

## CHAP. IX.

*Recall of the British Ambassador from Paris,  
after the King of France was dethroned.  
Examination of the Question, whether this  
Recall was a Breach of Neutrality toward  
France.*

IT is well known, that on the 10th of August, 1792, the palace of the King of France was attacked by an armed populace, that his guards were murdered, and he himself obliged to seek refuge in the National Assembly, where he was at last doomed to hear the decree, by which he was deposed and sent prisoner to the Temple. Now, as according to the Constitution of 1791, which placed the legislative power in

the National Assembly, but the executive in the hands of the King, the credentials of the British Ambassador in Paris<sup>6</sup> ceased after this event to be valid, his further residence in that city was deemed unnecessary. On the 17th of August, therefore, a letter of recall (1) was dispatched by the British Government to Lord Gower, who communicated a translation of it to Le Brun, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, and member of the Council, to which the executive power was entrusted after the deposition of the King. To

(1) It is printed in Rivington's Annual Register, 1792, State Papers, p. 326. In this letter the following instructions were given to Lord Gower: "In all the  
"conversations, which you may have occasion to hold  
"before your departure, you will take care to express  
"yourself in a manner conformable to the sentiments  
"herein communicated to you: and you will take  
"especial care not to neglect any opportunity of de-  
"claring, that at the same time *his Majesty means to*  
"*observe the principles of neutrality in every thing which*  
"*regards the arrangement of the internal Government*  
"*of France.*"

this letter the French Minister returned an answer, in the name of the new republican Government of France, (2) expressing the greatest satisfaction at the friendly conduct of the British Cabinet, and containing af-

(2) Le Brun's note to Lord Gower is printed in the *Moniteur*, 26th August, 1792; and as it is a document of some importance, it is necessary to produce it at length in the original.

“ Le soussigné, Ministre des affaires étrangères, est  
 “ empressé à communiquer, au Conseil Exécutif pro-  
 “ visoire, la lettre dont son excellence M. le Comte  
 “ de Gower, Ambassadeur extraordinaire de S. M.  
 “ Britannique lui a fait part.

“ Le Conseil a vu avec regret, que le Cabinet Bri-  
 “ tannique se décidât à rappeler son Ambassadeur, dont  
 “ la présence attestait les dispositions favorables d'une  
 “ nation libre et généreuse, et qui n'avait jamais été  
 “ l'organe que de paroles amicales, et de sentimens  
 “ de bienveillance. S'il est quelque chose qui puisse  
 “ diminuer ce regret, c'est le renouvellement de l'as-  
 “ surance de neutralité donnée par l'Angleterre à la  
 “ nation Française.

“ Cette assurance paraît être le résultat de l'intention  
 “ sagement réfléchie et formellement exprimée par S.  
 “ M. Britannique, de ne point se mêler de l'arrange-

surances, that the same justice and impartiality would be observed by the French Executive Council.

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“ ment intérieur des affaires de France. Une pareille  
 “ déclaration ne peut surprendre de la part d’un peuple  
 “ éclairé et fier, qui le premier a reconnu et établi le  
 “ principe de la souveraineté nationale ; qui substi-  
 “ tuant l’empire de la loi, expression de la volonté de  
 “ tous, aux caprices arbitraires des volontés particu-  
 “ lières, le premier a donné l’exemple de soumettre les  
 “ rois eux-mêmes à ce joug salutaire, qui enfin n’a  
 “ pas cru acheter trop cher, par de longues convul-  
 “ sions et de violens orages, la liberté à laquelle il a  
 “ dû tant de gloire et de prospérité.

“ Ce principe de souveraineté inalienable du peuple  
 “ va se manifester d’une manière éclatante dans la  
 “ Convention Nationale, dont le corps législatif a dé-  
 “ crété la convocation, et qui fixera sans doute tous  
 “ les partis et tous les intérêts. La nation Française  
 “ a lieu d’espérer, que le Cabinet Britannique, ne se  
 “ départira point, en ce moment décisif, de la justice,  
 “ de la modération, et de l’impartialité, qu’il a montré  
 “ jusqu’à présent.

“ Dans cette confiance intime fondée sur les faits,  
 “ le soussigné renouvelle à son excellence M. le Comte  
 “ de Gower, au nom du Conseil Exécutif provisoire,  
 “ l’assurance qu’il a eu l’honneur de lui donner de vive  
 “ voix,



But as the recall of Lord Gower has been since represented as a violation of that neutrality, which by the acknowledgment of Le Brun himself in the above mentioned answer, and afterwards by the acknowledgment even of the National Convention, (3) had been at least till that time observed by the British Government, historical accuracy requires a full investigation of the subject. To determine this question, there is no ne-

“voix, que les relations de commerce entre les deux  
 “nations, et toute les affaires en général seront suivies  
 “de la part du Gouvernement Français avec la même  
 “justice, et la même loyauté. Le Conseil se flatte,  
 “que la réciprocité sera entière de la part du Gou-  
 “vernement Britannique, et qu’ainsi rien n’altérera  
 “la bonne intelligence, qui régne entre les deux  
 “peuples.

“Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères,

“LE BRUN.”

