

The decree itself consists of eleven articles, and contains instructions to be observed by the French generals and commissaries, in every country into which the French arms might be able to penetrate. The Executive Council, that the purport of this decree might not be mistaken, accompanied it moreover with a commentary : and, as both the one and the other are worthy of notice, it will be necessary to quote a few passages from each. (3) The first article begins thus :

(3) The text of the decree, together with the commentary, is printed in Chauffard's *Mémoires Historiques et Politiques*, p. 180—228. The text itself is printed in Italic, the commentary in Roman characters, in order to distinguish them : the whole is signed by the six ministers who formed the Executive Council, Le Brun, Roland, Claviere, Monge, Garat, Pache : and commentary and text are there dated 8th January, 1793. Of this celebrated decree there are various editions, which do not all agree, the reason of which is, that it received, on the 17th and 22d of December, some alterations and additions, whence it is called, in Chauffard's particular instructions, dated 31st December, “*Le Décret de la Convention Nationale*”

des

- “ In those countries, which are, or *shall be*
- “ (4) occupied by the armies of the French
- “ Republic, the generals shall immediately
- “ proclaim, in the name of the French Na-
- “ tion, the sovereignty of the people, and
- “ *the abolition of all constituted authorities,*
- “ &c.” (5) Here we have a positive and de-

des 15, 17, et 22 Décembre.” (Chaussard, p. 156). Hence, likewise, in the *Moniteur*, 17th December, the two last articles are not contained. Now, as that text of the decree in question, which was signed by the Executive Council, and delivered to the commissaries for the Netherlands, of whom Chaussard was one, must be regarded as the authentic text, I have strictly adhered to it.

(4) This expression shews, that the decree was applicable to all countries, and consequently to Great Britain.

(5) “ Dans les pays qui sont, ou qui seront occupés
 “ par les armées de la République, les généraux pro-
 “ clament sur le champ, au nom de la Nation Fran-
 “ çaise, la souveraineté du peuple, la suppression de
 “ toutes les autorités établies, &c.” Chaussard, p. 187.

cisive declaration, that the National Convention was resolved to overturn the constitution of every country, which had either folly enough to receive, or not force enough to repel, a French army : (6) but the Executive Council, in order to give it more energy, added in the commentary : “ It is necessary that not even the *shadow* of these authorities remain.” (7) The means, likewise, by which even the shadow of the ancient authorities should be made to vanish, were assigned by the Executive Council : and these means consisted in the following order to their commissaries : “ They shall not only “ encourage the writings destined to this instruction (namely, the instruction of the “ people), the patriotic societies, and all the

(6) In this respect, every man must confess that the modern rulers of France have kept their word.

(7) Il ne faut pas que *l'ombre même* de ces autorités subsiste.” Chauffard, p. 189.

“ establish-

“ establishments consecrated to the propa-
 “ gation of liberty, (8) but they themselves
 “ shall likewise have immediate communi-
 “ cation with the people: they shall pre-
 “ vent, by frequent explanations, the false
 “ interpretations, (9) the false reports, and
 “ all the falsehoods by which evil-minded
 “ persons may endeavour to lead astray the
 “ public opinion. In short, it is with the
 “ view of assisting the commissaries in this

(8) It is well known that, in England particularly, this encouragement was given in every imaginable mode. But in England, there was already as much liberty as any rational man could wish. and it was this rational liberty, this liberty founded on law, that the National Convention, under the pretence of promoting it, wished to destroy, that free-born Britons might become the slaves of French tyrants.

(9) No interpretation could place the conduct of the French in a more unfavourable light than the true one: for that must certainly be considered as the true interpretation which the Executive Council itself gave. The bitterest enemies of France, therefore, had no need of false interpretations.

“ important part of their ministry, that the
 “ Council has thought proper to associate
 “ with them a certain number of agents,
 “ more particularly destined to these instruc-
 “ tive communications with the inhabi-
 “ tants of the countries. Further, *in the*
 “ *different countries, to which they shall be*
 “ *sent,* (10) shall be transmitted to them lists

(10) As the above-quoted expression, “ *qui seront occupés,*” proves the universality of the decree, so this expression (*divers pays où ils seront envoyés*) proves the universality of the commentary, and shews, that though it was first used in Belgia, it was by no means designed for that country alone. Further, throughout the whole decree no particular mention is made of that country under any name whatsoever; and all the expressions are of such a kind, that they are equally applicable to every country. In the particular instructions given to Chauffard was said likewise, “ *tous les peuples chez lesquels la république Française a porté, et portera ses armes.*” Chauffard, p. 157. Lastly, Chauffard himself, p. 25, has declared in positive terms, “ *Les instructions étaient générales.*”

—This note deserves the attention of those gentlemen who were so fond of applying to the British Ministers at the period in question, the title of alarmists.

“ of those citizens, who are known for their
 “ patriotic sentiments, and who are the most
 “ capable of co-operating in the mission of
 “ the commissaries.” (11)

In the first article of this decree was further promised to all nations who should receive a French army, “ the suppression of all

(11) “ Non seulement ils encourageront les écrits
 “ destinés à cette instruction, les sociétés patriotiques
 “ et tous les établissemens consacrés à la propagation
 “ de la liberté, mais encore ils communiqueront
 “ mêmes avec le peuple ; ils préviendront par
 “ plications fréquentes les fausses interpré-
 “ faux bruits, et tous les mensonges par
 “ malveillans chercheraient à égarer l’opinion
 “ c’est pour seconder les commissaires dans
 “ importante de leur ministère, que le Con-
 “ devoir leur adjoindre un certain nombre d’agents
 “ tinés plus particulièrement à ces communicatio-
 “ fructives avec les habitans de ces pays. Il leur
 “ en outre remis des listes des citoyens *des divers pays*
 “ où ils seront envoyés, connus pour leurs sentimens
 “ patriotiques, et les plus capables de concourir à la
 “ mission des commissaires.” *Chaussard, p. 291.*

taxes;" (12) and in the second article was promised, "peace, aid, fraternity, liberty and

(12) Immediately after the words "la suppression de toutes les autorités établies," quoted in Note 5, was added, "des impôts ou contributions existans." By such alluring promises, and by assurances of exemption from all taxes, the National Convention hoped to seduce the ignorant and the unwary to its own interest, and to encourage them to rebel against their governments. But the artifice was so gross, that it is really astonishing that so many persons have been credulous enough to enter into the snare, especially as the decree itself carried with it its own antidote. For in the fourth article it is said: "Les généraux met-

de suite sous la sauvegarde et protection de la République Française tous les biens meubles et immeubles appartenant au roi, au prince, à ses fau-
 thériens, et satellites volontaires, aux éta-
 blissemens publics, au corps et communautés laïques
 ecclésiastiques." Chaussard, p. 196. The expres-
 sion "to put under the safeguard of the French re-
 public" needs no explanation. Further, it was said in the seventh article: "Le Conseil Exécutif nom-
 mera aussi des commissaires pour se concerter avec
 les Généraux et l'Administration Provisoire nommée
 par le peuple, sur les mesures à prendre pour la dé-
 fense commune, et sur les moyens à employer pour se
 procurer les habillemens et subsistances nécessaires aux
 armées,

