NARRATIVE

OF

THE EXPEDITION TO HOLLAND,

&c. &c.

A

NARRATIVE

OF THE

EXPEDITION TO HOLLAND,

IN

THE AUTUMN OF THE YEAR 1799;

ILLUSTRATED WITH

A MAP OF NORTH HOLLAND,

AND

SEVEN VIEWS

OF

THE PRINCIPAL PLACES OCCUPIED BY THE BRITISH FORCES.

By E. WALSH, M. D.

SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

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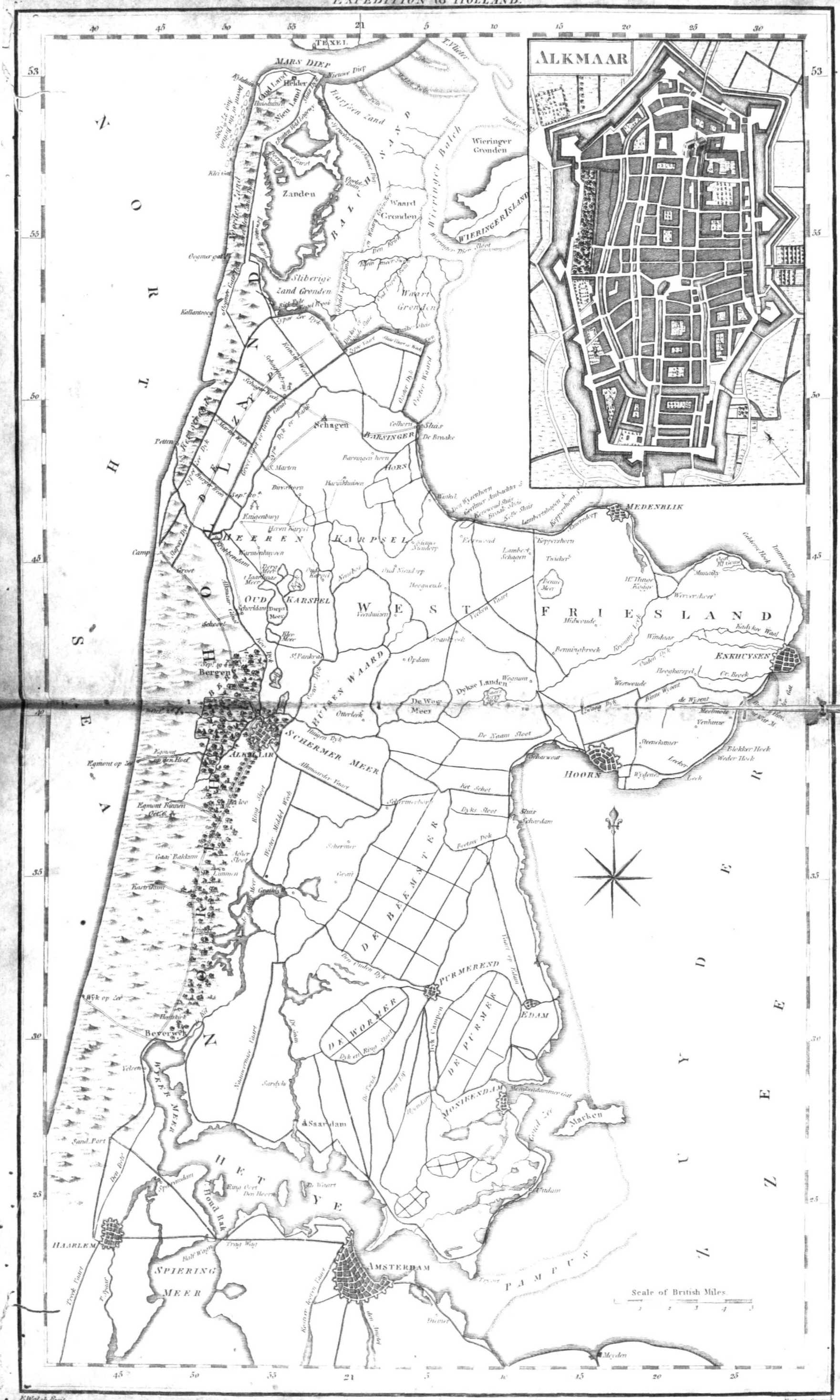
1800.

A MAP of NORTH HOLLAND including WEST FRIESLAND, illustrative of the EXPEDITION to HOLLAND.



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The author was Asst. Surgeon of the 29th on this Expedition.— He was afterwards Surgeon of the at Copenhagen in 1801.— He died in Dublin the 7th February 1832.

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THE late Expedition to Holland naturally excited a very lively interest in the public mind during its progress, and no small share of inquisitive curiosity respecting its final issue. The author of the following Narrative, however, cannot promise that he has been enabled completely to gratify this curiosity;—in truth, he has no pretensions whatsoever to boast of extraordinary information, derived from high authorities, or from any particular authenticated documents, other than those which have been already published, and which will be found collected in the Appendix.

This work, indeed, is nothing more than a journal, a little altered, so as to admit an account of various transactions and incidents connected with the subject, but which could not possibly altogether fall under the daily observance of any single person.

From this candid avowal, it will not be expected that the publication can be totally free from errors and mis-statements. For any such, the author must deem himself responsible; but he expects and hopes they will be found neither numerous nor important.

The various situations in which the author was placed, while in Holland, presented him with many obvious and favourable occasions for remark, of which he was not unmindful to avail himself. He was among the foremost of those who landed in the country, and among the last who left it.

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History has been but too justly censured, for betraying rather the opinions of the writer, than giving a true and unprejudiced detail of incidents; and the truth of the annals of mankind is more frequently trusted to the naked chronological series of events than to the historic page. If this remark be applicable to former celebrated historians, who have treated of subjects remote in time and of foreign relation, with how much more propriety will it apply to those who treat of contemporary and domestic concerns, at a period in which party is bigoted, and opinion is despotic!

The author, aware of this capital failing, has endeavoured to clothe his narrative in the simplest colouring, free from any prevailing or partial tints, as far as his judgment would permit. He professes to have no cause to serve but that of Truth,—no interests to promote but those of Justice.

The Map of North Holland, prefixed to the work, was reduced from a Dutch map on a large scale, in which the topographical situations of towns, villages, dykes, and canals, were laid down from actual measurement; but to avoid the confusion which would ensue from crowding such a number of parts in such contracted limits, the principal of these only have been retained.

The views were all sketched on the spot; and, besides being illustrative of the work, they are recommended by their novelty; inasmuch as North Holland is one of the very few countries on the continent of Europe which have hitherto escaped the researches of the tourist.

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TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

IN revising this work for a second edition, the author has been obligingly assisted by some British Officers, as distinguished for rank as abilities, who bore an active part in the late Expedition; and he feels great satisfaction in being enabled to mention, that the general statements have been found so near the truth, and the details so accurate and circumstantial, that little room is left for further additions or corrections.

It is hoped, notwithstanding, this edition will be found to be considerably improved. It has been corrected with minute attention; several interesting incidents are added; and the Appendix is augmented by some official papers, with a view of more completely elucidating the subject.

INTRODUCTION.

NATIONS, like individuals, are frequently indebted for their characters to local situations, first impressions, and early habits. The insulated flat lands, forming the *delta* of the Rhine, were originally colonised by a German tribe, called the *Battæ*; and thence their new country was named *Batavia*.

Amongst the many free and courageous nations that peopled the north of Europe, the Batavians were remarkable for their courage and their love of freedom; and when all Germany at length submitted to the superior discipline of the Roman arms, these civilising conquerors distinguished the Batavians above all the rest, by leaving them in full possession of their laws and customs, and requiring only military service. This service was cheerfully and ably performed. The eminent good conduct and singular bravery of the Batavian legions contributed to prop the declining empire, and for a long time retarded its fall.

The feudal power rose on the ruins of Rome: even under that slavish and oppressive system of government, the Batavians preserved a comparative portion of freedom. Their chiefs, or counts, seem

to have been actuated by far more generous and liberal notions than those which prevailed, at that time, on the continent of Europe; and the Batavian people themselves, from the very beginning of their political existence, turned their attention to commercial pursuits; to which they were impelled, as much by the love of liberty and independence which commerce inspires, as by the physical situation of their country.

In 1477, the government of the Low Countries devolved to the House of Austria, in consequence of the marriage of the emperor Maximilian with the heiress of Burgundy, who was countess of Holland, and had the Netherlands for her dowry; and in 1555, the sovereignty was resigned by the emperor Charles V. in favour of his son, Philip II. of Spain.