(3) In the list of grievances alledged against the British Government, at the time of the declaration of war, there is none prior to the recall of Lord Gower. See *Moniteur*, 3d Feb. 1793.

cessity for previously inquiring, whether the mere *Legislative* Assembly of France had a right to annihilate the Constitution of 1791, in which a decree of the Constituent Assembly had forbidden the Legislative Assembly to make the least alteration, which had been accepted by the King as well as by the people; and to which the Legislative Assembly itself had thrice sworn allegiance, first at its meeting on the 3d of October, 1791; secondly, on the 7th of July, 1792, in its public hall; and lastly, before the altar of freedom, on the 14th of July, only three weeks before the resolution was formed to overturn it. There is no necessity for inquiring, whether, after the disapprobation expressed by seventy-one out of the eighty-three departments at the events of the 20th of June, (4) the Legislative Assembly had a

(4) Les réclamations contre la journée du 20 Juin  
 “ furent générales dans tout l’empire ; sur 83 départe-  
 ments soixante et onze écrivirent à la Législature,  
 “ pour

right to deprive the King of his authority, though he committed none of the three misdemeanors, (5) which alone, by the constitution of 1791, warranted his deposition. These are questions which belong to other courts of inquiry, and we have at present only to consider the result of the fact itself, whether the injustice which occasioned it be admitted or not. (6)

“ pour demander la punition des féditieux, qui avaient  
“ offensé la loi si scandaleusement.” Coll. de meilleurs  
ouvrages pour la défense de Louis XVI. tom. i. p. 208.  
Likewise Brissot says: “ Les révolutions répondait-on,  
“ ne se font qu’avec les minorités. *C’est la minorité qui*  
“ *a fait la révolution Française.*” A ses Commettans,  
p. 87.

(5) Namely, the refusal to take the oath required by the constitution, the placing himself at the head of a foreign army destined to act against France, or his quitting the kingdom. • See ch. ii. sect. 1. art. 5, 6, 7, of the constitution of 1791.

(6) However, I cannot avoid quoting a remarkable confession made by the celebrated legislator Condorcet, who, in his speech of the 20th of April, 1792,

An immediate and unavoidable consequence of the revolution of the 10th of August, was a suspension of the diplomatic relations between the British Ambassador in Paris and the French Government; for, since his letters of credence had been made out to Louis XVI. as to the person invested with the executive power of France, they of course ceased to be of any value, after the King was deposed, and his authority transferred to a provisional Executive Council. (7)

saïd : "La Nation Française a une Constitution; cette  
" Constitution a été reconnue, adoptée par la généra-  
" lité des citoyens : *elle ne peut être changée que par le*  
" *vœu du peuple, et suivant les formes qu'elle-même a*  
" *prescrites.*" *Moniteur*, 22 Avril, 1792.

(7) This was mentioned in the letter to Lord Gower, of which a translation was communicated to the French Minister, for it is there said : "As it appears, that in the present state of affairs the exercise of the executive power has been withdrawn from his Most Christian Majesty, the credentials which have hitherto been made use of by your Excellency can no longer be valid."

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There were only three possible modes, therefore, which could be adopted by the British Government: either to let Lord Gower continue in Paris in a private capacity, or to renew his diplomatic relations by fresh letters of credence, or to recall him. But it would have rendered no service either to France in general, or to the National Assembly in particular, to have suffered a person who, by the revolution of the 10th of August, was reduced to a private station, to continue his residence in that country. On the contrary, it would in all probability have produced rather discontent than satisfaction: for, though he was become a private person, and must remain as such till he had received new credentials, yet his former diplomatic relations would not have been forgotten, and his presence would have so frequently reminded the new executive power of the difference between his former and his present character, that it would have gradually be-

come a subject of complaint. With regard to the second mode, there were likewise very weighty reasons which dissuaded the British Government from adopting it. For had new letters of credence been sent to Lord Gower, he must have been accredited either to the Executive Council or to the National Assembly. But the very title of the Executive Council, *Conseil Exécutif provisoire*, (8) clearly indicated, that its institution was merely temporary. Consequently letters of credence, addressed to the Executive Council, could likewise have been only temporary; and it might be expected, that in a very short time fresh credentials would be required for some other council or committee. Still less could a British Am-

(8) Le Brun himself, in his note to Lord Gower, used this title. Likewise, in the 4th article of the decree which passed in the night of the 10th of August, was said: “Les Ministres actuellement en activité continueront *provisoirement* l'exercice de leurs fonctions.” *Moniteur*, 12th August, 1792.

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bassador be accredited to the National Assembly; for this very Assembly had, in the night of the 10th of August, pronounced its own dissolution, and ordered the election of a National Convention. (9) Further, it was declared in the same decree, that the King was only *provisonally* suspended from his functions. (10) All authorities, therefore, in France were at that time merely transient; and, consequently, the most prudent part which England could take, was to wait at least till the new constitution had been determined by the National Convention, for

(9) The first article of the decree of the 10th of August is: "Le peuple Français est invité à former une Convention Nationale." *Ib.*

(10) The second article is: "Le chef du Pouvoir Exécutif est *provisoirement* suspendu de ses fonctions, jusqu' à ce que la Convention Nationale ait prononcé sur les mesures, qu'elle croira devoir adopter pour assurer la souveraineté du peuple, et le règne de la liberté et de l'égalité."

which



which purpose it was ordered to assemble. This was certainly no breach of neutrality, especially as in the letter by which the British Ambassador was recalled, the most solemn declaration was made, that it was not the intention of the British Government to interfere in the arrangement of the internal affairs of France. Besides, when it is the intention of a Court to abandon its system of neutrality, its Ambassador usually quits the country against which hostilities are intended, without taking leave of the Government. But this did not happen in the present instance, for Lord Gower communicated his letter of recall even to the *new* Government of France: nor did Le Brun, in his answer, express the least suspicion, that it was the design of the British Cabinet to violate the neutrality toward France. On the contrary, he declared, not only that the French Nation confided in “the justice, the moderation, and the impartiality of the British

tish Cabinet," but likewise, that "this confidence was *founded on facts*:" (11) and in his report on the situation of France in respect to the different powers of Europe, delivered to the National Assembly on the 23d of August, he asserted, that on the subject of neutrality the British Ambassador "had left a *satisfactory testimony of the sentiments of his Court*." (12) Indeed the whole conduct of the British Government afforded ample proof, that it was not its intention to seek a quarrel with France; for had it really entertained any such design, it would not have neglected the most favourable oppor-

(11) Dans cette confiance intime *fondée sur les faits*, etc. See Note 2.