"equality." (13) So far the decree has a very fine appearance: and one should suppose, that it was the will of the National Convention to fix the sovereignty of the people in all countries on so firm a basis, that they should at all times, and in all respects, enjoy the full power of acting according to their own fancy. It is true, that the first and second articles of this decree were equivalent to a declaration of war against all existing governments: but then they *seemed* at least, like the decree of the 19th of November, to favour the subjects of each country, whom the generous governors of France were willing to take under their high protection. The decree of the 19th of November had

"armées, et pour acquitter les dépenses qu'elles ont faites, ou seront, pendant leur séjour sur son territoire."
 Chauffard, p. 207.

(13) "Ils (les généraux) annonceront au peuple qu'ils lui apportent paix, secours, fraternité, liberté et égalité." Chauffard, p. 193.

even left to every nation the choice of rebelling against its government, or not, a choice which could not be refused, without manifestly infringing on the *sovereignty* of the people. But on the 15th of December, the revolutionary zeal of the National Convention arose to such an height, that they deprived at once the *sovereign* people of all choice in regard to insurrection, and in the eleventh article of the decree in question, made the following declaration: "The French nation declares, *that it will treat as an enemy* that people which, refusing or renouncing liberty and equality, should chuse to preserve, or recall, or treat with its Prince and privileged orders." (14) Here we have a formal declaration of war, not only against every existing government,

(14) "La nation Française déclare, *qu'elle traitera comme ennemi* le peuple qui, refusant la liberté et l'égalité, ou y renonçant voudrait conserver, rappeler ou traiter avec le Prince et les castes privilégiées." Chauffard, p. 225.

but likewise against every *people* that did not choose to change their political constitution. But the great majority of the people of Britain were warmly attached to their present form of government, and by no means wished for a revolution: consequently the eleventh article of the decree of December 15th, contained a declaration of war against the *people*, as well as against the King of Great Britain. Nothing can be more clear than this article: but though it was not wanting in perspicuity, the Executive Council judged it necessary, by the following commentary, to give it a greater degree of energy: “It is evident, that a people so
“ enamoured of its chains, (15) and so ob-

(15) But if any nation was really enamoured of its chains, what right had the rulers of France to rob it of the object of its admiration? And what right had they to determine, in the name of any nation, the question, whether the bands which united it in civil society were to be termed chains, or not? This was a question which every nation had probably a right

“stinately attached to its state of brutish-
“ness as to refuse the restoration of its
“rights, is the accomplice, not only of its
“own despots, but even of all the crowned
“usurpers who divide the domain of the
“earth and of men; (16) that such a servile
“people is the declared enemy, not only of
“the French republic, but even of all other
“nations, and therefore, that the distinction

to determine for itself, without calling in the aid of French arbitration. If it be further asked, in what the liberty consists, which these gentlemen everywhere substitute in the place of what they call slavery, the answer can be most easily given by the Dutch and the Swiss. These unhappy people would answer, if they dared to speak: “We now enjoy the liberty of
“emptying our purses, of abandoning our trade and
“manufactures, of sacrificing our privileges, of seeing
“the true lovers of our country murdered or banished,
“of returning thanks for the gracious chastisement
“inflicted on us, and of applying to our executioners
“the appellation of deliverers.”

(16) No crowned head on earth enjoys this privilege in an equal degree with the five uncrowned lords of France.

“which

“ which, we have so justly established be-
 “ tween government and people, ought not
 “ to be observed in favour of a people of
 “ this description; (17) in short, that the
 “ right of natural defence, the duty of in-
 “ furing the preservation of our liberty and
 “ the success of our arms, (18) the gene-

(17) Unhappy people, that must be treated with all the rigours of war, for no other reason, than because it is contented with its government! The source of its happiness shall be dried up; *because* it thence derived its happiness! Such are the blessings bestowed by the Great Nation. Well, therefore, did Dumouriez say: “ C’est le 15 Dec. que fut donné le fameux décret, qui prouvait aux Belges, *et à tous les peuples*, “ qui avaient appelés les Français ou qui les avaient “ reçus, que la Convention n’envoyait les armées “ chez eux, *que pour les spolier et les tyranniser.*” Vie de Dumouriez, tom. iii. p. 373. He even protested against the decree, as he himself relates, Mémoires, tom. i. pref. p. 15, though without effect: for, as he further relates, p. 101, “ Le décret du 15 Décembre, “ bien loin d’être désapprouvé dans le Conseil, *était appuyée par tous les membres.*”

(18) That is, in plain English, “ the promotion of our plans of conquest and aggrandizement.”

“ral interest of restoring peace to Europe,
 “which it cannot obtain but by the annihila-
 “tion of the despots and their satellites (19)
 “all conspire in inducing us to treat such a
 “people according to the rigour of war and of
 “conquest.” (20)

(19) Is not this a manifest declaration, that the rulers of France were resolved not to lay down their arms, till all the governments of Europe were gradually overturned? And have they not acted, to the present hour, agreeably to that resolution?

(20) “Il est évident qu’un peuple assez amoureux
 “de ses fers, assez entêté de son abrutissement pour
 “refuser la réstauracion de tous ses droits, est le com-
 “plice, non seulement de ses propres despotes, mais
 “même de tous les usurpateurs couronné, qui se par-
 “tagent le domaine de la terre et des hommes; que
 “ce peuple servile est l’ennemi déclaré non seule-
 “ment de la république Française, mais même de
 “toutes les autre nations: qu’ainsi la distinction si
 “justement établie par nous entre les gouvernemens
 “et les peuples, ne doit point être observé en faveur
 “de celui-ci; qu’en un mot le droit de la défense na-
 “turelle, le devoir d’assurer la conservation de notre
 “liberté et le succès de nos armes, l’intérêt universel
 “de rendre à l’Europe une paix, qu’elle ne peut obtenir
 “que

It was further ordered, on the 15th of December, that the French Generals, on entering any country, at the same time that they published the decree, should publish likewise a proclamation, which began in the following manner: "The French people
 " to the people. (21) Brethren and
 " friends, we have conquered our liberty,
 " and we will maintain it. Our union and
 " our force are our guarantees. We offer
 " you the enjoyment of this inestimable
 " blessing, which has always belonged to
 " you, but of which you have been crimi-
 " nally deprived by your oppressors. *We*
 " *are come to expel your tyrants.*" (22)

*" que par l'anéantissement des despotes et de leurs satellites,
 " tout nous fait une loi, de traiter un tel peuple suivant
 " la rigueur de la guerre et de la conquête."* Chauffard,
 p. 225.