The ever-memorable resistance to the coercive measures of that cruel and bigoted tyrant laid the foundation of the republic of the Seven United Provinces. Great military talents, discipline, and perseverance, were opposed by heroic courage, and the enthusiasm of liberty. Murders, massacres, public executions, and private assassinations of characters pre-eminent for rank, virtue, and abilities, together with repeated violations of public faith and honour,—all these odious means were employed in aid of the fair appeal of arms, to subjugate a people who were resolved not to survive the loss of their liberties.

It is worthy of remark, that the first effectual resistance to the progress of the Spanish arms was made by the people of North Hol-

land. The city of Haarlem sustained a siege of eight months, which has few parallels in history. Reduced at length, by every privation, to the last extremity, it was compelled to submit on terms of capitulation, which, however, were basely broken by that execrable executioner of merciless tyranny, the duke of Alva, who gave up the town to pillage, and its brave inhabitants to indiscriminate slaughter. —Alkmaar was more fortunate than Haarlem; for, after having made several desperate assaults, and kept the trenches open for three months, the Spaniards were forced to raise the siege with great loss.

But other causes contributed, with the undaunted courage and fortitude of the inhabitants, to establish the independence of the Seven United Provinces. The reformation, pushed on in the ardour of inquiry to the very verge of fanaticism, by the impetuous Calvin, found a congenial spirit in the Hollanders, and confirmed their natural habits of freedom; for it is generally allowed that the Calvinistic tenets are more favourable to republicanism than those of any other sect.—To the rejection, therefore, of the reformation by the ten provinces of the Low Countries, and to its reception by the other seven, may be ascribed the success of the one and the failure of the other, in their respective efforts to shake off the Spanish yoke. But all these causes combined, though supported by the talents and virtues of that illustrious patriot William I. prince of Orange, must have been ultimately ineffectual against the gigantic power and immense resources of Spain, had not his exertions been countenanced and aided by two of the wisest, most beneficent, and most powerful sovereigns that ever swayed a sceptre,—Henry the Fourth of France, and queen Elizabeth of England.

The independence of the Seven United Provinces having been at length conceded by Philip III. of Spain in the year 1609, and, at the same time, acknowledged by all the governments of Europe, the republic forthwith began to acquire the most rapid accessions of political strength and population, in consequence of the general persecution of the protestants, in almost every country, where the Roman-catholic faith was the religion of the state. By the revocation of the edict of Nantes, the wealthiest, most industrious, and most enlightened of the persecuted people of France fled into Holland, which they suddenly enriched with their property, ingenuity, and experience. Hence, perhaps, may be deduced the predelictions of the Hollanders for the French, in preference to any other nation. But it was chiefly on the ruin of the Netherlands that the Dutch republic rose to the zenith of power and prosperity. Antwerp, once the emporium of Europe, saw her commerce transferred from the spacious, navigable, and commodious Scheld, to the intricate channels and dangerous shoals of the Zuider Zee; whilst the trade and manufactures of Bruges and Ghent were transplanted to Leyden, Middleburg, and Rotterdam. From the south of Europe too, that unfortunate race, heretofore the devoted victims of persecution, the Jews, found at last their long-sought asylum in Holland, to which, in return, they imported immense wealth, and their own peculiar habits of œconomy and traffic.

The treaty of union, signed at Utrecht in the year 1579, was the basis upon which was erected the irregular but substantial fabric of the constitution of the United Provinces. Conformably to the tenor of this treaty, each province preserved its laws and customs, its magistrates, sovereignty, and independence. But, besides the provinces,

the principal cities, to the number of fifty-six, retained their own interior governments; so that, in reality, each city was itself a republic, pursuing its distinct interests, and being governed by its own magistrates and municipal laws. The government of the towns, however, was completely aristocratical; the legislative power was vested in a senate, and the executive in burgomasters and syndics. All these magistrates held their offices *during* life, and were chosen from among a privileged class of the citizens.

The constitutions of the provincial states, which, collectively considered, formed the vital principle of the whole political body, differed more or less from each other.

The province of Holland, which, in wealth, population, and political importance, equals all the rest, sent nineteen deputies to the general provincial assemblage. The first deputy represented the nobles of the province, the eighteen others as many cities; for, although this flourishing province contains thirty-seven cities, amongst which may be reckoned the Hague, yet only eighteen were invested with the right of deputing representatives; and of these, the Hague itself, the seat of government, was not one; nor had Amsterdam, with its immense population and commerce, and its vast contributions to the public expenditure, more weight or authority in the general representation, so far as regarded its vote, than the little obscure city of Purmerend.

The constitutions of Guelderland, Utrecht, and Zealand, did not considerably differ from that of Holland. In Zealand the nobility

had become extinct. Guelderland and Utrecht, partaking of the customs and manners of the neighbouring circle of Westphalia, retained longest the remnants of feudality, and supported a race of hereditary but indigent nobles. In the former, the nobles who possessed baronial manors formed half the states, the other half being composed of representatives of the cities; and in Utrecht, eight deputies of the clergy had seats in the provincial representation; but these representatives of the church were laymen, who possessed the revenues that formerly belonged to the five chapters of the province.

In the country parts of the provinces of Over-Yssel and Groningen the people had a share in the elections, but the government of the towns was aristocratical.

The constitution of Friesland, however, differed materially from all the rest. In this province there never was any nobility. The representation consisted of four members; one for the cities, and three for the country. The country was divided into cantonments or bailiwicks, in which every individual, possessing so many acres of landed property, acquired the right of voting for a representative. The electors, therefore, were composed of all descriptions, peasants, burghers, citizens, and gentlemen. In fine, the rights of election in Friesland seem not to have been different from those of England. Indeed Sir William Temple alleges, that this province was the parent, not only of the language of England, to which its dialect is similar at this day, but of its customs, laws, and constitution. East Friesland had its own stadtholder, until it was incorporated with the other provinces, under the stadtholderate of William the Fourth.

The privileges and interests of the provinces were the prime objects of provincial representation; but their union was collectively represented by a more dignified assembly, called *the States-General*. The states-general were composed of delegates from every province; but though each province had the right of sending as many as it chose, yet, on the ultimate decision of a measure, there was but one vote for each province.

The states-general bore the exterior marks of sovereignty, but it was not the sovereign power of the republic; that power was really vested in the provincial states, who alone could enact laws, make war and peace, levy taxes, raise soldiers, and nominate the greater number of the highest offices, civil and military. The states-general had the sole prerogative of appointing commanders of the fleet.

The last branch of this singularly constructed commonwealth was the council of state and the stadtholder. The council of state, like the other assemblies, was formed of deputies of provinces: the deputation, however, was more equally divided; Utrecht, Over-Yssel, and Groningen, sent each one deputy; Guelderland, Zealand, and Friesland, two each; and the province of Holland sent three. The stadtholder had likewise a seat and vote in this council.

The office of stadtholder, which had no resemblance of any other chief-magistracy in the world, requires more particular consideration. The stadtholder was an officer of state peculiar to the Low Countries, and existed there long before the union and independence of the Seven United Provinces. This magistrate was then only the deputy-governor of a province, acting with delegated power under the count or

duke who was the sovereign. William the First, prince of Orange, was invested with the magistracy by his liege lord Philip the Second: afterwards, when, by the virtue and talents of William and his son Maurice, the Dutch were enabled to emancipate themselves from the Spanish yoke, they established the office in the house of Orange. It is not very evident, that the stadtholderate was, at first, intended to be either perpetual or hereditary: it appears rather to have been an occasional power, created on grand emergencies, like the dictatorship of ancient Rome. Indeed the republic seems to have dispensed with this office, without any apparent violation of the constitution, at one time, for twenty-two years, when it was abolished by the perpetual edict; and again, on the elevation of William III. to the throne of Great Brirain, for a period of forty-five years, on that prince having abdicated, with little self-satisfaction, the republican chief-magistracy for the regal power.

But the necessity of a chief magistrate to connect and consolidate a constitution composed of such various materials is sufficiently apparent, and was fully admitted by the states themselves in the preamble to the instrument by which they conferred their first authority on the prince of Orange. It sets forth, "That all republics and "communities ought to preserve, maintain, and fortify themselves "by unanimity, which being impossible to be kept up always by so "many members often differing in inclination and sentiments, it is "consequently necessary that the government should be placed in "one single chief magistrate," &c.

On the great national concerns of peace and war, alliances and taxation, the stadtholder had only a single voice in the council of state.

On the other hand, he was hereditary captain-general of the army, and high-admiral of the navy of the republic, with the appointment of army commissions, up to a colonel, inclusive. In the provinces of Utrecht, Guelderland, and Over-Yssel, he might change and augment at pleasure the several members of the state; but, in the four remaining provinces, he could only nominate the magistrates from amongst a number that had been previously elected. Finally, the stadtholder was allowed, by the constitution, to judge and advise respecting the affairs of the united republic, and to interpose his authority in any disputes that might arise amongst the cities and provinces, from local interests, or a misconstruction of the fundamental articles of the union. In the year 1749, the power of the stadtholder was augmented, and his prerogatives and office better defined. He was created governor-general and supreme director of the East and West-India Companies, by which he obtained a great accession of influence and patronage.