(12) "Il reste à parler de l'Angleterre et de la Hollande: ces deux puissances, annoncent toujours le désir de rester dans les termes de stricte neutralité. L'Ambassadeur Britannique, en s'éloignant même tanté-ment de la France, nous laisse à cet égard un *témoignage satisfaisant des sentimens de sa Cour*." Moniteur, 25 Août, 1792.

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tunity that ever offered of humbling its rival, the month of August, 1792. A glorious peace with Tippoo Saib, which was already known in Europe, afforded full scope to the operation of the British arms: France stood unsupported by a single ally, like England at the commencement of the American war: yet, though France had taken ungenerous advantage of the one period, England refused even to retaliate at the other, notwithstanding the repeated solicitations of the Confederate Powers. (13) Nay, so favourable was the conduct of Great Britain toward France, that the free ex-

(13) We have already seen that the British Government was solicited, in 1791, to join a coalition against France, and that the proposal was rejected. That it was again invited by various powers in the summer of 1792, and with the same success, appears from the speech of Mr. Dundas in the House of Commons, on the 14th of December, 1792. See likewise Mr. Miles's Letter to Le Brun, the French Minister, dated 18th December, 1792, in the Authentic Correspondence, Appendix, p. 75.

portation of arms and provisions was still permitted, and ceased not till the decree of the 19th of November, with its concomitant circumstances, had placed beyond a doubt the hostile disposition of France.

How then can any man with justice assert, that the British Government was guilty of a breach of neutrality toward France in August, 1792? The mere recall of an ambassador from a foreign court, if attended with no indications of hostility, cannot possibly be construed into a breach of peace. Almost all the other ambassadors left Paris about the same time with Lord Gower: even the Danish Ambassador, Baron Blohm, received letters of recall; and the only reason why he did not leave Paris was, that he was too ill at that time to undertake a long journey. No one has ever reproached the Danish Court with having violated, by the  
command

command sent to the Danish Ambassador, its neutrality toward France. Why then shall the English Government be accused for sending a similar command? An appeal has indeed been made to the second article of the treaty of commerce between France and England: but the proof which has been founded on this article rests on a false interpretation of it. For by this article was stipulated, not that the mere recall of an Ambassador, either from Paris or from London, should be regarded as a breach of peace, but simply, that in case the two powers should happen to be at variance, and a rupture should be likely to ensue, hostilities should not be considered as actually commenced, till the Ambassadors of both powers were either recalled or dismissed. (14) Now the

(14) " Si quelque jour il survient quelque mauvaïse  
" intelligence, interruption d'amitié ou rupture entre  
" les couronnes de leurs Majestés, ce qu' à Dieu ne  
" plaise,

case assumed in this article did not take place in August 1792, and consequently the article itself is not applicable to the recall of Lord Gower. Besides, the French Minister in London was still permitted to remain there; for he continued in England not less than five months after the period in question, and even communicated with the British Ministry, though his communications, for obvious reasons, could not be considered as strictly official. (15)

“plaise, (laquelle rupture ne sera censée exister que lors  
 “du rappel ou du renvoi des ambassadeurs et ministres  
 “respectifs), etc.” Martens’ *Recueil des Principaux  
 Traités*, tom. ii. p. 681.

(15) It is likewise to be observed, that the whole of the British embassy did not leave Paris with Lord Gower: for Mr. Lindsay, the Secretary of Legation, staid behind, and would probably have continued his residence there, if the murder of two British subjects, under the pretext of their being aristocrats, and the butcheries of the 2d of September, had not excited apprehensions for his personal safety.

But it is said, if the French nation thought proper to establish a republic, what necessity had the British Government to trouble itself about the forms of a letter of credence? An Ambassador might have been accredited to the nation at large, without regard to the persons who, in August 1792, conducted its affairs!—But in the first place we must ask what is meant by an Ambassador's being accredited to the nation at large. No Ambassador can negotiate with the whole body of the people; his conferences must be confined to the persons who are in actual possession of the executive authority. These persons may indeed assert that they act in the name of the whole nation: and in a republic, in which order and durability of government is to be found, the actual rulers may assert it without contradiction. But in 1792 and 1793 the administration of public affairs in France was highly defective, as well in order as in <sup>a</sup>durability: one party rapidly succeeded



ceeded another, and each party pretended, while in power, to act in the name of the nation, but was branded, when fallen, with the appellation of a faction. By what criterion then was the British Government to determine, to which of the parties the honourable title of nation, and to which the disgraceful name of faction was due? Had the Girondists been asked, they would have answered, *we* represent the nation: and the very same answer would have been given by the Anarchists, who considered *themselves* as the nation, and the Girondists as a faction.