(21) A vacant space was left, which was to be filled up with the name of each people, where the French generals should come. This is an additional proof of the universality of the decree. See the Notes 4, 10.

(22) "Le peuple Français au peuple Freres

That in all these measures the National Convention had its eye particularly fixed on Great Britain and Holland, is too obvious to need a proof: but should any one be really disposed to entertain a doubt on this subject, the following passage, in the opinion delivered and published by Chauffard (23) *on the decree in question*, will probably remove it.

“ Without doubt it was the interest of
 “ France to raise, to conquer the commerce
 “ of the Belgic provinces, sway and neu-
 “ tralise by that of Holland, thence to alarm
 “ and menace the United Provinces, to plant
 “ our assignats in their very counting houses,

“ et amis, nous avons conquis la liberté et nous la
 “ maintiendrons. Notre union et notre force en font
 “ les garans. Nous vous offrons de faire jouir de ce
 “ bien inestimable, qui vous a toujours appartenu et
 “ que vos oppresseurs n'ont pu vous ravir sans crime.
 “ *Nous sommes venus, pour chasser vos tyrans.*” Mo-
 niteur, 18 Dec. 1792.

(23) *Mémoires historiques et politiques*, p. 11—30.

“ there to ruin the bank of England, (24) and,
 “ in short, to complete the revolution of the
 “ money system. It was of consequence to
 “ France to engross, as it were, the vast
 “ workhouses of trade, these manufactures
 “ of national prosperity.” (25) Such were

(24) Yet complaints were made about the assignat bill!

(25) “ Sans doute il importait à la France de rele-
 “ ver, de conquérir le commerce des provinces Bel-
 “ giques, dominé, neutralisé par celui de la Hollande ;
 “ et de-là d’inquiéter, de menacer les Provinces Unies,
 “ d’implanter jusques sur leurs comptoirs l’assignat, d’y
 “ ruiner la banque de Londres, et, enfin, d’achever la
 “ révolution du système monétaire. Il importait à la
 “ France d’accaparer, pour ainsi dire, ces vastes ate-
 “ liers de commerce, ces manufactures de prospérité
 “ nationale.” *Chaussard*, p. 17. And in a note to the
 words “ d’y ruiner la banque de Londres,” which is
 printed in the *Appendix*, p. 417, he says: “ Si le pro-
 “ ject de pousser les armes de la république, jusqu’à Am-
 “ sterdam avait eu lieu, il aurait été facile de s’empa-
 “ rer de la plus grande partie des effets sur la banque
 “ de Londres. La banque était ébranlée, si on lui eût
 “ présentée à la fois tous ces effets dont Amsterdam est

the remarks made by the French Commissary Chauffard on the decree of the 15th of December: and they sufficiently prove, that

“le centre et le pivot.” It may be observed, in general, that the leading men at that time in France made so little a secret of their designs against Holland, and consequently against England, (for, as we have just seen, the ruin of the latter was to be effected by the ruin of the former), that Cambon, in the Committee of General Defence, said openly to Abena and Van Staphorst, two deputies of the Dutch patriots: “Vous n’avez point de biens ecclésiastiques à nous offrir, pour nous indemniser: c’est une révolution de porte feuilles, qu’il faudra faire.” Brissot à ses Commettans, p. 88. This was uttered in the true spirit of the National Convention: for wherever estates of nobility and clergy have been wanting, the property of merchants and of all other men, who had any thing to lose, has supplied their place, as Boyer Fonfrede said at the time, when the proposal, to respect the Amsterdam merchant ships, was rejected under the pretence of their belonging to aristocrats: “La masse des Hollandais est riche, elle n’est donc pas amis de nos principes, et en admettant quelques exceptions, si vous y avez des amis, ils doivent être seulement dans la classe des sans-culottes.” *Moniteur*, 5th Feb. 1793.

at least one of the tendencies of this decree was the destruction of Great Britain.

But as the measures of precaution, which the British Cabinet had already begun to take, were impediments to the execution of this grand design, it was judged necessary to have again recourse to the favourite maxim, which has rendered so much service to modern France: "the governed must be excited to rebel against their governors." For this purpose, the Executive Council, according to Le Brun's own report to the National Convention, on the 19th of December, gave *express order* to the Minister, Chauvelin, to "embrace every opportunity of assuring the English Nation that, notwithstanding the ill humour of its Government, (26) the

(26) The English Government, therefore, after the National Convention had openly avowed its intention of overturning the constitution, should have remained in good humour!

“ French people desired nothing more ar-
 “ delutely than to merit *its* (the English Na-
 “ tion’s) esteem.” (27) At the same time,
 Le Brun, who was himself member of the
 Executive Council, and Minister for Foreign
 Affairs, gave notice in this report to the Na-
 tional Convention, that Mr. Chauvelin, in

(27) “ Le Conseil exécutif provisoire a con-
 “ tinué d’entretenir à Londres un Ministre de la Ré-
 “ publique Française ; et il l’a *expressement* chargé de
 “ saisir toutes les occasions, pour assurer la Nation
 “ Anglaise, que malgré la mauvaise humeur de son
 “ Gouvernement, le peuple Français ne désire rien plus
 “ ardemment, que de mériter son estime, et de con-
 “ server la bonne harmonie et l’amitié qui doivent à
 “ jamais unir deux nations généreuses et libres. La
 “ Convention Nationale a reçu à diverses reprises des
 “ témoignages éclatans de la réciprocité de cette bien-
 “ veillance, et de la part sincère, que le peuple Anglais
 “ prenait aux succès de nos armes et au triomphe de
 “ la liberté Française. Mais ces mêmes événemens
 “ glorieux agissaient dans un sens très opposé sur le
 “ Ministre de Saint James.” *Moniteur*, 21 Décem-
 ber, 1792. That the expression “ son estime” ap-
 plies not to the government, but to the people of
 England, is evident from the context.

case the armament, which, by Le Brun's own acknowledgment, in the very same report, had nothing which ought to cause an alarm, (28) should be continued, was ordered to declare, "*that a solemn appeal would be made to the English Nation.*" (29) And at the utterance of these words, the National Convention applauded. (30) But what was truly ridiculous, and would really excite a

(28) "Il en résulte jusqu'ici que ces armemens n'ont rien *que* *doive nous allarmer*, puisqu'il n'ex-cèdent que de *quatre* vaisseaux de ligne ceux qui ont eu lieu dans les années précédentes." *Ib.* It has been already proved in the preceding chapter, that even before Great Britain began to arm, France had an hundred and two ships of war, of which twenty-one were of the line, not only commissioned, but actually at sea.