From a government thus constructed, it is not difficult to account for the indecision and ruinous delays that impeded its operations, and frequently rendered its measures null and abortive. Before a measure could be put in execution, the proceedings on it were obliged to be transmitted to the particular states of the provinces: by them they were sent to be examined by their respective constituents; they were then to be returned to their provincial states, and thence to their states-general: where, after all this precaution, if the affair in question were of primary concern that related to the united republic, it was necessary that it should be carried unanimously; for it was lost by a single dissentient voice.

Nevertheless, such a constitution seemed admirably adapted to the nature of the country, and the character of the people. It was the true interest of the Dutch to be at peace with their neighbours; whatever were the means that might procrastinate a declaration of war, were, for them, salutary. On the other hand, when their interests compelled them to wage war, as it was necessarily an unanimous measure, no nation on earth has carried it on with more pertinacious constancy and courage;—qualities, which their enemies, with a view of lessening them, have been accustomed to term *obstinacy*. For nearly two centuries the Dutch have maintained themselves in an unprecedented continuance of political happiness and national prosperity. At one period they were indisputably the first maritime power in the world. They terrified the navies of Spain and Portugal within their own ports. They successfully combated the combined fleets of France and England. They wrested from the English the sovereignty of the ocean. They colonised the West, and monopolised the East. Whilst they carried their triumphant flag from Nova Zembla to Cape Horn, and from the British Isles to those of Japan.

It may be useful, and cannot be uninteresting, to trace the causes of their present misery and degradation, as it may tend to justify the efforts of the British government in its attempt to restore that form of constitution, under which they had so long and so greatly prospered.

Notwithstanding the limited power and moderate privileges annexed to the stadtholderate, that office of the state was, at all times,

regarded by the aristocracy with jealousy and distrust. On the other hand, the army and navy, from principle and affection, were attached to the House of Orange; and the people, for a long period, in the history of the United Provinces, inclined to its interests; so much so, indeed, that their sudden, powerful, but unwarrantable interference, in two important instances, restored the stadtholderate, which in both had been abolished by the predominant power of the aristocracy*

Thus a political schism was engendered in the bosom of the state, which, more than once, nearly effected its ruin: and thus it was, that the same causes, which, by a steady and gradual progress, established a third estate in the constitution of England, produced a similar effect in Holland. The people, who hitherto had no share in the constitution, began to find they possessed some weight, as their favour and support were assiduously cultivated, at the same time, by the cabinet of the Hague, and the provincial aristocracies.

But a prime cause of the misfortunes of the republic was the unaccountable partiality the Dutch had shown, on all occasions, for political connexions with France, in preference to England; unaccountable on any other score than that of commercial jealousy, and national rivalry; inasmuch as the United Provinces were indebted to

* When Holland was invaded by the armies of Lewis XIV. in 1672, the people, having risen at Dort and the Hague, caused the prince of Orange to be declared stadtholder, and massacred his two powerful opponents—the Dutch Gracchi—the De Wits. Afterwards, in 1747, the office was again restored by means of another insurrection, in consequence of the invasion of Dutch Brabant by marshal Saxe.

England not only for their original independence and subsequent prosperity, but for her unremitting friendship and protection to preserve them in that state.

Although the Engliſh influence predominated in Holland, on the restoration of William the Fourth to the stadtholderate, in the year 1748, yet, by the death of that prince, and a long minority succeeding, the French party once more gained the ascendency; ſo that, on the breaking out of the American war, the measures which the Dutch republic purſued, on that momentous event, were unfriendly, if not openly hoſtile, to Great Britain. It eagerly embraced the ſcheme of the armed neutrality; and, under its ſanction, ſupplied the enemies of England with the materials of warfare. Thus a rupture between two powers, whoſe political views and intereſts ought for ever to be inſeparable, became unavoidable. The ruinous conſequences of that war continued after the general peace, and gave a fatal blow to a conſtitution, that for two centuries had ſurmounted ſuch formidable obſtacles, and ſecured ſuch unparalleled proſperity to a people. On the plea that the ſtadtholder had ſacrificed the intereſts of his country to his connexions with the court of St. James, and his partiality for the Engliſh nation, the republican party proceeded to entrench upon his conſtitutional prerogatives. As captain-general of the land forces, the army, not leſs from duty than affection, were attached to his cauſe. Of this poſt he was deprived; and, under the pretext of ſtrengthening the military forces of the republic againſt the unjuſt proceedings of the emperor, relative to his claims of the Scheld, but, in reality, to oppoſe the troops in the prince's intereſts, a new volunteer army was ſuddenly created, raiſed from

among the citizens and burghers throughout all the cities, towns, and villages of the seven provinces.

This new armed power soon discovered its own strength. The success of the Americans, in breaking the ties of connexion with their old government, loosened those of all others. A vigorous and aspiring democracy was, at once, established in Holland, whose claims and pretensions were now reluctantly admitted by the aristocratic party, not only from an inability to refuse them, but from a combination of interests in one grand object, that of abrogating the stadtholderate. In most of the cities and provinces, therefore, delegates, chosen by the people, were elected into the provincial states; in some of which they reckoned upon a majority of democratic members. At this critical conjuncture, the stadtholderians were not depressed or inactive; they had secured the army and navy; but their chief dependence was on the support of England and Prussia, whilst the hopes of their adversaries, on the protection and assistance of France, were less probably founded.

At length the opposite parties came to an open rupture. It was found expedient to remove the prince of Orange's court from the Hague to Nimeguen. The cities of Amsterdam, Haarlem, Alkmaar, Dort, Leyden, and Utrecht, took the lead in the opposition. The latter city, in particular, was most violent; and, in an attempt made by the troops of the stadtholder to seise the advanced post of Jutphaas, they were repulsed by the armed burghers of Utrecht. Thus the flames of civil war had actually been lighted up in the Seven United Provinces.

The king of Prussia was not an indifferent spectator of these proceedings; he only waited a plausible occasion to march an army into Holland. This occasion fortunately very soon presented itself. The princess of Orange, his sister, was arrested near Schoonhoven, on her journey from Nimeguen to the Hague, and detained as a prisoner for two days in that town. The states of Holland made a show of justifying the arrest: upon which his Prussian majesty, to punish the public affront of his sister, collected an army of 20,000 men in September, 1787, and placed it under the command of the duke of Brunswick. The duke immediately set out from the duchy of Cleves, entered the province of Holland at Arnheim, and marched directly towards the capital. After a short, vigorous, but ineffectual attempt of the burghers of Amsterdam to defend the approaches to that city, the republican party, not finding that assistance from France upon which they had founded their last hope, submitted, with as good a grace as they could, "to the re-establish-"ment of the tottering constitution." At the intercession of the princess of Orange, the affront of her arrest was pardoned; a general amnesty was proclaimed; the constitution was restored to its primitive form, and the stadtholder re-established in all his privileges and prerogatives; in the peaceable possession of which he was guaranteed by the governments of England and Prussia.

Such was the state of the Seven United Provinces at the commencement of the French revolution. The Dutch republicans, during all their struggles for power, were accustomed to look up to monarchical France for assistance and protection. What then must have been their secret exultation, at seeing the throne, and all the

authorities emanating from it, at once overturned and destroyed, and a congenial democracy usurping its powers? The Anti-orangists, however, possessing the constitutional apathy of Dutchmen, were enabled to keep under the ebullition of their spirits, and to await, in apparent tranquillity and forbearance, a favourable opportunity to co-operate with their friends in France. That opportunity, as will be seen, anticipated their most sanguine expectations. Meanwhile, the several governments of Europe, particularly such as were situated nearest the revolutionary conflagration, were preparing to guard against and divert its terrible approaches. The Dutch republic, although its obvious interests were neutrality and peace, found itself irresistibly hurried into the vortex of this formidable anti-revolutionary alliance. The Dutch government saw its danger without a possibility of escaping it; and scarcely could the threatened opening of the Scheld, that old bone of contention, backed by the pressing remonstrances of the allied powers, extort from its tardy councils a cautious and feeble manifesto. That, however, formed a sufficient pretext to include the states-general and the prince of Orange in the list of enemies against whom the French convention thought proper to declare war.

The Dutch fight sturdily when actuated by emotions of interest or dislike; but, in the present instance, the nominal assistance of their forces, to the allies, was worse than negative. On the first disaster at Dunkirk, the Dutch troops ran off, in a body, and never halted until they got within their own frontier; and, on the subsequent reverses of the allied armies, the conduct of the Dutch was not merely disaffected to the common cause,—it was openly hostile.