(16) In this situation the British Govern-

(16) The public administration of affairs at that time is represented by Brissot in his work *à ses Commettans*, in very striking colours: The following passages may serve as examples:—P. 2. Des loix sans exécution, des autorités constituées, sans force et avilies, le crime impuni, les propriétés attaquées, la sûreté des individus violée, la morale du peuple corrompue, *ni constitution, ni gouvernement, ni justice*—P. 33. Maintenant je le demande à tout homme de bonne foi: où donc est maintenant la puissance suprême?

ment could not treat with the party which was in power, and which called itself the

Est-ce dans la Convention, ou dans le Tribunal révolutionnaire ? Est-ce dans ce Tribunal, ou dans Marat ? Est-ce dans Marat, ou dans les factieux, qui le protègent ?—P. 37. Ce n'est pas encore dans la commune de Paris que réside l'exercice de la souveraineté nationale, c'est dans un club, ou plutôt dans une vingtaine de brigands, qui dirigent ce club, qui font courber devant eux toutes les autorités constituées par la nation.—P. 39. Je le demande à tout homme, qui a étudié les bases des républiques, peut-il exister à côté d'un foyer aussi actif de conspirations, qui communique à ceux de la municipalité, des sections et des autres clubs de l'empire ; peut-il exister une convention libre et indépendante, un gouvernement, une justice ?—P. 41. Tous les pouvoirs sont nécessairement au club ; voilà le corps législatif, ou plutôt voilà le corps au dessus de la loi, au dessus de toutes les autorités constituées, voilà le souverain de la France entière. J'ai fait voir que le club des Anarchistes était le souverain de la Convention ; il est encore des Ministres depuis le 10 Août.—P. 46. Je reviens aux Ministres qui, puisqu'il faut enfin trancher le mot, ont été et sont plutôt les ministres des Jacobins de Paris, que ceux de la nation. It is true that the description which Brissot here gives of France applies immediately to the spring of 1793 :

but

nation, without incurring the danger of being accused by the succeeding ruling party of having treated with factionists. The new party might have even asserted that Great Britain intermeddled in the internal affairs of France: (17) and, according to the doctrine of the National Assembly itself, this was one of the greatest offences which one nation could commit toward another.

Besides, all diplomatic connexions with so fluctuating an administration appeared to be useless: a treaty made with one party might

but it is equally applicable to the latter half of 1792, and one passage in particular is expressly dated from the 10th of August.

(17) For this reason, in the Letter to Lord Gower, immediately after the passage quoted above in Note 7, was added: "His Majesty is therefore of opinion that you ought not to remain any longer in Paris, as well on this account, as, because, this step appears to him the most conformable to the principles of neutrality, which he has hitherto observed."

have been regarded as not valid by the other : and therefore Great Britain could not expect, under such circumstances, that any convention with France would have a lasting effect. (18) Nor was it certain, in August 1792, that the King of France would not be re-instated : for no one expected, after the celebrated declaration at Coblenz, of the 25th of July, that the close of the Prussian campaign would so ill correspond to the commencement of it. And if Louis XVI, had been restored to his former authority, the British Government, by a connexion with either of the republican parties in France,

(18) Brriot, in the above quoted work, p. 103, says : “ Les puissances étrangères, qui voudraient  
“ traiter avec nous, dans l’état où nous sommes, pour-  
“ raient-elles concevoir un espoir semblable ? Non,  
“ elles se disent : la France est divisée par des fac-  
“ tions ; l’une triomphe aujourd’hui, demain ce sera  
“ l’autre. Traitez avec l’une, l’autre casse le traité.  
“ Rien n’est stable ; attendons cette stabilité, et nous  
“ traiterons ” And p. 112, he says, “ *On ne traite  
“ point avec l’anarchie.* ”

would

would have materially injured its own interests in regard both to the King and to the allied powers, which no one had a right to expect, since there is a duty which we owe to ourselves as well as to our neighbours. But even if this duty be set aside, and even if no attention was due to the possibility of a revolution in favour of the deposed King, at least regard was to be had to another revolution, which was expected by the republicans themselves: for Brissot, in his Address to the republicans of France, which is dated October, 1792, declared, that as the first revolution destroyed despotism, and the second overturned royalty, a third was necessary to put an end to anarchy (19). Consequently the most prudent conduct which Great Britain could observe was to continue

(19) His own words are: "J'ai toujours pensé qu'il nous fallait trois révolutions: la première a renversé le despotisme, la seconde la royauté, la troisième détruira l'anarchie."

neutral toward all parties, (20) and not to renew the diplomatic connexions with France, which the revolution of the 10th of August had interrupted, till a stable government, or a settled constitution, whether monarchical or republican, was fully established. But the new constitution, which it was the business of the National Convention to determine, and then present to the Primary Assemblies for their approbation, was not even drawn up before February, (21)

(20) See Note 17.

(21) It was first presented to the Convention on the 5th of February, 1793, by Condorcet, in the name of the Constitutional Committee. See the *Moniteur*, 17th and 18th Feb. 1793. But though presented, it was not adopted by the Convention: for that which is called the constitution of 1793, and was really adopted, was drawn up much later in that year. And even this constitution was not only suspended within a short time after its adoption, but is considered by the present rulers of France as so defective, that on the 16th of April, 1796, a law was made, which condemned to death all persons who, by their *writings* or *speeches*, should

1793: and after that period, the residence of a British Ambassador in Paris was no longer a question, since, on the first of that month, the Convention had already declared war against Great Britain.