(29) Le Brun's own words, in his report on the 19th of December, were: "Nous ne manquerions pas de faire *un appel solennel à la nation Anglaise.*" *Ib.*

(30) Immediately after the just-quoted words, is added in the *Moniteur*, "On applaudit."

smile, if the indignation excited by hypocrisy did not suppress it, Le Brun introduced them with the assertion, "that they would then have exhausted every explanation which could demonstrate the purity of their views, and their respect for the independence of other nations." (31) This assertion is an example of insolence and hypocrisy, which is hardly to be found but in the annals of republican France: for it was made in the very week in which the National Convention had openly and solemnly declared its intention, not only of overturning all kingly governments, but of treating *whole nations* as enemies, which should refuse to take up arms against their lawful sovereigns. Nor did Brissot display less insolence and hypocrisy in his remarks on the menaced appeal: for in his report to the National Convention, on the 12th of

(31) "Comme alors nous aurions épuisé toutes les explications propre à démontrer la pureté de nos vues et notre respect pour l'indépendance des autres peuples."

January, 1793, after having related, that the Executive Council had signified, on the 27th of December, through the organ of the Minister Chauvêlin, "its firm resolution of opening the eyes of the people of England, by an appeal which should be made to them," (32) he proceeded to express his

(32) "Le 27 Décembre le Conseil Exécutif a fait
 "notifier au Gouvernement Anglais, par l'organe de
 "notre Ambassadeur, un écrit par lequel il repousse
 "vigoureuſement toutes les inculpations élevées contre
 "lui, par lequel il ſe plaint des préparatifs hoſtiles de
 "la cour d'Angleterre, et annonce la ferme réſolution
 "d'ouvrir les yeux du peuple Anglais dans un appel
 "qu'il lui fera." *Moniteur*, 15 Janv. 1793. To this

menacè, which, had it been made by a British Mi-
 niſter at Paris, would have been answered by an order
 to quit the country, if not by order to arreſt the perſon
 of the British Miſiſter, Lord Grenville replied, on the
 31ſt of December, with equal moderation and dignity.

"Quant à ce qui regarde moi et mes collègues, c'eſt
 "à ſa Majeſté que ſes miniſtres doivent le compte de
 "leur conduite; et je n'ai point de réponſe à vous
 "donner là deſſus, non plus qu'au ſujet de l'appel que
 "vous vous propoſez de faire à la nation Anglaiſe.

"Cette nation, d'après la conſtitution qui lui aſſure

surprise that the English Ministers' were offended at this menace, and regarded it as an incitement to insurrection, (33) though, as Brissot added, it was nothing more than
 "an appeal to the reason and justice of a
 "great nation, which was duped by the
 "tricks of its ministers, who wished to em-
 "broil it with a people whose cause was *its*
 "*own*, and which had sworn hatred only to
 "tyrants." (34) Language thus insulting

"liberté et sa prospérité, et qu'elle saura maintenir
 "contre toute attaque directe ou indirecte, n'aura
 "jamais avec les puissances étrangères ni relation ni
 "correspondance que par l'organe de son Roi, d'un
 "Roi qu'elle chérit et qu'elle respecte, et qui n'a
 "jamais séparé un instant ses droits, ses intérêts, et
 "son bonheur, des droits, des intérêts, et de bonheur
 "de son peuple." *Moniteur*, 14 Janv. 1793.

(33) In what other light then was it possible that they should have regarded it?

(34) "Rappellerai-je cette fausse interprétation de
 "cet appel à la nation Anglaise dont le Ministre des
 "Affaires Etrangères a menacé le Cabinet de Saint-
 "James."

to the British Cabinet would surely not have been heard in the National Convention, if the Government of France had been desirous of avoiding a rupture: and its falsehood, notwithstanding the veil of sophistry (35) in which it is involved, is so obvious, especially when we consider that the word "tyrant," in the mouth of the French rulers, is equivalent to "king," that the pre-

"James, s'il persistait dans ses projets hostile, appel, dans lequel ce Cabinet a feint du voir un signe d'insurrection, tandis que ces mots signifient un appel à la raison, à la justice d'une grande nation, dupe du charlatanisme de ses ministres, qui veulent la brouiller avec un peuple, dont la cause est la sienne, et qui n'a juré de haine qu'au tyrans." *Moniteur*, 15 Janv. 1793. In a former part of this speech, Brissot had said: "Il importe que la nation Anglaise, qui n'est égarée que par son gouvernement, soit promptement désabusée. C'est par respect pour la fraternité qui nous unit, que nous devons lui peindre avec franchise les manœuvres de son gouvernement."

(35) Brissot's sophistry, though it produced a great effect at the time, is now become proverbial.

tended apology affords a new proof, that the appeal to the people of Great Britain had no other object than to promote the already expected insurrection.

On the 24th of December, five days, therefore, after Le Brun had given notice of the appeal, Mr. Barailon, one of the few temperate members of the National Convention, observed that the decree of the 19th of November had excited uneasiness in the British Government, and in order to remove this uneasiness, he proposed the addition of a clause, by which the decree should be restricted to those countries with which France was actually at war. But the National Convention not only rejected the proposal, but rejected it even without a debate: for the previous question was immediately demanded, and it was determined "that there was no room for deliberation." (36) Now as the

(36) Barailon. "Ce décret a déjà fait beaucoup d'ennemis ;

British Government was particularly mentioned by Mr. Barailon, and the proposal was made with a view of removing its uneasiness, the decisive rejection of the proposal was equivalent to a formal declaration, that the National Convention was resolved to apply the decree to Great Britain.

Nor did eight days elapse, before a very remarkable application of it to Great Britain was actually made: for on the 31st of December the Marine Minister, Monge, sent

“ d’ennemis: il les multipliera encore. Le Ministère Anglais en a témoigné son mécontentement au nôtre, qui a été forcé de l’interpréter dans le sens le plus raisonnable. Je demande que dans le décret du 19 Nov. après ces mots, “ la Convention Nationale déclare, au nom de la Nation Française, qu’elle accordera fraternité et secours à tous les peuples,” on ajoute, “ contre les tyrans desquels elle fera en guerre.”

La question préalable est invoqué contre cet amendement.

Il est décrété, *n’y avoir pas lieu à délibérer.* *Moniteur*, 25 Dec. 1792.

a circular letter (37) to the sea-port towns of France, containing the following passage :

“ The King and his Parliament wish to make
 “ war on us. (38) But will the English re-
 “ publicans suffer it ? These free men already
 “ shew their discontent, and their abhor-
 “ rence of bearing arms against their bre-
 “ thren, the French. Well, then ! we will

(37) It is superscribed : “ Lettre du Ministre de la Marine aux amis de la liberté et égalité dans les villes maritimes.” Paris, 31 Décembre, 1792 : and it is printed in the *Moniteur*, 20th January, 1793. It was not printed immediately, because the French Government wished to wait the effects of it ; but before the 20th of January, favourable answers had been transmitted from some of the sea ports. The answer sent by the community of St. Malo on the 17th of January, expressive of their readiness “ to co-operate with the “ executive power,” will be quoted in the fourteenth chapter.

