years, and if we look at the administrations of the last century, with the exception of that of Mr. Pitt, this will not be found an unfair allowance—then every three years there will not only be a change of the man, but, it must be presumed, a corresponding change of measures.

We must not suppose that British statesmen are actuated by factious or selfish motives—we must give them the credit of seeking the appointment of their own friends solely for the sake of extending the influence of those opinions and principles which they believe to be right. What then must be the effect upon India of a rapid succession of rulers, selected under the influence of every varying shade of party opinion? What but an unsteady and vacillating policy,—a series of experiments, immature and ill-executed, succeeding each other like a phantasmagoria, and leaving as few traces behind them.

India is not in a condition to be suffered to remain stationary, but still less is she in a condition to be made the subject of indiscreet experiment. To accelerate her career of improvement is at once our interest and our duty; but our plans of improvement must be well devised and steadily pursued, or they will end in our expulsion, and the surrender of the people of India to a long and dreary night of barbarism and misrule. If Englishmen should ever learn to feel justly the value of our Indian possessions—and they have never

yet felt it—they will become sensible that they form too precious a deposit to be tampered with, or to be thrown heedlessly into the scramble of party.

But the evils of eternal change would not be confined to the entail upon India of a weak and wavering policy, injurious to the people governed and dishonourable to those who govern them—the general character of the individuals who would fill the office of governor-general would be lower than it has hitherto been. High-minded men would hesitate to accept an appointment which, with all its splendour, is attended with many inconveniences and privations, if the tenure were understood to depend upon a point so utterly beyond calculation, as the continuance in office of a particular party. And who would occupy the place which has hitherto been filled by those who, whatever their pretensions in other respects, were at least gentlemen and men of honour? For the most part, persons of desperate fortunes, who would speculate on the enjoyment of the salary of the governor-general for a few months—men without character, or property, obsequiously waiting, hat in hand, upon the party to which they happened to be attached, for any casual donation which it might have to bestow, and ready for an eleemosynary fee to run on any errand, although it should carry them half across the globe. Now and then, the monotony might be relieved by the

despatch of some political quack—some legislative nostrum-monger, panting for an opportunity of trying the effects of his grand state panacea, and delighted to find in India a field where he might freely practice without any fear of the fate that awaits the vendors of Morison's pills. If any man of better class could be prevailed upon to accept the office, it would not be until he had secured a snug pension or comfortable sinecure to fall back upon in case of need.

These evils are not, indeed, likely to result from the occasional supercession on an Indian functionary by the ministers of the Crown, for an insufficient reason or for no reason at all; but they are consequences resulting from carrying out to its full extent the principle that the governor-general of India must possess the full confidence of the existing ministry. Unless, therefore, any one set of ministers can convert their Cabinet appointments into patent situations, or unless any one political party can shew that the privilege of removing a governor-general who is displeasing to the ministry, is one to be exercised only by themselves, those consequences must ensue or the principle must be given up. It is certainly not that upon which the laws regulating the government of India have been framed. The Legislature which, amid so many changes, has steadily adhered to the principle of vesting the patronage of India in the Company, evidently intended to disconnect that country as

much as possible from the turmoil of party contentions at home. The minister, therefore, who grasps at the patronage of India, though he may not violate the letter of the law, evidently outrages its spirit. He seeks to acquire that which the Legislature has determined he ought not to possess.

The Act of 1784 undoubtedly gives to the Crown the power of recall, without imposing any conditions upon its exercise. It would, indeed, be extraordinary if such a power had been withheld, but it is quite clear that it was not intended to be used as an instrument for enabling the ministers of the Crown to force into the government of India any particular individual. The patronage of India was probably vested in the East-India Company, partly from the consideration that the local and peculiar information which they possessed would enable them to estimate the wants of the country more accurately, and to provide for them more judiciously, than a ministry whose attention was distracted by a variety of subjects; partly because the Court of Directors being comparatively a permanent body, the delicate connection between India and Great Britian would, while the government was in their hands, be in a great measure secured from the shocks which it would be liable to encounter in the fierce struggles of political party; and partly from a reluctance to increase the influence of the Crown.

If these reasons have any validity, the Court of Directors should be permitted to exercise the power delegated to them by the Legislature, as freely and independently as possible; subject to no control but such as is absolutely necessary to the safety of the state. It was certainly not intended to give to the ministry the right of nomination to official station in India, and the power of governing that country in the name of the Court of Directors, who were merely to register the decisions of the Cabinet. Extraordinary powers should be reserved for extraordinary occasions, and it seems quite impossible for any impartial person to consider the difference of opinion between the Court of Directors and his Majesty's ministers in 1806, as one of those extraordinary occasions in contemplation of which the power was granted, and the actual rise of which alone can justify its exercise.

The causes which led to the capricious course pursued by the ministers of the Crown, prove the inconvenience of interfering with Indian patronage beyond their duty; and that duty is simply to protect the interests of the two countries from the injury that might result from the occupation of office by an improper person.

When the change of ministry was in progress, the vacancy occasioned by the death of the Marquess Cornwallis was not expected, and the new servants of the Crown were not prepared

to recommend any one in his place. A few days were sufficient to remove this impediment, and it would have evinced more respect to the Court of Directors, and more regard to the feelings of Sir George Barlow, as well as more consistency and dignity in their own conduct, had the ministers determined to suspend proceeding for those few days, instead of hastily ratifying an appointment almost immediately to be revoked.

When they had decided upon the person whose pretensions to the office they intended to support, they communicated their wishes to the Directors, who were naturally surprised by a communication so unlooked-for. They were unwilling to participate in the levity displayed by ministers with regard to Sir George Barlow, whom they moreover regarded as the fittest person to conclude those negociations on which he had entered; and they had insuperable objections to the nobleman recommended as his successor.