Lastly, the personal safety of the British Ambassador in Paris was not unworthy of consideration. But in a city, in which the

should attempt to re-establish it: for on that day the following law, proposed by Treillard, was unanimously decreed by the Council of Five Hundred, and immediately ratified by the Council of Elders: “ Sont coupables de crime contre la sûreté intérieure de la ré-  
 “ publique et contre la sûreté individuelle des ci-  
 “ toyens, et seront punis de la *peine de mort*, confor-  
 “ mément à l'article 612 du code des délits et des  
 “ peines, tous ceux qui par *leurs discours, ou par leurs*  
 “ *écrits, soit imprimés soit distribués, soit affichés*, pro-  
 “ voquent la dissolution de la représentation nationale  
 “ ou celle du directoire exécutif, ou le meurtre de  
 “ tous ou aucuns des membres qui le composent, ou  
 “ le rétablissement de la royauté, ou celui de la *consti-*  
 “ *tution de 1793, &c.*” *Moniteur*, 20 Avril, 1796.



licentiousness of a blood-thirsty populace either was not, or could not be restrained within due bounds, in a city where the most horrid murders were committed without regard either to age or character, and where even British subjects had fallen a prey to the fury of a Parisian mob, no British Ambassador could have remained with safety. On *this* ground, therefore, as well as on the preceding, his departure from Paris was the most advisable step which, under those circumstances, could have been taken.

From the present period to the middle of November, no events took place which belong to an history of the relations between Great Britain and France. During this interval, which comprised about three months, the former remained a quiet spectator of all that passed on the Continent: and the latter was too much engaged with Austria and Prussia

Prussia to pay much attention to Great Britain. (22) But in the middle of November the scene changed, and at that time, as will appear from the following chapter, was laid the foundation of the war, which still subsists between the two countries.

(22) I designedly say "*much* attention," because even before the end of September, France began the augmentation of its marine.

## CHAP. X.

*French Conquests in Germany, the Netherlands, and Savoy. A French Fleet in the Mediterranean harasses the Coasts of several Italian States. Other naval Armaments in France. Opening of the Scheldt. Decree of the 19th of November, by which Assistance was promised to all Nations, that were willing to take up Arms against their Governments. Deputies from certain British Societies appear at the Bar of the French National Convention, and signify their Intention of establishing a National Convention in Great Britain. Encouragement thereto*

*on the Part of the French Convention. Measures taken in Consequence, and Commotions in Great Britain.*

TOWARD the middle of November, 1792, the arms of France were victorious in every quarter. The decisive battle of Gemappe, which was fought on the 6th of this month, had rendered the French absolute masters of the Austrian Netherlands: and General Custine was not only in possession of Mentz and Francfort, (1) but was making vigorous preparations to penetrate still further into Germany. (2) The dutchy of Savoy had been already conquered, and, before the expiration of the month,

(1) It was not before the 2d. of December, that Francfort was re-captured.

(2) All these facts are so well known, that it would be superfluous to quote authority for them.

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it was formally incorporated into France. (3) At the same time the Toulon fleet, under the orders of Admiral Truguet harassed both the coast of Piedmont, and that of other Italian states. Nor was this fleet, which consisted of fifteen sail of the line, (4) the only naval armament, which France had fitted out at this period : for it appears from the report delivered to the National Convention by the Marine Minister, Monge, on the

(3) “Gregoire lit un projet de décret sur l’incorporation de la Savoie. La question est mise aux voix par assis et levé. *Un seul membre se leve contre.*” *Moniteur*, 28 Novembre, 1792. The circumstance that there was only one dissenting voice on this question, is so much the more remarkable, as the incorporation of Savoy was in direct contradiction to the solemn pledge, repeatedly given by the French rulers, “that they renounced all conquest and aggrandizement.”

(4) Brissot à ses Commettans, p. 42. N. B. Whenever I quote this Work, I mean the original Paris edition.

23d of September, 1792, that even then not less than *twenty-one ships of the line, thirty frigates, ten ships armed en flute, and forty-two smaller ships of war* were actually at sea. (5)

It appears further from the same report, that, *thirty-four ships of the line*, in addition to the preceding, were in a state to be instantly commissioned, that nineteen more were capable of being refitted, that seven were building, of which three were ready to be launched, and that out of one and forty frigates, twenty-three were in such a state of forwardness, that they were capable of being put in immediate commission, beside six

(5) Séance du 28 Septembre “ M. Monge fait un rapport sur le département de la marine. Il en résulte que la république fait flotter sur mer 402 pavillons tricolores; savoir 21 gros vaisseaux, 30 frégattes, 18 corvettes, 24 avisos, 10 flottes ou gabarres; que 34 autres vaisseaux de ligne sont prêts à être armés, 19 susceptible de radoubement, 7 sont en construction, dont 3 prêts à être mis en mer, que sur 41 frégattes, 23 sont en état d’être armés sur le champ, outre 6 qui sont sur les chantiers.” *Moniteur*, 25 Septembre, 1792.

which were on the stocks. Such was the naval armament, and such were the preparations, which were made in France, for a still further augmentation of it, at a time when Great Britain had only sixteen thousand sailors and marines in pay, which were hardly sufficient to man even twelve ships of the line, with the proportionate number of frigates, sloops, and cutters.

The rapid progress of the French arms, and the vigorous preparations which were making for new conquests, unavoidably excited the attention of the British Government. The plan of subjugation and aggrandizement, which had hitherto lain concealed in embryo, began now to unfold itself; and the system which the French rulers have since followed with so much success, became visible to the eye of the sagacious observer. By the incorporation of Savoy they had trodden under foot the principle



ciple on which they had solemnly pledged themselves to found the new fabric of French politicks; and it was now become evident, that the promised renunciation of conquest and aggrandizement was nothing more than a mask, under which they endeavoured to cover their real designs. In the Netherlands, however, they thought it prudent not to lay aside the mask at once, as they did in Savoy: they declared the Belgians a free and independent people, and expressed only a desire of affording them the protection of a friendly neighbour. But the Belgians possessed too small and too open a country to be able, in the neighbourhood of France, to form a perfectly independent state: and it was certain that their new protectors would at the same time, exercise the power of governors. In respect to England, therefore, it was a matter of indifference, whether Belgia bore the title of an independent state, or that of a French department, since in the

former, as well as in the latter case, the coast of Flanders, like the coast of France itself, must necessarily become an hostile coast to England. The declaration, however, of Belgia's independence, was nothing more than a prelude to its union with France, and the only reason why its incorporation did not immediately follow that of Savoy, was the necessity of deceiving the *people*, though not the Government of Great Britain: for the war against Great Britain had been declared only two days, when the Commissioners of the French Convention assembled at Brussels, decided that Belgia should be incorporated with France. (6)