(38) Of this assertion Monge neither did, nor could give a proof ; for the circumstance, that a Government puts itself in a posture of defence, when threatened with imminent danger, is no argument that it *wishes* for war.

“ fly

“ fly to their assistance; we will make a de-
 scent in that island; (39) we will huri
 “ thither fifty thousand caps of liberty; we
 “ will plant there the sacred tree, (40) and
 “ stretch out our arms to our brother republi-
 “ cans; (41) the tyranny of their government

(39) A landing in England with a considerable army was even at that time regarded as a matter very easy to be executed: for Kerfaint, in his speech of the 1st of January, 1793, said: “ Les barques de nos pé-
 “ cheurs (font) toujours prêtes à y transporter cent mille
 “ Français, car c’est par cette expédition que nous
 “ devons terminer cette querelle, et c’est sur la ruine
 “ de la Tour de Londres,” etc. *Moniteur*, 3 Jan. 1793.

(40) Had the sacred tree been planted in Great Britain, and borne the same fruits as it has borne in the Netherlands, in Holland, in Switzerland, in Italy, in Germany to the left of the Rhine, and likewise in France itself, we should have been no great gainers by the exchange of the old British for the new French tree of liberty.

(41) In order to crush them to atoms.

"shall soon be destroyed. May we all be strongly animated with this thought!" (42)

Nor was it long before this thought very strongly animated the garrison of Brest: for in the first week of January an attempt was made by the batteries of that port to sink a British sloop, which was cruising before the outward harbour. The attack on this vessel was an act of open hostility, and it was undoubtedly made with the approbation of the French Government, for otherwise

(42) "Le roi et son parlement veulent nous faire la guerre; les républicains Anglais le souffriront-ils? Déjà ces hommes libres témoignent leur mécontentement et la répugnance qu'ils ont à porter les armes contre leurs frères, les Français. Eh bien! nous volerons à leurs secours; nous ferons une descente dans cette île; nous y lancerons cinquante mille bonnets de la liberté; nous y planterons l'arbre sacré, et nous tendrons les bras à nos frères républicains. La tyrannie de leur gouvernement sera bientôt détruit. Que chacun de nous se pénétre fortement de cette idée"

Moniteur, 20 Janv. 1^{re} feuille.

some apology, or at least some explanation would have been given of it. If the commanding officer in the forts at Brest suspected that the sloop had been sent with the view of reconnoitring the Brest fleet, he might have sent off a boat with orders to the captain, to quit the road. But to hoist, as appears from the account given in the *Moniteur*, (43) the flag of war over the

(43) The following relation of this affair is printed in the *Monit.* 23 Janv. 1793. "Plymouth le 5 Janvier. Le Childers étant à croiser Vendredi à deux heures de l'après-midi devant Brest, s'avança à trois quarts de mille des batteries de ce port. Il était sans couleurs. Une des batteries lui tira un coup à boulet, qui passa heureusement par dessus, sans lui causer aucun dommage. Le Childers alors arbora pavillon Anglais. Mais le fort arbora aussitôt les couleurs nationales, avec un pendant rouge sur l'enseigne. Les autres forts suivirent son exemple. Pendant ce tems-là le Childers avait été entraîné par la marée à un demi mille environ de ces forts, et obligé à cause du calme d'avoir recours aux rames, pour ne pas arriver trop près. Tout à coup, les batteries, à un signal qui fut fait, com-
mencerent

French flag, as soon as the British captain had hoisted the British flag, and not merely to fire a single gun, as a signal for departure, but to make across fire from several batteries with the view of sinking the ship, was to treat it, in every respect, as the ship of an enemy. And if the French Government had been desirous of avoiding a rupture with Great Britain, it would have at least attempted to make some excuse to the British Cabinet, which necessarily felt itself insulted, as well as the nation at large. But no attempt of this kind was made: and this very neglect afforded a new proof of the sentiments entertained by the Executive Council and the National Convention.

About this time it was resolved, to send Mr. Genet as Ambassador to the United

mènerent sur lui un feu croisé, qui l'eût criblé, si un vent frais, qui s'éleva, ne l'eût mis à même de se dégager.

States

States of America, in order to engage them to enter into a war with Great Britain, in conjunction with France. His instructions (published by Mr. Genet himself in the following month of December) were signed the 3d of January, 1793, to which some additional instructions were annexed on the 17th of that month. (44) So early as the 21st of December, 1792, the Executive Council had given notice to the National Convention, that they had fixed on Mr. Genet to go as Ambassador to the United States of America, with the view "of drawing closer the bands which united the two

(44) I have not been able to procure the edition of Mr. Genet's instructions, which he himself published; but extracts from them, on which we may certainly depend, are given in Mr. Harper's "*Observations on the Dispute between the United States and France,*" printed at Philadelphia in 1797, and reprinted for Stockdale, London, in 1798. For the date of Mr. Genet's instructions, see p. 95 of the fourth London edition.

nations."

nations." (45) Now, when we consider the avowed object of the French Government in regard to Great Britain, this closer drawing of the bands which united France and America, could have no other meaning than the engaging of the latter to concur in the hostile designs of the former: but, should any one really entertain doubts on this subject, the instructions which Mr. Genet received from the Executive Council will certainly remove them. For, after several passages, which have undoubtedly reference to Great Britain, such as, "to punish those

(45) Séance du 21 Décembre. Un Secrétaire fait lecture d'une lettre du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères ainsi conçue : Citoyen Président, les preuves de talent "et de civisme" qu'a données le citoyen Genet dans "les différentes missions, dont il a été chargé, ont déterminé le Conseil Exécutif à récompenser son zèle "en le nommant ministre plénipotentiaire auprès des "Etats Unis d'Amérique. *Il doit travailler à resserrer "les liens, qui unissaient les deux nations."* Moniteur, 23 Décembre, 1793.