The recollection of the calamitous retreat from Nimeguen to Bremen never fails to awaken the most painful sensations; and the treatment our soldiers experienced from the Hollanders, during that dreadful march through part of their country, cannot be thought of by those brave men, who have survived their sufferings, but with the most lively indignation*. What followed it was not difficult to foresee; the French entered Holland, and were received there, not as conquerors, but deliverers. They had the address and policy, even while exacting their requisitions, to respect the private property, the customs, and the prejudices of the inhabitants; and, though outrages and disorder could not fail to have been committed by an invading army, yet the general demeanour and conduct of the enemy were, comparatively, so just, moderate, and conciliating, that the Dutch became as much enamoured of their newly-assumed character as they were already prepossessed in favour of their new principles.

No sooner had the allied armies retired from the United Provinces, and the French advanced, than the democracy assumed the powers of government. The example had been given, for some time before, by the province of Friesland; which, indeed, might be deemed, from the first charter of the union, a distinct republic, federatively but not constitutionally connected with the rest.

On this trying occasion, the stadtholder did all that could be ex-

* Instances are told of actual murders having been perpetrated on our wounded men, who were left behind in the Dutch churches. But these stories are scarcely credible. That they suffered from still more cruel neglect, is more probable. Such reports, however, having been circulated in the army, during the late expedition, gave very unfavourable impressions of Dutch humanity and hospitality.

pected from a prince in his desperate circumstances, without the means of enforcing his authority. He set forth manifestoes and proclamations, exhorting the people to rise in a mass. But the populace, which heretofore supported the cause of the House of Orange, now deserted it. The prince, therefore, finding all further exertions fruitless, having previously sent off his family and effects, embarked himself, not without difficulty and opposition, at Scheveling, on board an open boat, navigated by three men, and arrived safe at Harwich on the 21st January, 1795.

A provisional government for the Seven United Provinces, like that of the convention of France, was established by the ruling party, whose first act was to conclude an alliance offensive and defensive with the French republic; while the long connexion and friendship between Great Britain and Holland ended with a mutual declaration of war, and an immediate commencement of hostilities. The French government having new-clothed and fed for six months its army in Holland, withdrew it. The strong places, however, on the southern frontier were garrisoned with French troops, in order to be retained by France until a general peace.

In the year 1797, a representative government, not greatly different in form and principles from the late directorial one of France, excepting that it recognises the obligation on religious worship in the state, superseded the conventional government; whilst the title of THE BATAVIAN REPUBLIC was, in future, to designate the Seven United Provinces. Hence, therefore, the partisans of the new con-

stitution, and of the French connexion, began insensibly to lose their former appellatives of patriot and democrat, and to be known by their newly-restored ancient name of *Batavian*.

It must be confessed, that the new-modelled government has displayed an energy and activity in opposing the numerous and formidable dangers which assail it on every side, not usual with the torpid proceedings of Dutch councils. These exertions are the more remarkable, as the directorial form of government was imposed on the Hollanders by a foreign power, and is likely to take root in Holland, after it has been overturned by the fickle and restless nation by whom it was at first instituted.

Although there has been less bloodshed, outrage, and change of property in Holland, during its revolutionary transit from the old to the new order of things, than took place in contemporary revolutions, because the aberrations were neither so great nor so sudden, and the people themselves were of a less impassioned character, yet the consequences have been highly calamitous and ruinous to the Dutch nation. Abroad, their navy has been annihilated, their colonies possessed, and their commerce destroyed by their old allies, whilst their wealth, and moveable property, at home, have fallen a prey to the requisitional plunder of their new friends. In fine, there is nothing valuable remaining to the republic, but the dykes, the sluices, and the water-works, to which the soil is indebted for its existence. But as these artificial means of preservation require continual repairs, and the exterior resources which commerce can alone

supply, the country already exhibits symptoms of relapsing into that primitive state of morass and inundation in which it was found fifteen hundred years ago, when the intrepid Batavians first conceived the bold and arduous project of giving stability to the quicksands of the Rhine, and limiting the incursions of the ocean.

A

NARRATIVE,

&c. &c.

THE affairs of the British empire having proved remarkably prosperous in the early part of the year 1799, by her critical and decisive naval victories, and by the complete suppression of rebellion and insurrection at home,—a great military force remained, without any immediate object to engage its operations, at the disposal and direction of government.

About the middle of the summer very active preparations for some impending and important service became general throughout the army. A camp was formed at Shirley-Common, near Southampton; all the regiments of the line on duty in Ireland were embarked, with the greatest possible dispatch, and at the most convenient ports, chiefly at Cork, for England; and those that were ordered first for service had their full complements of men made up from skeleton regiments, which last were afterwards wholly recruited, many of them with additional battalions, by volunteers from the English militia, conformably to a recent act of parliament made expressly for that purpose.

All these preparations began very much to engage and interest the public mind, whilst, from the appearance of bustle and secrecy with which the armament was conducted, it acquired the name of the *Secret Expedition*.

Indeed so long as the place of rendez-vous continued to be near Southampton, it might reasonably enough give rise to a variety of conjectures respecting its final destination. Accordingly, the coasts of Brittany, Portugal, and the Mediterranean, were severally mentioned, together with Holland and the Netherlands, as the supposed objects of the intended expedition. But when, at the latter end of June, the camp broke up at Shirley-Common, and the troops marched into Kent, and encamped on Barham-Downs, while transports were collecting at the different neighbouring ports, there was no longer a divided opinion as to its object and destination: it began to be universally believed that it was intended for Holland.

The French and Dutch governments seem to have been early apprised of the projected invasion; nor could it well have been otherwise, as the correspondence that was necessarily kept up with the Dutch loyalists, for the purpose of concerting with them on the best and speediest modes of re-establishing their former constitution and government, could not long have escaped the suspicion and vigilance of the existing government. Indeed, so early as in the month of June last, the enemy seemed to have penetrated the design of the expedition, and they immediately began to adopt the most active measures to counteract and defeat it. Their military force in the Netherlands was

suddenly augmented by means of conscripts; an army of observation was stationed along the coast of Flanders, from Dunkirk to Ostend; the fortifications in the island of Walcheren, and at the mouths of the Scheld, were repaired and strengthened; and a French army began forthwith to be organised in Holland under the command of general Brune.

On the part of the expedition no time was to be lost, as the season was fast approaching when the most wisely planned and best conducted military operations were liable to be defeated by the elements alone. Of this government seemed to be sufficiently aware, for the equipment and embarkation of the first division were pushed on with the utmost vigour and celerity. On the 8th of August the camp on Barham-Downs broke up; and the troops collected there marched off the ground to Margate, Ramsgate, Deal, and Dover, preparatory to their embarkation.

The first division of troops for this service was unquestionably composed of the flower of the British army. It consisted chiefly of old regiments whose courage and conduct had been proved on former occasions, and who were inured to a military life, and disciplined by actual service in various climates; the several brigades were commanded by experienced generals; and the commander in chief was an officer who had devoted a long life to the service of his country, during which, on many trying occasions, in different countries, he was distinguished for his courage and ability, and the most unblemished reputation. The whole effective military force of the

first division amounted in round numbers to about fifteen thousand men

From the 9th to the 13th August the troops were occupied in embarking on board the transports and men of war at their respective stations; and on the morning of Tuesday, the 13th of August, the whole fleet, amounting to upwards of 200 sail of every description of vessels, under the command of vice-admiral Mitchel, who hoisted his flag on board the Isis, put to sea with the most favourable auspices. The weather, which had previously been very inclement for the season, had now the appearance of becoming settled. The day itself was uncommonly fine, the wind was as fair as could be wished, and the whole armament, on getting under way, was accompanied by the prayers, the wishes, and the hopes of millions; not merely arising from patriotic or national emotions, but from feelings of friendship and affection, in consequence of the widely-extended relative connexions of those who were embarked or concerned in it.

Towards evening, the several divisions of the fleet were united, and the whole armament, which now nearly covered the straits, held

* The following is a detail of the forces which composed the first division. Sir Ralph Abercrombie, K. B. commander in chief. Sir James Pulteney, K. B. second in command.

First brigade, two battalions guards; major-general D'Oyley.

Second brigade, two battalions guards; major-general Burrard.

Third brigade, 2d, 27th, 29th, 69th, and 85th regiments; major-general Coote.

Fourth brigade, 1st royals, 25th, 49th, 79th, and 92d regiments, (the two last Highland); major-general Moore.

Reserve attached to third brigade, 23d and 55th regiments; two troops 18th light dragoons; colonel Macdonald.

