous task the king could not exercise. And from these premises they had deduced this inference, that those who advised the king to punish of his own accord, to punish without a trial, to order exiles, arrest, and imprisonments, were guilty of wounding eternal justice, of violating the laws of the realm, and of destroying the most consolatory prerogative which his majesty possessed.

They concluded by saying—“It is, therefore, in the name of those laws which preserve empires, in the name of that liberty of which we are the respectful interpreters and the lawful mediators; in the name of your authority, of which we are the first and most confidential ministers, that we dare demand the trial or the liberty of the duke of Orleans, and the two exiled magistrates, who were imprisoned by a sudden order, as contrary to the sentiments as to the interests of your majesty.”

A. D. 1788.] The answer of the king was equally laconic and repulsive: the substance of it was, “That they should not demand from his justice what solely depended upon his will.”

The parliament, therefore, persisted in their efforts: having appointed a time for taking the answer into consideration, they passed several resolutions, strongly enforcing and



enlarging the principles advanced in their former remonstrances. They charged the king with departing from the professions holden out in some of his former declarations or answers. Their reprobation of *Lettres de Cachet* placed them in every point of view that could render them odious or terrible. They described them as being the common instruments of concealed views and private revenge; and they scrupled not to charge the monarchy with degenerating into actual despotism, through the nefarious abuse of the king's authority, by ministers using these letters, without any form of law or colour of justice, for depriving individuals of their liberty. They argued—and no ground of argument could possess greater strength—that the same power which arbitrarily deprived the first prince of the blood and the two magistrates of their liberty, might, undoubtedly, with greater ease, attack that of all other citizens; and if the repeal of such arbitrary orders depended only on the goodness and pleasure of the monarch, it must naturally follow, that no Frenchman had any security for his liberty; that *Lettres de Cachet* were to have the effect of laws, and were to be considered as necessary and essential parts of government.

This principle they totally condemned, as subverting the most sacred foundations of the constitution. They declared, that they, therefore, could not, and, indeed, that they ought not, to recur to the king's goodness, in order to obtain the liberty of the duke and of the two magistrates: such a step would be no less derogatory from the essential principles of the constitution, and of public order, than from the generous sentiments of the sufferers themselves: that all his majesty's subjects were equally interested in preventing the sad effects of so dangerous a principle: and that they neither could themselves, nor ever would, make any difference between the cause of the prince and the magistrates, and that of any other citizen whatever. They summed up the whole with repeating their declaration, that parliament, therefore, would never cease to demand the liberty or the impeachment of the prince and the magistrates; and that, thinking themselves equally bound to employ the same zeal and the same perseverance for the welfare of all their fellow-citizens, they would not cease to entreat his majesty to grant and to ensure to every Frenchman that personal security, which was solemnly promised by the laws, and due to them by the principles of the constitution.

On the seveneenth of January, the parliament was sent for to Versailles, to receive the king's answer to this remonstrance, which afforded as little satisfaction to that body as any of the preceding. They were informed, that although he had condescended to receive their representations in behalf of the two magistrates whom he had punished, he did not think proper to recall them; that, besides, the manner in which their representations were expressed was by no means such as to deserve his indulgence. On the subject of *Lettres de Cachet*, he assured them, that the lawful liberty of his subjects was as dear to

to him as to themselves; but he, at the same time, declared, that he would not suffer his parliament to oppose the exercise of an authority, which the tranquillity of families so much and so often required; which magistrates themselves so frequently solicited and implored; and of which he had the satisfaction to know that he had made a more moderate use than his predecessors. He then informed them, that the expressions made use of in their late resolutions were as indiscreet and improper as those which they had used on the twenty-seventh of August in the former year: that he, therefore, suppressed the resolutions of both those days, as being contrary to that respect and submission which his parliament owed, and was bound to set an example of to all his subjects. He concluded by forbidding them to pursue such a conduct, or to form any such resolutions in future.