"powers

“ powers which still keep up an exclusive
 “ colonial and commercial system, by de-
 “ claring that their vessels shall not be re-
 “ ceived in the ports of the contracting
 “ parties,” it is expressly said, “ we (the
 “ French) have at this moment a *particular*
 “ *interest* in taking steps to act *efficaciously*
 “ against *England* and *Spain*, if, as every
 “ thing announces, those powers should at-
 “ tack us. In this situation of affairs, we
 “ ought to excite, by all possible means, the zeal
 “ of the *Americans*, &c.” Great commercial
 advantages are then promised to the United
 States, “ in expectation that the American
 “ Government will finally *make a common*
 “ *cause with us*, to take such steps as exi-
 “ gencies may require.” (46) According,
 therefore, to the clear and express words of
 the instructions, the object of Genet’s mis-

(46) All these passages, with others to the same
 purport, are quoted in Mr. Harper’s *Observations*, p.
 32, 33.

sion was to effect an alliance between France and America, in order to act against Great Britain. It is true, that this alliance was proposed under the title of a mere defensive one: but it is evident, that the words, "if those powers should attack us," were inserted for no other purpose than to preserve an appearance of justice, it being wholly inconsistent with diplomatic caution to have said in plain terms, "We have formed the resolution to overturn the British Government and Constitution; we request you, therefore, to assist us in the accomplishment of this end." But that the French Government, before the 3d of January, 1793, the day on which Mr. Genet's instructions were signed, really had formed this resolution, and that, on the other hand, the measures which had been taken by the British Government were nothing more than what was necessary for self-defence, has been proved, by documents which no one can call in question.

question. Consequently, it was the object of the Executive Council, in sending Mr. Genet to America, to effect, according to the letter of his instructions, indeed, only a defensive, but according to their spirit, an offensive alliance against Great Britain. (47)

We have hitherto seen only preparatory steps to the execution of the great plan, which consisted, first in the overthrow of the British and Dutch Governments, and then in the subjugation of the two countries. We have seen, that the National

(48) The prudent Washington soon perceived this, and did not suffer himself to be drawn into the snare on which Mr. Genet not only made bitter complaints, but endeavoured to act the same part toward the American, as his principals at home acted toward the British Government; that is, he applied the favourite maxim, "the governed must be excited against their governors." See his Notes to Washington and Jefferson, printed in the New Annual Register, 1793, Public Papers, p. 108, 111, and Harper's Observations, p. 9.

Convention, on the 28th of November, 1792, had openly declared its sentiments in regard to the British Government, that the decree of the 19th of November, which was both confirmed and amplified by that of the 15th of December, had been particularly applied to Great Britain by the resolution of the National Convention on the 24th of December, that the French Minister for Foreign Affairs had menaced the British Government with an appeal to the people; that another French Minister of State had threatened a landing in Great Britain with fifty thousand caps of liberty, and that these menaces were supported by a considerable fleet, which was already at sea, even before Great Britain began to arm, not to mention other measures, which have been already described, and the insolence and contempt with which kingly government of every description was treated in the National Convention. Nor were the hostile designs of France

France less visible in regard to Holland. The resolution to open the Scheldt, and the forcing of a passage up to Antwerp, in defiance of the protestation of the Dutch Government, were acts of open hostility against an independent state: and that before the close of 1792, a plan was in agitation for an actual invasion of Holland, appears from several expressions in the letter written on the 6th of December by the War Minister, Pache, to General Dumouriez. (48) The hostile designs of France in respect to

(48) In this letter the following expressions occur: "Si l'armée de la Belgique se porte sur la Hollande," "et ne passe point la Meuse, etc."—"Les divers motifs ci-dessus, Général, ont déterminé le Conseil à persister dans son ancien arrêté: il a délibéré comme mesure d'urgence, et qui devoit dévancer l'expédition de la Hollande." Correspondance du Général Dumouriez avec Pache, Ministre de la Guerre, pendant la campagne de la Belgique en 1792, (Paris, 1793-8), p. 138. Chauffard likewise, p. 278, speaks of "opérations exécutées dans la Flandre, et projetées sur la Hollande."

Holland appear further from the circumstance, that a corps of Dutch patriots, as they were called, to the amount of ten thousand, were taken into the French service, under the name of the Batavian legion; that this corps was stationed on the frontiers of the Dutch territory; that a revolutionary committee of this legion was permitted to correspond with the French party in Holland, in order to promote the expected insurrection, and facilitate the entry of a French army; and lastly, that a French agent was appointed to reside with the revolutionary committee, and communicate an account of its proceedings to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Paris. (49)

(49) “ Les réfugiés Hollandais avaient assemblé un petit comité révolutionnaire à Anvers, où était aussi la légion Batave. Ils avaient plus de zèle que de lumières, et quoiqu'ils dépensassent beaucoup d'argent pour entretenir des correspondances avec les diverses provinces de leur république, etc.” Mémoires de Dumouriez, tom i. p. 5, ed. 2de.—“ Il fut décidé que les réfugiés

After all these preparatory steps, the Executive Council was of opinion, on the 10th of January 1793, that the plan, as far as it related to Holland, was ripe for execution : for on this very day orders were sent to General Miranda, who then commanded the French army in the Netherlands, in the absence of Dumouriez, to invade Dutch Flanders and the province of Zealand at furthest within twelve days. Dumouriez himself was at that time in Paris, concerting measures with the Executive Council for the next

réfugiés Hollandais se transporteraient à Anvers avec un comité révolutionnaire formé par eux. Bientôt une légion de dix mille hommes, que ces Hollandais avaient levés sous le nom de légion Batave, eut ordre de se porter sur la même ville, pour faire l'avant-garde de l'armée, en cas qu'on se décidât à pénétrer en Hollande. Un agent du gouvernement fut placé auprès de ce comité révolutionnaire pour rendre compte au Ministre Lebrun, chargé des relations étrangères, des mesures qu'on y prenait." Desfodoards Hist. Phil. de la Révolution Française, tom. ii. p. 1792, ed. 2de. Paris, 1797-8. Dumouriez likewise gives the very same account. Mem. tom. i. p. 26.

campaign: and, as being commander in chief of the army in the Netherlands, he was commissioned to communicate the order of the Council to General Miranda, which he did in the following terms: (50)

“ I send you at present *the resolution of the*
 “ *Council*: and as Valence comes to Paris,
 “ and as you command the army in the
 “ mean time, you are charged with the ex-
 “ ecution of the following plan, which you
 “ must arrange with *the most profound secre-*
 “ *cy*. In the first place, General Bourdon-
 “ naye will be dismissed, that he may not
 “ counteract the project which you have to
 “ execute, and all the troops, in French
 “ maritime Flanders will be placed under

(50) Dumouriez's Letter to Miranda is superscribed: “ Le Général Dumouriez au Général Miranda, Paris le 10 Janvier: and is printed, p. 3-8 of the following publication, printed at Paris in 1793. Correspondance du Général Miranda avec le Général Dumouriez, et les ministres de la guerre, Pache et Beurnonville, depuis Janvier, 1793.