(6) The documents relative to this subject are printed in Chauffard *Mémoires Historiques et Politiques sur la Révolution de la Belgique et du pays de Liege*. (Paris, 1793. 8: p. 78—85) Chauffard's own vote was delivered in the following words: "Je vote la réunion de la Belgique à la France.—On m'oppose le vœu du peuple; le vœu d'un peuple enfant ou imbecille serait nul, parcequ'il stipulerait contre lui-même." The vote

Ten days after the battle of Gemappe had put the Austrian Netherlands in the possession of the French, the Executive Coun-

vote of Chepy is likewise worthy of notice : “ Je vote  
 “ pour que la réunion de la Belgique à la république  
 “ Française soit opérée par la puissance de la raison,  
 “ par les touchantes insinuations de la philanthropie,  
 “ de la fraternité, et *par tous les moyens* de tactique  
 “ révolutionnaire ; et au cas que nos efforts soient in-  
 “ fructueux, et que l’on continue à nous opposer le  
 “ système désespérant de la force d’inertie, j’estime  
 “ que le droit de conquête, devenu pour la première fois  
 “ utile au monde et juste, doit faire l’éducation poli-  
 “ tique du peuple Belge et le préparer à de brillantes  
 “ et heureuses destinées.” Further, that notwith-  
 standing the all-promising manifesto, with which the  
 entry of the French army into Belgia was accompa-  
 nied, it was by no means the intention of the French  
 Government to establish an independent republic  
 there, appears from the following confession of Ge-  
 neral Dumouriez : “ L’intention *secrète* à Paris n’était  
 “ point que le peuple Liegeois, et encore moins celui  
 “ de la Belgique se réunît en corps de nation pour se  
 “ donner une constitution et des loix ; on craignait  
 “ qu’une fois assemblés, ces deux peuples ne connus-  
 “ sent leurs forces et ne fondassent une république  
 “ indépendante.” Vie de Dumouriez, tom. iii. p. 348.

cil resolved, that the Scheldt, in which the Dutch, by virtue of various treaties, possessed the exclusive right of entering with ships of a certain burden, and especially ships of war, should be opened. (7) It would be useless to examine whether these treaties, as the Executive Council asserted, were contrary to the law of nature or not. (8) It is

((7) This resolution was made by the Executive Council on the 16th of November, 1792, and on the 21st was presented to the National Convention, which received it with great applause. See *Moniteur*, 22d November, 1792.

(8) The Executive Council adopted, as the basis of the resolution, the following principle: "that rivers are the common and ipalienable property of all those nations, through whose territories they flow." Now, the Scheldt, from only a league below Fort Lille, to the mouth of it, flowed through Dutch territory, for on the north side lay the province of Zealand, and on the south side Dutch Flanders: and every nation considers itself as possessing the right to exercise sovereignty over a river as far as its own territory extends. The French themselves, at least, would certainly not suffer

sufficient that such treaties existed: France itself had guaranteed them, (9) in conjunction with other powers; and they could not be violated without destroying that law of nations, which, from the time of the general treaty of Westphalia, had united the European states into a kind of great republic.

In declaring that the Dutch should no longer exercise their accustomed sovereignty

suffer any nation to deprive them of this right in regard to their *own* rivers: and if, in the year 1792, the inhabitants of Geneva, or of the country of Valais had applied to the Rhone the principle, which the Executive Council applied to the Scheldt, and had said: "the Rhone flows through our territory, consequently we have as good a right as you to the free navigation of it from Lyons to the Mediterranean," the inference would certainly have been rejected as devoid of foundation.

(9) See the second article of the treaty of 1785, between France and Holland, in Martens' *Recueil des Principaux Traités*, tom. ii. p. 614.

over the Scheldt, the French Government had two objects in view, an immediate and a distant one. The immediate object was to send French ships of war into the Scheldt, to bombard the citadel of Antwerp; and this object was very soon attained: for, on the first of December, 1792, a French frigate, a brig, two gun-vessels, and three other armed vessels from Dunkirk, entered the Scheldt, in defiance of the solemn protestation of the States General. (10) The dif-

(10) In a note delivered by the States General to the Imperial Ambassador at the Hague, was contained the following passage: "Que L. H. P. ont prié S. A. le Prince d'Orange, etc. d'ordonner à l'officier qui commande le vaisseau de garde, stationné à l'embouchure de l'Escaut, de ne pas accorder le passage, mais d'informer le commandant Français, qu'en vertu de traités la rivière d'Escaut est close pour les vaisseaux de guerre." *Moniteur*, 16 Dec. 1792. And immediately in the same article is added: "On apprend que, ce nonobstant, une frégate Française, l'Ariel, un brick, deux chaloupes canonnières, et  
trois

tant, but main object, was to convert the mouth of the Scheldt into a station for French ships of war, in order to acquire a naval advantage in the North Sea, which France had hitherto not possessed. This design did not escape the notice of the British Ministers: and it could not be a matter of indifference to them, whether France, which at that time had no harbour on the northern coast in which ships of the line could enter, acquired this advantage or not, because it exposed not only the British commerce, but the eastern coast of Britain itself to a new and very material danger.