So little effect did this prohibition produce, that the parliament, on the succeeding day, passed a new set of resolutions, which, besides reiterating the principal arguments and positions of the former pieces, held out such new matter, as, if it could not add much to their force, was, however, well calculated to operate upon the minds of the people, which were already extremely inflamed in every part of the kingdom.

The contest was continued, in this manner, for some time longer, the apparent firmness on one side being met with an equal degree of perseverance on the other; nor, in the mean time, was it at all clear, whatever concessions had been made, or even if all the claims of the parliament had been granted, that the latter had left it in their power to relieve the crown from its distresses, or consequently to enable it to carry on the business of government. This proceeded from their unexpected declaration, that it was neither in their power, nor in that of the crown, nor of both united, to grant or to raise any money by the levy of new taxes upon the people; a declaration which was *constitutionally* true, but to which the conduct of the parliament had formed one continued contradiction.

Whatever were the particular motives of the party by whose influence that body was induced, to make this voluntary surrender of its authority, the new doctrine spread, with wonderful rapidity, through the nation. In proportion to the general odium incurred by the taxes, was the joy at this emancipation from all actual authority to raise new ones; whilst the patriotism of that body, which had thus testified its own incompetence, in order thereby to establish the disqualification of the crown, was little less than idolized. Thus circumstanced, it would not have been easy for the parliament, however inclined, to retract its own measure, and to resume a competence which it formally declared it did not possess; as little could it renew that authority in the crown, which it had just endeavoured to cancel.

During these transactions, an attempt was made by the ministry to recover their lost popularity, by the adoption of two measures equally calculated to promote the general welfare of the community. The first was a general reform in the codes of both civil  
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and criminal justice, a reform long-wished, and than which nothing could be more wanted; but its difficulty and magnitude had hitherto deterred any minister from venturing upon so arduous an undertaking. M. de Lamoignon, the keeper of the seals, had not only the courage to encounter these difficulties, but the happiness and honour to form—under the encouraging influence of his sovereign—so excellent a plan for completing the design, as to leave but little to be done by those who were destined to be his successors in carrying it into execution. And, for the relief of those persons, who might be brought to trial in the interim, before the great work could be perfected, he introduced several most humane and essential regulations into the immediate proceedings of the criminal courts; particularly with respect to evidence, and the mode of obtaining it, the system of which was vicious in the last degree; and still more particularly in those cases where the life of the accused was affected.

The second was the edict in favour of the Protestants, which was introduced by the king on the memorable nineteenth of November, and was registered by the parliament on the twenty-ninth of January, 1788. This edict contained thirty-seven articles, the greater number as well as the most essential of which were those relating to marriages, births, baptisms, and burials; subjects which had frequently been the cause of great trouble, difficulty, and grievance to the Protestants, with respect to the legitimacy of their issue, and the legal descent of their inheritances.

While all France was waiting, with the utmost attention and solicitude, the issue of the contest between the king and the parliament of Paris, relative to *Lettres de Cachet*, an incident occurred in Languedoc which threw the whole kingdom into a ferment upon that subject. M. de Catalan, the president of the parliament of Toulouse, having, in conjunction with that body, refused to register the late edict for levying a tax of two twentieths on the nation, the king immediately ordered a *Lettre de Cachet* to be issued against the president, the execution of which was committed to the count de Perigord, governor-general of the province. M. de Catalan was, accordingly, arrested, and sent prisoner to an old castle at the foot of the Pyrenean mountains.

This, and some other circumstances of a similar nature, brought on an argumentative written discussion between the parliament of Paris and the king, which afforded not only a more full explanation of the respective claims of the parties than had yet appeared, but likewise some view of their separate opinions with regard to sundry great questions of law, upon which the French constitution was either *supposed* to be founded, or its preservation appendant.

On the eleventh of April, the parliament presented a remonstrance, in which, representing the nineteenth of November as the epoch of a direct attempt to subvert the public rights, and to establish despotism, and stating all the subsequent proceedings as a continuation