“ your

“ your command, that all the parts may be
 “ put in motion by one will. At Bruges
 “ you have General Desfiers, who is very
 “ good, to whom you will send your in-
 “ structions, and charge him with the dis-
 “ position of the troops in the lower A-
 “ strian Flanders, while General Pascal,
 “ commandant at Dunkirk, is intrusted with
 “ the disposition of the troops in the lower
 “ French Flanders. Arrange matters in
 “ such a manner, as to be able, *within twelve*
 “ *days at farthest, to approach Zealand, and*
 “ *get possession of Dutch Flanders, at the same*
 “ *time that you will order your troops to enter*
 “ *the island of Zuyd-Beveland, and thence*
 “ *cross over to the isle of Walcheren, of which*
 “ *we wish to make ourselves masters, before the*
 “ Stadtholder has time to retreat thither, and
 “ before it is fortified, and has received a
 “ garrison. *There is no time to lose: and,*
 “ though the patriots pretend that the Zea-
 “ landers are prepared, and that in all Zea-

“ land there are not more than fifty-five
“ companies of infantry, consisting each of
“ only forty men, and no cavalry, and con-
“ sequently that this expedition does not re-
“ quire above three thousand men, I am of
“ opinion, that we shall want eight batta-
“ lions of infantry, the Batavian legion,
“ Moultsen's flotilla, two regiments of ca-
“ valry, eight twelve-pounders, four howit-
“ zers, a company of flying artillery, and
“ sixteen battalion pieces. You will go to
“ Antwerp, where you will be joined by the
“ Dutch patriots, who will bring you their
“ maps, and serve as your guides, as they
“ themselves have already acknowledged the
“ facility of the expedition. *The Minister*
“ *of the Marine gives orders to prepare furnaces*
“ *and grates in each of the three gun vessels, in*
“ *order to fire with red hot balls. These three*
“ *vessels draw but little water, and will ea-*
“ *sily beat off the frigates by the superiority*
“ *of their four-and-twenty pounders, and*
“ *their*

“their red hot balls.” (51) After a few lines relative to a forced loan at Antwerp, by

(51) “Voici à présent la résolution du Conseil : et comme Valence vient à Paris, comme vous êtes chargé par interim du commandement de l’armée, voici dont vous êtes chargé, et que vous devez arranger dans le plus profond secret. 1mo. On donne congé au Général Bourdonnaye, pour qu’il n’entrave point ce que vous avez à faire, et on met à votre disposition toutes les troupes de la Flandre maritime, pour qu’une seule volonté fasse agir toutes les parties. Vous avez à Bruges le Général Desfiers, qui est fort bon, à qui vous enverrez vos ordres et que vous chargerez de la disposition des troupes sur la basse Flandre Autrichienne, pendant que vous ferez faire celle de la basse Flandre Française au Général Pascal, commandant à Dunquerque. Arrangez les troupes de manière à pouvoir sous douze jours au plus se rapprocher de la Zélande, et s’emparer de la Flandre Hollandaise, pendant que vous ferez entrer vos troupes dans l’île de Zuyd Beveland, et de là dans l’île de Walcheren, dont on veut s’emparer, avant que le Stadthouder ait le tems de s’y réfugier, qu’elle soit fortifiée, et qu’elle ait reçu garnison. Il n’est pas de tems à perdre. et quoique les patriotes prétendent, que les Zélandais sont préparés, qu’il n’y a dans toute la Zélande que cinquante cinq compagnies d’infanterie tout au plus, à quarante hommes chacune.

which the expences of the expedition were to be defrayed, was then added: “ Contrive, “ likewise, that Desflers assemble at Bruges “ four or five thousand infantry, with four “ twelve-pounders, two hundred cavalry, “ two howitzers, two four pounders for each “ battalion, and advance with the utmost ce- “ lerity to Middlebourg, and thence to the “ isle of Cadfand and Biervliet. Send me a

et point de cavalerie, et que par conséquent cette ex-
pédition n'exige que 3000 hommes, je crois qu'il faut
huit bataillons d'infanterie, la légion Hollandaise, la
flotille de Moulton, et deux régimens de cavalerie,
huit pieces de douze, quatre obusiers, une compagnie
d'artillerie à cheval, et seize pièces de bataillon. Vous
irez à Anvers, vous y ferez joint par les patriotes Hol-
landais, qui doivent vous apporter des cartes, et vous
guider, ayant reconnu eux-mêmes toutes les facilités
de cette expedition. Le Ministre de la Marine donne
ordre de préparer des fourneaux et des grils sur chacune
des trois chaloupes canonnières, pour pouvoir tirer à bou-
lets rouges. Ces trois batimens tirent peu d'eau, et
chasseront facilement les frégates, par la supériorité
de leur calibre de vingt-quatre, et par leurs boulets
rouges.”

“ courier,

“courier, to inform me of the difficulty of
“facility which may present itself in the
“execution of the plan. This you will
“know to a certainty, when you have seen
“the Dutch patriots, and have examined
“their maps and their projects. *The whole
“depends on promptitude and secrecy.”* (52)

Now, when we consider that the States
General had hitherto observed the most
strict neutrality, that they not only had
given no indications of a design of attack-

(52) “Arrangez aussi dans votre plan, que Desfiers
fassent à Bruges un rassemblement de quatre à cinq
mille hommes d’infanterie, avec quatre pieces de
douze, deux cens hommes de cavalerie, deux obusiers,
deux canons de quatre par bataillon, et se porte avec
la plus grande promptitude à Middlebourg et de là dans
l’isle de Cadland, et Biervliet. Expédiez moi un cou-
rier pour me donner connoissance de ce qui se rencon-
trera d’obstacles, ou de facilités, dans l’exécution de
ce plan. C’est ce que vous saurez positivement, quand
vous aurez vu les patriotes Hollandais, et que vous
aurez examiné leurs cartes et leurs projets. *Tout dé-
pend de la promptitude et du secret.”*

ing France, but on the contrary, on the supposition that the neutrality, which they themselves had observed, would secure them from an attack on the part of any other power, had taken no measures to put their garrison towns on the frontiers in a proper state of defence, we must acknowledge that the order of the Executive Council, which was given on the 10th of January, was an act of perfidy, which very little accorded with the boasted magnanimity of the French rulers, or with the declaration at that time too generally believed, that they fought only for their own preservation, and the political liberty of France. It was in fact worse than an *open* declaration: for an open declaration gives the attacked power at least a short notice of the intended hostilities, whereas the *secret* order given by the Executive Council had no other object, than to take a neighbouring country by surprise in the midst of peace. It is true, that the order was not immediately, because General Mi-

rande, as he mentioned in his answer of the 15th of January, (53) could not instantly