A detachment of the flying artillery and of the [illegible] of engineers.

a north-easterly course, with a pleasant and favourable breeze. During the night, the fleet had made fast approaches to the coast of Zealand; and on the following day, the weather having assumed a very threatening appearance, the admiral hauled his wind, upon which the whole fleet wore, and held a course north by west. On the 15th August, the wind still blowing fresh, a junction was formed with the north-sea fleet under admiral lord Duncan, who however did not assume the command, which remained with vice-admiral Mitchel. From the 15th to the 20th of August, the weather continued exceedingly stormy, accompanied with squalls and showers. Many of the ships sustained damage, and the fleet was widely scattered and separated. However, the wind having considerably abated on the evening of the 20th, signals were made to collect the scattered ships round the admiral; and on the following day the headmost ships fell in with the coast of Holland, upon which the fleet lay off and on shore all night with a gentle breeze from the west. The next day, 22d, the weather being moderate, the whole fleet came to an anchor, the Texel Roads being distant about five miles. The signal was now given, and every preparation made for landing; but, towards evening, the wind again freshened, and the fleet was compelled to weigh anchor, and to put to sea in the night, it blowing hard on a lee-shore from the south-west.

Nothing could have happened more unfortunately than this disappointment. Although a descent on the coast of Holland was judged, from the very beginning, to be the object of the expedition, yet the particular part of the country chosen for the attempt was known only to the commanders in chief, and remained to the last a profound secret

to all others. It is now, however, generally believed, that the coast of Zealand, either at the entrances of the Meuse or the Scheld, was pitched upon, in the first instance, for the enterprise; and it must be owned that there were many good reasons for this preference.

In that part of the United Provinces the friends of the prince of Orange had concentrated their force, which was considerable and respectable. The neighbouring provinces of Brabant were in a state of insurrection, which held the French in check, and they only waited for a proper occasion to make a powerful diversion. Fine commodious harbours would be secured for our shipping, and an easy and speedy intercourse kept up with England. Finally, in the event of a successful descent and consequent junction with the Orangists, the position which the British army must necessarily have assumed would have broken the connexion between the northern and southern provinces, and have secured a short and easy route, through a fine fertile country, by Rotterdam to the capital. The possession of the Dutch fleet would not, perhaps, have been the immediate consequence, but its surrender must eventually have followed the fate of the country.

It was the near prospect of succeeding, in this last important enterprise, that ultimately determined the descent to take place on the coast of North Holland,—the weather having prevented any prompt and sudden attempt to land in a more southern situation. When, therefore, the armament anchored the first time, near the Texel, the enemy had no suspicion of a descent, and were quite unprepared to oppose an invading army in that quarter. The recurrence of the

The Helder: Point, from . Mars-Diep; Texel Roads.

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storm that forced the armament to put to sea, after having been reviewed by the enemy, must therefore be considered as a very serious misfortune; for if the weather had proved favourable, the disembarkation would have been effected without opposition, and not the Dutch fleet only, but the whole province of North Holland would, in consequence, most probably, have fallen an easy and speedy conquest.

On the other hand, it was fortunate for one grand object of the expedition, that the Dutch admiral, mistrustful of the fidelity of his seamen, did not embrace the favourable opportunity afforded—by the British fleet having been blown off the coast,—of trusting to the chance of the elements in an attempt to make some of the ports of Zealand, or Brest harbour, in which attempt it is probable he might have succeeded, at least, with some of his ships.

On the two following days after leaving the coast, the storm rather increased than abated, and some of the transports were obliged to bear away for England. By this time all the fresh provisions and vegetables in the fleet were consumed; and wine, vinegar, and even water, began to be scarce. Indeed the general aspect of affairs appeared so unpromising, that serious apprehensions were entertained for the fate of the expedition, and the return of the armament to England began to be deemed an event of absolute necessity. However, on the 25th, the general hope was revived by the weather having moderated, and on the morning of the 26th the whole fleet once more came to anchor off the northern extremity of the province of Holland.

The most active exertions were now made to expedite and facilitate the disembarkation, The various descriptions of vessels composing the armament were arranged in the following order. The transports were stationed on the outside; nearest to these were moored the ships of the line; the frigates lay next in order, still nearer the shore; and the armed brigs, cutters, bomb-vessels, and gun-boats, were moored close along-shore, to cover the landing.

While thus, on the eve of the arduous enterprise, every individual was busied in his respective station, not a moment was lost in discovering the situation of the Dutch fleet, and in sounding the disposition of the crews. For this purpose flags of truce passed between the English and Dutch admirals*, and the result proved highly satisfactory as to one grand achievement of the expedition.

At three o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, 27th August, the signal was given for disembarkation, the troops having been previously furnished with sixty rounds of ball-cartridge, and two days' provisions in their haversacks; besides which, their canteens were filled with spirits and water.

To effect a landing on an hostile coast, in the face of an enemy prepared to dispute it, must be allowed to be a bold and hazardous attempt, under the most favourable circumstances: in the present instance it was peculiarly so. The extremity of the province of North

* See admiral lord Duncan's summons, and the answer of admiral Story, in the Appendix.

Holland forms a narrow peninsula, whose west side, where the landing was effected, is washed by the German Ocean; and the northernmost end, whose angle forms the Helder Point, faces the Texel Island: the channel between, called the Mars Diep, is the principal entrance into the Zuider Zee, which sea washes the eastern shore. The Helder Point is a bold bluff beach, from which several piers of huge unhewn stones project into the sea*: it is crowned by a strong battery, called Kyckduyn, which commands the passage to the Texel Roads, but is itself commanded, on the land side, by the heights of Heuysden. From this point the coast stretches due south, presenting to the sea a flat beach, on which a heavy surf breaks even in the calmest weather; but when it blows, no boat can live in an attempt to approach the shore. Ascending from the strand, the land presently rises into sand-hills, which are formed into three irregularly-parallel ranges of unequal heights, the easternmost being the highest. The valleys between are narrow and winding, and the hills, intersected by ravines and defiles, rise into abrupt ridges, which form so many natural redoubts. Between the Sand-Hills and the Zuider Zee, the land extends into a marshy plain, divided by dykes and inundations. About seven miles from the Helder, the road turns off at right angles with the sea-coast, and, passing in front of some farm-houses, leads directly into the country.

This description will serve for the whole coast of Holland, from the Texel to the Meuse, except that, proceeding to the southward,

* The labour and patience with which the Hollanders constructed these piers of immense stones, chiefly for the purpose of breaking the force of the ocean, must appear astonishing, when it is remembered that there is not, in the whole country, a stone to be found as big as a boy's marble.

the Sand-Hills extend in breadth, and are skirted by thick woods, which separate them from the flat country.

It was at first intended, and so ordered, that all the launches which carried troops from the transports should rendezvous under the stern of such frigates as lay nearest the landing-place; the army was then to disembark in the following order:—Major-general Coote's brigade, with a detachment of the light-artillery, were to effect a landing on the right of the whole, under the command of Sir James Pulteney. After which, the rest of the army, under the commander in chief, was immediately to follow; major-general D'Oyley's brigade taking its position on the right; major-general Burrard's occupying the centre; and that of major-general Moore being posted on the left. This plan of operations, however, was not precisely executed,—for the first boats that received the men from the transports, having been taken into tow by wherries and schooners, pushed on directly to the beach, under a press of sail, without attending to the general rendezvous; whilst the soldiers, as soon as ever the boats took the ground, jumped out on the strand, and instantly formed under cover of the flotilla, which kept up an incessant and tremendous fire of shot and shells during the whole of the engagement that succeeded. Thus it was that the body of troops which attacked and defeated the enemy was composed of the reserve, and of detached parties of different regiments, chiefly of the third brigade.

Meanwhile the enemy, who the preceding evening only had collected his forces at the village of Callants-Oge, posted his infantry, among which were some battalions of riflemen, on the Sand-Hills,

and his cavalry and artillery on the marshy plain behind. In this position he observed our landing with apparent indifference : but as soon as the British marched from the strand, and began to ascend the heights, the enemy advanced, and the action commenced.

It is, however, wholly unaccountable, that the enemy should have suffered the British troops to land without interruption. He might have annoyed them severely while disembarking and forming on the strand; as the first ridge of Sand-Hills, which sheltered him from the fire of the flotilla, was within half-musquet shot of the margin of the sea.