By another resolution of the Executive Council, likewise of the 16th of November, the Commander in Chief of the French army in the Netherlands was ordered to attack the Austrians, even on the Dutch territory, in

“trois barques de pêcheur Dunquerqueises armées,  
“ont remonté l'Escaut le 1er. de ce mois.”



case they retreated thither. (11) It is unnecessary at present to examine, whether, according to the usual practice of war, it is allowable in any instance to attack an enemy on neutral ground : for whether it be allowable or not, the haste with which this resolution was made shews, that the Executive Council regarded the neutrality of Holland as a matter of absolute indifference. They would otherwise have made previous representations to the States General, they would

(11) “ Extrait du Registre des Délibérations du Conseil Exécutif Provisoire. Du 16 Novembre, 1792, l’an premier de la République.

“ Le Conseil Exécutif Provisoire, délibérant sur l’état actuel de la guerre, notamment dans la Belgique—arrête qu’en conséquence de la délibération du 24 Octobre dernier, il fera donc ordre au Général commandant en chef l’expédition de la Belgique, de continuer à poursuivre des ennemis même sur le territoire Hollandois, dans le cas où ils s’y seraient retirés.”

Correspondance du Général Dumouriez avec Pache.  
(Paris, 1793-8.) p. 71.

have waited till the Austrian army had been permitted to take refuge on the Dutch territory, and they would not have made the resolution at a time when the Austrians were retreating to Liege, and every movement indicated that it was not their design to enter Holland.

But all the measures which the French Government had hitherto taken, though they necessarily excited uneasiness in the British Cabinet, were trifles, in comparison of other measures, which were adopted in the same month; for at this very time was formed the determination to overturn the British Government and the British Constitution. By the correspondence of the Jacobin Club with various societies, the seeds of discord and sedition had been already sown in great abundance: and the principle adopted by the French rulers, "that the

governed must be excited to rebel against their governors," (12) had been already applied in England with great industry and success. For, in the first place, on account of the political liberty which existed in England, it was easier to set the people in commotion, than the people of any other state in Europe: (13) and in the next place, no

(12) "Que pensaient les hommes éclairés, républicains avant le 10 Août, les hommes qui voulaient la liberté, non seulement pour leur pays, mais pour toute l'Europe? Ils croyaient qu'on pouvait l'établir par-tout *en soulevant les administrés contre les administrans, en faisant voir aux peuples la facilité et les avantages de ces soulèvemens.*" Brissot à se Commettans, p. 81.

(13) So early as the 5th of January, 1792, Isnard had said: "Voici l'instant qui peut-être doit décider à jamais des despotes et des nations; c'est vous que le ciel réservait à ces grands événemens: élevez-vous au niveau de vos destinées:" and a few lines after, "Est-il bien vrai qu'un langage national ne se-rait entendu dans aucune contrée? Ah! sans doute  
" les

object appeared so desirable to the French as the utter destruction of their ancient and formidable rival, which the excitement of a civil war afforded both the easiest and the surest means of attaining. During a considerable time their operations were carried on in the dark : but as soon as they became all-potent conquerors, and the National Convention had acquired sufficient power to act an open part, it was no longer thought necessary to make a secret of their designs. The decisive battle of Gemappe, and the conquest of the Austrian Netherlands, presented the most favourable opportunity for a public declaration : and accordingly, on the 19th of November, 1792, the National Convention announced by a formal decree, which was translated into all the European languages, *that France was ready*

“ les Anglais seraient un peuple digne de l'entendre.”

Moniteur, 6 Jan. 1792.

*to assist every nation which was willing to rebel against its own government. (14)*

“ Séance du Lundi, 19 Novembre.

(14) Lépaux propose, et la Convention adopte, la  
 “ rédaction suivante. La Convention Nationale dé-  
 “ clare, au nom de la nation Française, qu’elle ac-  
 “ cordera fraternité et secours à tous les peuples qui  
 “ voudront recouvrer leur liberté; et charge le pou-  
 “ voir exécutif de donner aux généraux les ordres né-  
 “ cessaires pour porter secours à ces peuples, et dé-  
 “ fendre les citoyens qui auraient été vexés, ou qui  
 “ pourraient l’être pour la cause de la liberté.

“ Sergent. Je demand que ce décret soit traduit et  
 “ imprimé dans toutes les langues.

“ Cette proposition est décrétée.” *Moniteur*, 20  
 Nov. 1792. Brissot, though he made no objection  
 to this decree at the time when it was proposed, for it  
 passed with enthusiasm, (le décret passa d’enthousiasme)  
 as he himself says, called it afterwards, on ma-  
 ture reflection, “ l’absurde et impolitique décret du  
 19 Novembre, qui a justement excité les inquiétudes  
 des cabinets étrangers.” *A ses Commentans*, page 68.  
 It is remarkable, that the person who proposed this  
 decree was elected one of the first five Directors,  
 though in other respects he is by no means a distin-  
 guished character.

The

The measures adopted by the National Convention even previous to this decree, but more particularly the decree itself, produced in England the desired effect, and set various societies, who were already disaffected to Government, in agitation. So early as the 7th of November (15) an address, voted by five thousand persons, members of the united societies of London, Manchester and other places, (16) was delivered to the National Convention, containing the following passages: "They are of opinion (namely, " they who voted the address), that it is the " duty of true Britons to support and assist

(15) Even on the 14th of August several Englishmen appeared at the bar of the National Assembly, and congratulated the French on the energy which they had displayed on the 10th of August (*de l'énergie qu'ils ont montrée dans la journée du 10 Août*). *Moniteur*, 17 Août. 1792.