(53) Je crois votre plan bien difficile à exécuter, dans la situation de nudité et manque absolu de magasins, où nos armées se trouvent. Correspondence du Général Miranda, etc. p. 8. On the receipt of this letter, the Executive Council came on the 18th of January to the following resolution, which was communicated to General Dumouriez: "Le Conseil Exécutif provisoire, Général, a reçu la lettre que vous lui avez écrite concernant l'opération de la Zélande, avec la copie de celle du Général Miranda. Le Conseil, après avoir délibéré sur leur contenu, a arrêté qu'il ferait surcrois de nouveau à l'expédition projetée sur la Zélande, et il vous prie de le mander au Général Miranda, en y ajoutant, qu'il désirerait que ce Général attendît les patriotes Hollandais, qui doivent se rendre à Liege, et qu'il prit des mesures pour vérifier les dispositions annoncées des Zélandais et leurs différens rapports. Le Général Miranda conservera d'ailleurs la disposition des troupes qui ont été mises en mouvement pour cette opération, et qui sont hors du territoire Français."

b. p. 10. The expression "de nouveau" affords an additional proof, that even before the 10th of January an invasion of Holland had been in agitation; and last period clearly shews, that the execution of the order given on that day was not abandoned, but merely postponed. This is further confirmed by Dumouriez's letter to Miranda of the 22nd.

put his troops in motion on account of the want of magazines; but this circumstance is of no more importance to our present inquiry, than when, after a *public* declaration of war, a general, to whom orders for an attack are sent by his government, does not find himself in a situation to comply with them at the instant. In our judgment of French politics, therefore, the whole depends on the time of the order, and not on the time of its execution. Consequently it must be admitted, that the Executive Council, on the 10th of January, 1793, declared itself in a state of war with Holland.

But France, by declaring itself in a state of war with Holland, virtually declared itself in a state of war with England. The common interest, and the mutual obligations, which it is said: "Je vous ai mandé, mon cher Miranda, que j'abandonnai comme vous le projet de Zélande, mais c'est une raison de plus de pousser très-vivement celui de l'attaque de Mâstricht, Venlo

which then united these two countries, (54) made them really *one* nation, in regard to an invasion on the part of France: and an attack on Holland in January, 1793, was as much an attack on Great Britain, as a declaration of war against Holland in the present year would be a declaration of hostilities against France. This was not unknown to the National Convention; and accordingly, when war was *openly* declared three weeks afterwards, it was declared against Great Britain and Holland at the same time. Brissot likewise acknowledged in his speech of the 1st of February, that a declaration of hostilities against the British Government alone involved in it a similar declaration against that of Holland: (55) consequently, as the converse of this proposition must be

(54) See what has been said in the eleventh chapter on this subject.

(55) Brissot's own words were, "En déclarant, que la France est en guerre avec le Gouvernement Anglois, c'est déclarer qu'elle l'est avec le Stadthouder". Monit. 3 Feb. 1793.

equally true with the proposition itself, the interest being common, and the obligations mutual, it follows from Brissot's own concessions, that the order of the 10th of January was equivalent to a declaration of hostilities against Great Britain. Further, that the rulers of France not only had their eyes constantly fixed on these two countries at the same time, but that it was their design to make the ruin of the one subservient to the ruin of the other, appears both from their speeches and actions. "Assurances, that I received at this time from Paris," says Mr. Miles, (56) speaking of the 18th of January, 1793, "convinced me that the great object of the Executive Council was to throw
" this country into an insurrection, and that
" the explosion was expected to happen first
" in Ireland. *The projected invasion of Hol-*
" *land*, preceded by the opening of the
" Scheldt, as a preparatory step to the fall of
" Amsterdam, were measures that would

“not have been attempted, but for the firm
 “persuasion that the people in England
 “were on the eve of revolt, and that a revo-
 “lution would inevitably happen the very
 “instant, if not sooner, that war was de-
 “clared. The entire conduct of the Con-
 “vention, and of its Executive Council, the
 “efforts of private individuals, *all tended to*
 “*this solitary but important object.*” In what
 manner the conquest of Holland was to
 be made subservient to the destruction of
 England, may be seen in two passages of
 Chauffard’s *Memoirs*. The one, by which
 it appears that the bank of England was
 to be ruined by certain finance operations
 in Holland, has been already quoted in this
 chapter. (57) The other passage, which
 Chauffard has taken from a speech delivered
 in the National Convention, shews not only
 that the members of the Convention re-
 garded the fall of Holland as a preparatory
 step to the fall of England, but, that they

(57) Note 25.

were well aware, their views were not unknown to the English Government. For the orator, speaking of England and Prussia, said: "These two powers well know that France has the greatest interest to substitute a popular and representative government to the aristocratic and degenerate one, that actually exists in Holland: *that, with the forces of that country, France would irrevocably destroy the commerce of England, and, by means of its navy, soon command the Baltic; that nothing more would be wanting, than a renewal, in that part of the North, of an alliance of situation then become necessary; and, that after an intimate Union of France and Holland, the supremacy of the English commerce in the two Indies would rapidly disappear.*" (58)

(58) "Ces deux puissances savent très-bien que la France a la plus grande intérêt à substituer un gouvernement populaire et représentatif au gouvernement aristocratique actuel et dégénéré de la Hollande; *qu'avec les forces de ce pays, la France écraserait sans retour les forces de l'Angleterre, et qu'avec ses forces navales*

Under these circumstances it would have been perfectly justifiable, to have declared war against France in the middle of January, 1793. The existence of the British empire was now at stake: for not only had the plan been laid for its destruction, but the wheels of the machine, by which its destruction was to be effected, were already in motion. It was not merely the ruin of an ally, the order for whose political annihilation had been signed on the 10th of January: It was not merely the loss of a balance of power, or the effects of an aggrandizement, which might be dangerous to Britain at a future period; it was the immediate downfall of Britain itself, of its constitution, its laws, its liberty, its commerce, which was now in agitation, and in agitation by

elle dominerait bientôt dans la Baltique; qu'il faudrait que renouer dans cette partie du Nord la liaison de situation, dès-lors rendue nécessaire après l'intime union de la France et de la Hollande, la suprématie du commerce anglais dans les mers du Nord paraîtrait rapidement." Crauff. p. 2

enterprising, a restless, and implacable foe. The measure of iniquity was already full; yet the British Government, desirous of maintaining peace to the very last, still waited with patience till the measure was not only full, but overflowed. That Ministers, therefore, precipitated their country in a war with France, is an opinion, which nothing but party malevolence could suggest.

Lastly, within three days after the order was signed for the invasion of Holland, the National Convention decreed, that in addition to the twenty-two ships of the line, and the thirty-two frigates, which were already in actual service, thirty ships of the line and twenty frigates should be instantly in commission, beside forty five ships of the line and frigates, which were ordered to depart with the utmost dispatch. (59) Now

the two first articles of the decree of the 13th 3, are as follows

Le ministre de la Marine donnera incontinent