The first contention was in attacking an eminence, on which was erected a telegraph or signal-post, which was afterwards of use to us in directing the fire of the armed vessels and gun-boats. This point of defence, after a smart contest, was carried by the flank companies of the third brigade*; and in like manner the enemy was pushed from one eminence to another, not without a warm dispute for each, by the persevering ardour and intrepidity of the British troops, encouraged by the gallantry and bravery of their officers. About noon the action became general, and very brisk : the inequalities of the ground did not allow of more than one battalion to be drawn up in line, so that our advanced parties were supported and relieved by fresh

* The gallantry and spirit of the grenadiers of the 29th regiment deserve to be mentioned. Finding themselves encumbered with their knapsacks, &c. whilst charging the enemy through the heavy sand, they threw away both them and their provisions. After the battle, these brave men petitioned to have their necessaries replaced, which in truth they much wanted; but, from a strick adherence to the rules of military discipline, their request could not be granted:— the officers and soldiers have however been since remunerated for their losses of baggage, &c during the campaign.

detachments, who, as soon as they were landed, marched up from the strand to the scene of action. The British army had neither cavalry nor artillery; but these wants were in a great measure remedied by the steady co-operation of the armed vessels, whose terrible fire prevented any attempt of the enemy to turn its right flank. The enemy, nevertheless, made some ineffectual manœuvres, with a view of charging with his cavalry; but he fired his field-pieces and howitzers from the plain with considerable effect.

About five o'clock in the evening the enemy was driven from the last ridge of the Sand-Hills, and retired further, between the inundation and farm-houses on the plain; at which time the brigade of guards, under major-general D'Oyley, marched along the strand with two field-pieces, which had just been brought up by a party of sailors, to attack the enemy in his last position. The enemy, forming a close column, with some artillery in front, sustained the attack with firmness, and retired in good order to a position about six miles distant, without being pursued on our part, for the want of cavalry.

Thus ended an irregular but well-contested action, which established a British army in Holland, and which was immediately followed by the most important consequences.

The force that the enemy had been able to collect to oppose our descent was estimated at seven thousand men, all Dutch troops, well cloathed and appointed, and commanded by a general of some repute (Daendels). The prompt and vigorous attack of the British was therefore a measure of the first necessity; for if the enemy had

been allowed time to collect a more considerable army, and to take advantage of the strong ground, by planting cannon on some of the heights, the dislodging of them would have been a task of far greater difficulty.

The loss of the Dutch in this engagement, according to their own account, amounted to eleven hundred men, among whom, however, they reckoned no officer of rank, except one colonel (Luk) killed.

The British loss, considering the small proportion of the army actually engaged, was by no means inconsiderable: it amounted to five hundred, and fell chiefly on the reserve, consisting of the 23d and 55th regiments, commanded by colonel Macdonald, who, though wounded, never left the scene of action. The detachments of the third brigade, from the Queen's, 27th, 29th, and 85th regiments, under the command of major-general Coote, did not suffer proportionably less than the reserve. Lieutenant-general Sir James Pulteney, second in command, was unfortunately disabled by a wound in the arm: his place, however, was ably supplied by major-general Coote.

The principal officers who fell during the action were, lieutenant-colonel Smollet of the guards, and lieutenant-colonel Hay of the engineers. The latter received a cannon shot, which shattered his thigh; he had the satisfaction, however, of commending, with his latest breath, a numerous family to the care of his friend the commander in chief, and of dying with the consolatory reflexion that they would be provided for by his country

* The total return of killed and wounded, corrected from the official *detail*, is as follows:— Two lieutenant-colonels, 1 subaltern, 3 serjeants, 51 rank and file, killed; 1 lieutenant-

The left wing of the British army was not engaged; it was composed of major-general Moore's brigade, and the brigade of guards under major-general Burrard, and was destined to attack the batteries at the Helder. But the enemy saved us the trouble; for, on perceiving the event of the battle, the garrison, consisting of between two and three thousand men, silently and secretly evacuated the forts, having first spiked the guns and destroyed some of the carriages; upon which, under cover of the dusk of the evening, they retreated along the dyke, on the edge of the Zuider Zee, directly in front of our whole army; and in some points not half a mile from our advanced picquets. The same night, detachments from major-general Moore's brigade occupied the batteries at the Helder Point; and the next day the British troops marched into the Helder town *, accompanied by numbers of loyal Dutchmen, whose first acts were to cut down the tree of liberty, to mount the Orange cockade, and to hoist the Orange flag on the steeple of the church.

Thus were the first efforts of the British army in Holland crowned with complete success,—a landing was effected, the enemy defeated, and a safe port for our shipping secured; and, on the day after the engagement, we had the satisfaction to witness the first fruits of our victory, by the disembarkation of a reinforcement of five thousand men at the Nieuve Diep, just arrived from England under the com-

general, 1 colonel, 1 lieutenant-colonel, 1 major, nine captains, 6 subalterns, 18 serjeants, 1 drummer, 334 rank and file, wounded; 26 rank and file missing. The casualties are not included in this return.

* The Helder is a dirty disagreeable town, inhabited by sea-faring people, not unlike Sheerness. The streets are unpaved; and the soil, being a heavy slimy sand, is converted, in rainy weather, to a thick slab. Through this slab a horse flounces up to his belly at every plunge. The roads throughout the country, being composed of the same materials, are, with few exceptions, very little better.

mand of major-general Don*. For these troops, owing to a continuance of the storms, could not possibly have disembarked on the beach where the first division effected a landing.

All the Dutch men of war that were afloat in the Mars Diep, in consequence of the decided success of the British arms, got under weigh, retired further within the Zuider Zee, and anchored in a narrow and intricate channel behind the Texel Island, called the Vlieter.

Admiral Mitchel having anchored in the Mars Diep with his whole fleet, consisting of eleven sail of fifty and sixty-four gun ships, including two Russian men of war, proceeded, without loss of time, to follow the enemy; meanwhile he dispatched the Circe, captain Winthorp, to take possession of the ships that were laid up in the Nieuve Diep, together with the arsenal and naval stores. This service was performed without the least show of opposition on the part of the enemy. Thirteen ships of war and three Indiamen were found there†.

In exploring the winding channels of the Texel Roads, the America, and the Ratisvaw (Russian ship), took the ground; and as they

* This division consisted of 17th, 20th, and 40th regiments, two battalions each, and the 63d regiment.

† The ships laid up in the Nieuve Diep, were, one guard-ship of 54 guns, one ship of 66 guns, six of 44 guns, one of 32 guns, and four of 24 guns, together with three Indiamen and a sheer-hulk.

could not immediately be got off, the fleet proceeded without them, and, in the morning of the 30th August, anchored in line, a short distance from that of the enemy.

A flag of truce from the Dutch admiral now came on board the Isis, with proposals, for the purpose of gaining time, under pretext of receiving instructions from the Batavian government. An answer was immediately returned, with positive orders not to alter the position of the Dutch ships, and to submit within an hour under pain of the consequences. Captain Rennie of the Victor was also the bearer of a summons from vice-admiral Mitchel to admiral Storey; in which the latter, and those under him, were exhorted instantly to hoist the flag of his serene highness the prince of Orange, and, by so doing, to be considered as friends of the king of Great Britain, otherwise the blood that must be shed by a contrary conduct would be on the heads of those who resisted. The Dutch admiral, finding his situation hopeless and irretrievable, struck his flag, attempting at the same time to justify his conduct in an official answer to the summons of the British admiral, in which he alleges, that he acknowledges no sovereign but the representatives of the Batavian people, and that, in consequence of the mutiny of his fleet, he was under the necessity of surrendering it, submitting himself and his officers as prisoners of war.

The flag of the Batavian republic having been struck, a number of officers was sent from the British fleet to take possession of each of the Dutch ships, accompanied by a proclamation from vice-admi-

ral Mitchel, with a view of tranquillising the minds of the people on board *, and of restoring order and subordination.

This last remnant of the Dutch navy, that so happily yielded to the flag of Great Britain, consisted of eight ships of the line, three frigates, and a sloop of war †.

During these successful operations by sea and land, the Dutch seem to have been astonished and panick-struck at the boldness and rapidity of our movements. They fondly imagined, that their batteries on shore, and their channels and shoals, scarcely navigable by themselves, would have rendered the situation, at least of their fleet, impregnable; as if any dangers were too great to be encountered, or any obstacles insurmountable, by the combined efforts of a British army and navy.

The Dutch admiral has been severely censured for the line of conduct he pursued. By not adopting the measures of the loyal part of his fleet, in declaring openly for the prince of Orange, he for ever forfeited his countenance and protection. On the other hand, he was suspected by the Batavian government, who employed him, of betraying the high trust reposed in him, by surrendering the fleet of the republic to its enemy without so much as firing a gun. On the

* For the correspondence of the English and Dutch admirals, and the memoir of the latter in justification of his conduct, see the Appendix.

† The Dutch ships, stores, &c. of which possession were supposed to have been taken on behalf of the prince of Orange, have been since condemned as lawful prizes, and sold to government for the benefit of the captors, among whom, very justly, are included the first division of British troops that effected the landing at the Helder.

whole, however, if the statement the Dutch admiral has given for his own justification is to be credited, and there is no good reason to doubt of its truth, he appears to have been more unfortunate than culpable.