(16) Cette adresse a été votée par 5,000 Anglais réunis dans les sociétés de Londres, Manchester, etc." *Moniteur*, du 8 Nov. 1792.

" to

“ to the utmost of their power the defenders  
 “ of the Rights of Man, the propagators of  
 “ human felicity, and to swear inviolable  
 “ friendship to a nation which proceeds on  
 “ *the plan which you have adopted*”—(It  
 is to be observed, that this plan was the  
 abolition of royalty).—“ What is liberty?  
 “ What are our rights? Frenchmen, you  
 “ are already free, *and Britons are preparing*  
 “ *to become so. A triple alliance, not of crowns,*  
 “ but of the *people* of America, of France,  
 “ and of *Great Britain, &c.*” (17) This

(17) “ Ils croient qu’il est du devoir des vrais Bre-  
 “ tons, de soutenir et assister de tous leurs moyens les  
 “ défenseurs des droits de l’homme, des propagateurs  
 “ du bonheur, de l’humanité, et de jurer à une nation,  
 “ qui procède d’après le plan que vous avez adopté,  
 “ une amitié inviolable.” Qu’est-ce que la liberté?  
 “ Quels sont nos droits? Français, vous êtes déjà  
 “ libres; mais les Bretons se préparent à le devenir.  
 “ La triple alliance, non de couronnes, mais des peuples  
 “ de l’Amérique, de la France, et de la Grande Bre-  
 “ tagne, etc.” Moniteur, 8 Nov. 1792. The ad-  
 dress is signed, Maurice Margarot, President; Thomas  
 Hardy, Secretary; and contains several other passages  
 equally



language was very intelligible : but no sooner was the decree of the 19th of November generally known, than a more open and daring language was adopted ; for within nine days after the publication of this decree, deputies from certain British societies appeared at the bar of the National Convention, and signified their intention of adopting the form of Government introduced in France, and of establishing a *National Convention in Great Britain*. “ We hope,” said the orator of the first deputation, “ that  
 “ the troops of liberty will never lay down,  
 “ their arms as long as tyrants and slaves shall  
 “ continue to exist. (18) Our wishes, Citi-

equally expressive of a determination to abolish royalty in England. They who have not access to the *Moniteur*, will find the whole address, in English, in *Rivington's Annual Register*, 1792, State Papers, p. 344.

(18) Every rational man must deplore the existence both of tyrants and of slaves ; but *these* gentlemen by the word “ tyrant ” understood every king, however mild his government, or however limited his au-

“zen-Legislators, render us impatient to see  
 “the moment of this *grand change*. Nor  
 “are we alone animated by these senti-  
 “ments: we doubt not that they would  
 “be equally conspicuous in the great ma-  
 “jority of our fellow countrymen, if the  
 “public opinion were consulted there, as  
 “it ought to be, in a NATIONAL CON-  
 “VENTION.” (19) To this address the

city; and by the word “slave” they understood every inhabitant of a country where kingly government was established. Thus do men become the dupes of mere *names*, as if the word “king” necessarily involved the idea of slavery, or the word “director” the idea of liberty. It is not the title, but the power annexed to it, which is to be taken into consideration: the Sovereign of Great Britain is called King, the Sovereigns of France, are called Directors: yet Great Britain is still the land of liberty, and France is now the land of abject slavery.

(19) “Nous espérons que les troupes de la liberté  
 “ne les (i. e. les armes) poseront, que lorsqu’ils n’y  
 “aura plus de tyrans ni d’esclaves. Nos vœux, Citoy-  
 “ens Législateurs, nous rendent impatients de voir le  
 “moment heureux de grand changement. Nous ne  
 “sommes

President made the following reply, in the name of the French Convention: "Citizens of the world, etc. Principles are waging war against tyranny, which will fall under the blows of philosophy. Royalty in Europe is either destroyed, or on the point of perishing on the ruins of feodality: and the declaration of rights, placed by

"sommes pas les seuls animés de ces sentimens, nous ne doutons pas, qu'ils ne se manifestassent également chez la grande majorité de nos compatriotes, si l'opinion publique y était consultée, comme elle devait l'être, dans une Convention Nationale." Séance 28 Novembre: Moniteur, 29 Nov. 1792.

• Le Président à la députation,

"Citoyens du monde, etc. Les principes font la guerre à la tyrannie, qui tombera sous les coups de la philosophie. La royauté est en Europe ou détruite ou agonisante sur les décombres féodaux: et la déclaration des droits placée à côté des trônes est un feu dévorant, qui va les consumer. (Applaudissemens). Estimables républicains, félicitez vous en pensant, que la fête que vous avez célébrée en l'honneur de la révolution Française, est le prélude de la fête des nations." *Ib.*

“ the side of thrones, is a devouring fire,  
“ which will consume them. *Worthy re-*  
“ *publicans*, congratulate yourselves on think-  
“ ing, that the festival which you have ce-  
“ lebrated in honour of the French revolu-  
“ tion, is *the prelude to the festival of nations.*”

But the language held on the same day by the Deputies of the Society for Constitutional Information, (20) as well as the language of the President, in his reply to *them*, was still more expressive. “ Citizens of “ France,” said the orator of the deputation, “ we are sent by a patriotic society “ in London to congratulate you, in their “ name, on the triumphs of liberty.—Af- “ ter the example which France has lately “ given, *revolutions will be rendered easy :*

(20) The same Society in its address to the Jacobin club, which was sent a few days before the royal proclamation of the 21st of May was issued, displayed similar principles, though not so openly, as after the decree of the 19th of November.

“ and