Whilst thus a sensible impression was made by a British army and navy on the coast of Holland, the hereditary prince of Orange, with not a numerous party, which he had collected in the eastern provinces, attempted a diversion on the frontiers of Over-Yssel; but his efforts were unsuccessful. He, in vain, summoned the fortress of Coevorden. His party were dispersed by a body of the national guards of Arnheim, and the prince himself was constrained to embark at Embden for the Texel; where he arrived, just after the Dutch fleet had surrendered to admiral Mitchel.

As soon as complete possession was obtained of the Helder and its dependencies, the republican municipalities were suppressed, and magistrates elected agreeably to the former constitution. Two proclamations were also issued in the Dutch and English languages, and distributed among the inhabitants. The first was from the commander in chief, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, setting forth, That the British army enters the territory of the United Provinces, not as enemies, but as friends and deliverers from the oppression of France,—it calls upon the Dutch to be instrumental to their own deliverance, recommending to all parties union, concord, and a forgiveness of injuries; but, at the same time, it asserts, that if any Dutchmen should in future be found to adhere to the oppressors of their country (the French), they would be treated as decided and irreconcileable enemies.

The other proclamation was a temperate, persuasive, and conciliating address from his serene highness the prince of Orange to his countrymen. It was to the same purport as the former, and promised, that the hereditary prince of Orange would soon put himself at the head of all loyal Dutchmen, to co-operate with the allied army in re-establishing their former free and lawful government.

But neither the brilliant career of the British arms, nor these proclamations, had the immediate effect expected from them. The inhabitants of the part of the country in our possession displayed no cordiality in their attachment to the cause we maintained, which seemed to be the effect rather of necessity than choice, and a new feature of the Dutch character soon betrayed itself,—they proved cool and cautious in their friendship, but active and vindictive in their enmity.

During these transactions, the weather continued unusually severe and tempestuous. Admiral lord Duncan, having superintended, though he did not command the naval operations, returned in the Kent man-of-war to England.

From the 27th August to the 1st September, the army was stationed on the line of Sand-Hills, extending about seven miles from the northern point at the Helder to the village of Callants-Oge. In this exposed situation it suffered severely from the inclemency of the weather, for there was no other shelter from the unusual coldness, accompanied with frequent heavy showers that prevailed during the

For these proclamations, see Appendix.

nights, than what could be obtained by digging trenches in the sand. The supplies of provisions were also for a few days irregular and precarious, owing to the intercourse with the fleet being interrupted by the unceasing storms. As these hardships however extended to all without distinction, they were sustained by all, not only with fortitude but with cheerfulness.

Whilst the army occupied this position, it was employed in throwing up breast-works and redoubts at several points of defence, and in receiving parties which every day came over from the enemy to declare for the prince of Orange, though their numbers were by no means considerable.

About this time another proclamation was issued, signed by the hereditary prince of Orange, which, in consequence of the present favourable posture of his affairs, was conceived in more peremptory language than the former. It especially enjoins to the people of the seven provinces to establish forthwith a provisional government, until the legal constitution shall be effectually restored; and directs all those persons, who, prior to the French invasion, had been employed in the departments of police, finance, and justice, immediately to assume the provisional administration of those departments, with the exception of such as had a share in the revolution, or were attached to the present illegal government. Nevertheless, to prevent confusion, it tolerates the public functionaries of the existing government, until the provisional one is prepared to exercise its powers

For the proclamation, see Appendix.

The British Lines at Oude Sluys

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At length, on the 1st September, to the great satisfaction of every one, the army received orders to quit their position on the Sand-Hills, and to advance into the country.

And here it may neither be improper nor irrelevant to the subject, to consider, whether all the advantages proposed to be derived from undertaking the expedition might probably have been greater, or more decided, if any other plan of operation had been adopted at its commencement than that which was actually followed;—for the world, in judging of events, is prone to make its conclusions, not always in consonance with the causes by which they were produced, but from their successful or unfortunate issues.

Immediately consequent to the possession of the enemy's fleet, and the establishment of a victorious army in the country, formidable indeed more from its discipline, appointments, and courage, than from its numbers,—three several plans of operation obviously presented themselves.

The first was, to reimbark the troops, and to withdraw them altogether from North Holland, after having brought off, with the captured ships, as much of the artillery and the military and naval stores as were worth the removal, and then to destroy the remainder. By this expedient, it is true, a grand exploit would have been achieved, of incalculable advantage to Great Britain, and with an incomparably small proportion of expenditure of life and treasure; but, by so doing, the main intention and scope of the expedition would have been frustrated, which were—to effect the re-establishment of the former

legal constitution, and to restore the stadtholderate to the House of Orange. Yet, even supposing conquest only was the sole object of pursuit, the éclat of our arms, as well as the solid advantages already obtained, warranted a further prosecution of them. To abandon therefore the expedition in its first successful onset,—to relinquish at once the fair prospect of the speedy completion of all its objects, and to return home without so much as one discouraging circumstance or occurrence, would be an extraordinary line of conduct indeed, that might well challenge animadversion.

Directly opposed to so contracted and timid a plan, another equally apparent offered itself.—After having secured the enemy's fleet and the forts of the Texel, to have profited by the first successes, and, without the loss of a moment, to have followed them up, as far as possible, with the utmost energy and promptitude. In favour of such a plan of operations, arguments not unplausible might be adduced: it might be alleged, that the enemy, weak in numbers, having as yet not been joined by the French, and disheartened by our unexpected victorious commencement, would not dared to have opposed the rapid advance of the British army;—that apprehensive of this, he had evacuated for a short time Alkmaar; that possession therefore might have been gained, without loss, of a tract of country adequate to the maintenance and accommodation of an army of 50,000 men, and for which we afterwards so warmly contended;—that we might have then secured a tenable position, by establishing a line of posts through a strong country, from Hoorne to Egmont-op-Zee, having Alkmaar as a principal intermediate post;—that, by such a vigorous movement, those of the inhabitants who were sincerely

attached to the interests of the prince of Orange would be induced to come forward, and evince their loyalty, not by a mere display of its symbols, but by a manly and active co-operation with the British army; and finally, supposing the worst, that a retreat would have become necessary, the same security in effecting it would have existed then as at any subsequent period.

Induced by such considerations, it is not improbable that the British army, flushed with victory, would have pushed on to Alkmaar immediately after the battle of the 27th August, if its numerical force had been greater. But although that city might have then been taken, and the country possessed without opposition, yet to have maintained, for any time, a secure position there, inasmuch as the line of defence, extending from sea to sea, must have been very weak, would be a doubtful and extremely hazardous undertaking.

Between those two measures of leaving the country, and advancing farther into it, a medium was chosen by our veteran and experienced commander. The army took up a position on the course of the Groot-Sluys of the Zype, having Oude-Sluys on the Zuider Zee on its left flank, and Petten on the German Ocean on its right. By this position a fertile tract of country was gained, which, though of no great extent, was sufficient to subsist the army that then occupied it. It furnished an abundant supply of excellent black cattle and sheep, and also of horses and waggons,—of which last the army stood in great need. The position was likewise a remarkably strong one; for it was defended by the great dyke or embankment, running in

front of the canal, and extending across the isthmus. The course of this bank is not in a straight line, it forms several half-moon and angular projections, and has a fine gravel road all along the top. At convenient distances, small redoubts were immediately erected, and cannon mounted upon them, so that the dyke, thus fortified, was not less adapted to stop the progress of an enemy than of an inundation.

In this secure situation, the army waited impatiently for the powerful reinforcements which were hourly expected; meanwhile it occupied quarters which might be termed comfortable, compared with those on the Sand-Hills. The troops were cantoned in large and commodious farm-houses, which made excellent barracks, all the offices being contained under one roof. These houses were so numerous and equally distributed, that the face of the country had the appearance of a continued village.

It was now two hundred and fifty years since the peace and happiness of this part of the United Provinces had been interrupted by hostile armies:—no wonder then, that, during so long a repose, the virtuous and industrious inhabitants had attained the summit of political prosperity. The dates on the fronts of all the houses prove them to have been built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, —during which last æra the country appears to have acquired as many people as it could possibly maintain: ever since, the overflowing population must have been disposed of, occasionally, in the marine and in the colonies.

Schlangen from the South.

The manners, customs, and fashions of the people of North Holland perfectly coincide with the dates on their houses—they exhibit a picture of centuries past: and as neither riches nor poverty, palaces or hovels, are to be seen there, the inhabitants must, for ages, have been in the actual and unquestionable enjoyment of that genuine liberty and equality which is founded on just laws, adapted to the genius and character of the people;—but of the modern metaphysical import of these words they were totally ignorant, until, by bringing calamity and destruction on the human race, it, at length, involved them in the dreadful consequences*.

The enemy not finding himself pursued, and being, at this time, reinforced by the advanced guard of the French army, which had proceeded by forced marches through South Holland, began to recover from his panic, and to take up positions in our front.

From the first to the tenth of September the army was exercised by frequent false alarms, which might be so far useful, as it accustomed the troops to assemble under arms without beat of drum;—sometimes at any given hour in the night, and always at two hours before day-break.

At length, the commander in chief, having been duly apprised that a formidable attack was in meditation against our right, made the necessary preparations to repel it. Some skirmishing had occurred be-

* The people of North Holland are very religiously disposed. It was as certain to find a prayer or psalm book on the person of the killed and wounded, as a pipe or canteen. Religious books were generally met with in the farm-houses, and frequently also political pamphlets; which last, apparently, had been lately distributed.

fore this, at our advanced post at Warmanhuysen, and in front of Oude-Carspel, which occasioned those posts to fall back, it being intended to strengthen our position, and to act on the defensive until the arrival of the expected reinforcements.

The Batavian government, by uncommon and forcible exertions, had collected a number of Dutch troops from the general levy, called the National Volunteer Guards, and raised by the several towns and districts throughout the Seven United Provinces. These troops, having been recently joined by a part of the promised succours from France, composed a considerable force,—not exceeding, however, twelve thousand men.

On the morning of the 10th September, at day-break, the combined enemy commenced the attack. They divided all the force they were able to muster into three columns; the right column, composed wholly of Dutch troops, under the command of general Daendels, directed its operations against the British ports of Saint Maarten and Eenigenburg; the centre column, likewise Dutch, marched on to the attack of Krabendam and the Sleiper Dyke; while the left, consisting entirely of French troops, under the direction of general Brune, advanced upon Camperduyn, and the Dyke towards Petten.

Our position at the head of the dyke of the Zype was very strong and commanding, and was bravely defended by the two battalions of the 20th regiment, under lieutenant-colonel Smyth, who was severely wounded. The enemy advanced, notwithstanding, with great intrepidity. His right column pushed on to St. Maarten's, of which it obtained a temporary possession; but the centre, not being able to pe-

netrate the British lines, and the left column of French having been checked in its career by the British right, consisting of the two brigades of guards, while one flank of that column was for some time exposed to a destructive fire from our centre, and the other to the fire of some armed vessels stationed on the coast,—the whole of the enemy's force was compelled to retreat before eleven o'clock in the morning. His retreat was quickened by colonel Macdonald with the reserve. After which, both armies re-assumed the positions they had respectively occupied before the action; the head-quarters of the British being at Schagen *, and that of the enemy at St. Pancras, a village to the north of Alkmaar.

This experiment cost the enemy near a thousand men in killed and wounded, including about forty officers, and one general (David), who was killed. It was made at the express order of the Batavian Directory, but with what intention is not very obvious, as the whole of the enemy's force was easily repulsed by little more than a third of ours.

The loss of the British army, in killed, wounded, and missing, was two hundred men, including ten officers wounded. Major-general Moore received a flesh wound, which, however, did not oblige him to quit the field †.

* Schagen is a handsome market-town, situated immediately on the outside of the great dyke of the Zype, and midway between the Zuider Zee and German Ocean. It became a post of the first importance to the allied army.

† The total loss, according to the official returns, was 37 rank and file killed; 1 lieutenant-colonel, 1 major, 4 captains, 4 subalterns, 2 serjeants, 131 rank and file, wounded; 1 serjeant, 18 rank and file, missing.

Although no ground was gained by this victory, it impressed the enemy however with a due sense of the strength of our position, and the courage of our men, while it intimidated him from trying any more offensive operations. The whole British army, in consequence, remained for some time in perfect security and repose, ardently expecting the time when its augmented strength should enable it to act offensively in turn.

Hitherto the troops, though harassed by severe duty, and constantly exposed to the vicissitudes of a most inclement sky, retained the highest health. To this, the lively hope of conquest inspiriting the mind, and a daily allowance of rum, being a gratuitous dole from the King, acting as a salutary stimulus on the body, no doubt essentially contributed *.

To the general joy of the army, field-marshal his royal highness the duke of York arrived on the 13th September, in the Amethyst frigate, at the Helder, after a passage of four days from Deal. His royal highness brought over three brigades of British troops †,—and, immediately upon landing, had the satisfaction to witness the disembarkation of eight battalions of Russian auxiliaries, consisting of

* The allowance of grog or wine in the navy has been found of essential service in contributing to preserve the health of seamen. A similar allowance extended to the army, while in active service, would be certainly not less useful,—as soldiers, in the course of a campaign, are liable to greater fatigues and exposures, without shelter, to inclement weather, than even sailors.

† The brigades which disembarked on the 13th September were,—5th foot, 2 battalions; 35th, 2 battalions; his royal highness prince William of Gloucester:—4th foot, 3 battalions; 31st regiment; major-general earl Chatham:—9th foot, 3 battalions; major-general Manners:—7th light dragoons, artillery.—N. B. The 11th light dragoons landed some time before.

seven thousand men, under the command of lieutenant-general D'Hermann.

The Russian forces had arrived from Revel the preceding day, and were speedily followed by the remainder of that division, consisting of three thousand men. Another division from Yarmouth soon after joined the allied armies, making, altogether, the Russian auxiliary troops amount to between seventeen and eighteen thousand effective men.

The fame of the Russian arms had already filled every quarter of the habitable globe. The courage, vigour, and discipline of those invincible troops claimed and obtained universal commendation,—and British soldiers, for the first time, were about to take lessons in the science of war from their redoubtable allies. It must, however, be confessed, that the Russian troops were little or nothing indebted to external appearance for their high reputation. Their cloathing, arms, and accoutrements, were certainly, at least, not superior to our own. Their uniform was green, with black, yellow, or red facings; yellow breeches, and long black leggings. The grenadiers were only distinguished by conical caps, with fronts of white or yellow latten metal. Many of the men had one, two, and, some few, three silver medals, appending by a short ribbon from the lapels of their coats. These medals, which were stamped either with the effigies of the emperor Paul, or of the late empress Catharine, with a Russian inscription on the reverse, were tokens of military merit, bestowed on account of some signal exploit. How far such rewards might contribute to excite military emulation in the breast of the soldier, de-

serves to be considered. There was a similar practice in the French armies, but on a much more comprehensive and elegant plan*. The Russian officers wore no epaulets, but they were known by a very large silver gorget, which possibly might be intended as a defensive armour for the breast.

In their persons, the Russians, for the most part, were rather under the middle size, but broad chested, robust, and muscular. Their countenances, however, could not be thought prepossessing;—to those who were unaccustomed to view them, they seemed even repulsive and ferocious.

The Russian grenadiers had not been selected on account of their height, but for their superior strength of form;—and this choice seems to be founded in a just estimate of the qualities which constitute bodily vigour; for men of the middle size are found to be proportionably stronger, and better able to endure fatigue, than tall men.

The only cavalry attached to the Russian army consisted of one troop of hussars, and two or three troops of Cossacks. The former was a part of the *gardes-du-corps* of the emperor, and was composed of picked men of the largest dimensions, and of the finest proportions, most superbly appointed. The Cossacks were of a slenderer

* A medal of this last description was found on the person of a French soldier, who had died of his wounds;—it hung by a string round his neck, within-side his shirt. It was of silver, larger than a crown-piece; and the action for which it was granted was represented on it, with a suitable inscription. The whole was executed in a masterly style. This medal is now in the possession of an officer of the 29th regiment.

make, and had better countenances than the Russians. Their arms were—a carabine slung across the back in a kind of cradle-sling, a scimitar, pistols in the waist-belt, and a spear twelve feet long in the hand. This furniture, together with their oriental dresses, and fine bushy beards, produced an effect more picturesque and romantic than formidable. They were mounted on a wretched looking race of small ambling horses, with long tails and manes, and of different colours; notwithstanding which, these animals were reported to be docile, sure-footed, and indefatigable.

The general appearance of the Russian army, when drawn up under arms, announced, at the first glance, that it was composed of troops formed altogether for service, and not for show. There appeared to have been established throughout all ranks the most absolute subordination. Several priests accompanied the army, to whom was yielded implicit and reverential obedience *.

Prior to the arrival of field-marshal his royal highness the duke of York, and the last reinforcements, the British army had been established in an advanced position in the country, as already described. The 69th regiment was encamped outside the Helder, where it remained, as a rear guard, during the campaign. A body of marines from the fleet did duty on the Texel Island, at the island of Warengen, and at the arsenal at the Nieuve Diep. His serene high-

* The Russians are members of the Greek church, in which there is much fasting. A few fast-days happened during the campaign, which were strictly enjoined, and as strictly observed —and, it must be remarked, sometimes very opportunely.