Into the nature of those objections it is, perhaps, useless at this distance of time to inquire; but there were undoubtedly some circumstances in the early political career of the Earl of Lauderdale, that might lead prudent men to hesitate as to the propriety of selecting him to wield the mighty, and, in indiscreet hands, the dangerous power of governor-general of India. Whether, however, the objections of the Directors were well or ill-founded, the ministry had no right to judge; and

when they perceived the little probability which existed of overcoming them, both duty and policy should have forbidden them to persevere.

By calling into exercise, for the first time, the prerogative of the crown, and revoking the appointment of Sir George Barlow, not because he was unfit to retain it, but solely to make way for their own nominee, they shewed an extraordinary disregard to the rights of the Court of Directors, as well as to the welfare of India, and a reprehensible desire of engrossing the patronage of the most valuable appointments there. Had the Directors been actuated by similar motives, the government of India would have been placed in abeyance, and a contest must have resulted, as little calculated to advance the dignity of the contending parties, as to promote the interests of the two divisions of the empire. But the Court of Directors, though firm, were not factious; they steadily resisted the appointment of the Earl of Lauderdale, but they did not retaliate upon ministers, by naming for the office a person disagreeable to the cabinet and hostile to its policy. When a nobleman was suggested in whose appointment they could conscientiously acquiesce, no remains of ill-feeling prompted them to keep alive differences between two bodies which the best interests of the state require to agree, and they cheerfully consented to appoint Lord Minto as the successor to Sir George Barlow. It would be well if their example were

more generally followed by the ministers of the crown; if party connection were less regarded, and personal qualification somewhat more. India is not like Ireland, essentially mixed up with party opinion and feelings; she has no natural connection with them, and to drag her into conflicts which do not and cannot concern her, is doing gross wrong, and frustrating to a great extent the intention of the Legislature, in bestowing the patronage on a body of men who, for the most part, are not likely to be actuated by party motives. India should be governed with a strict regard to her own benefit, as well as to that of England, and should not be unnaturally converted into a stage for the gladiatorial combats of political partizans.

CHAPTER III.

AFFAIRS OF TRAVANCORE.

The connection between Travancore and the East-India Company has been of considerable duration, and the Government of the latter has, on various occasions, rendered good service to the former. In 1790, Tippoo Saib attacked Travancore, and penetrated to Virapelly; but Lord Cornwallis, then governor-general, promptly interposed to rescue the country from an invader who threatened in a very brief period to overrun it. This timely aid was not afforded without some sacrifice on the part of the British Government; and it led ostensibly to the war which succeeded between that power and the ruler of Mysore. In 1795, a subsidiary treaty was concluded between the British Government and the Rajah of Travancore; and ten years after, in 1805, a second treaty. By the former treaty, the rajah engaged to assist the East-India Company in time of war with troops

to the extent of his ability. By a clause in the latter this aid was commuted for an annual tribute.

Travancore was among the most scandalously misgoverned of Indian states. Retrenchment and reform were indispensably necessary, and the treaty provided for their being commenced and conducted under the auspices of the British Government. To afford time for effecting the necessary changes, the payment of half the additional subsidy stipulated for by the second treaty was remitted for two years, but the end of that period found the rajah no better disposed to pay the entire amount of subsidy than the beginning. One heavy source of his expense was a military body, called the Carnatic Brigade, which, though unnecessary as well as burthensome, the rajah insisted upon retaining, in spite of the remonstrances of the British representative at his court. This gave rise to much angry feeling. The resident, Colonel Macaulay, pressed for the required payment of subsidy, and after a while a part of the amount was liquidated, but a very large portion still remained undischarged.

The resident having to perform a most ungracious duty in urging the demands of his Government, became an object of aversion to the Dewan, in whose hands the Rajah had suffered the whole power of the state to fall. That officer while ruling his master was himself under influence unfavourable to the interests of the British Govern-

ment. His conduct had long been evasive and unsatisfactory, and towards the close of the year 1808, it became suspected that he entertained views of direct hostility. It had been ascertained that communications had taken place between the Dewan and some Americans, who had recently arrived from Persia. The nature of these communications was kept secret, but they were followed by overtures from an agent of the Dewan to the Rajah of Cochin, for entering into joint measures in opposition to the British power. It was reported that a French force would land on the coast of Malabar in the course of January, and in anticipation of this event, the Dewan urged the Rajah of Cochin to prepare to unite himself with the Travancorians and French, for the purpose of expelling the English from the country.

The Dewan was not one of those who content themselves with merely giving advice. He enforced his recommendation by example. Extensive military preparations were entered into; the people were trained to warlike exercises, and large supplies of arms were obtained. The object of these proceedings was all but avowed, and it was currently reported, that emissaries had been sent to the Isle of France to solicit a reinforcement of artillery. The Government of Fort St. George considered these circumstances as calling for immediate and active measures. Troops were ordered to march from Trichinopoly, and others

were embarked from Malabar for Quilon; but these movements were suddenly countermanded, and a determination taken to try further the effects of a conciliatory policy.

The experiment met with that species of success which usually attends attempts at conciliation under such circumstances. The Dewan professed great alarm at the military preparations which had been made by the British Government, and entreated permission to throw himself upon the generosity of the power which he had provoked. A succession of messages followed, and this portion of the drama ended in the Dewan, on the ground that his person was not safe in Travancore, expressing a desire to resign his office and retire within the territories of the Company. The resident agreed to indulge him, and on the 28th of December, every thing was prepared for his journey from Aleppi to Calicut; a sum of money was advanced for his expenses, and as the alleged fears of the Dewan led him to demand a large escort of troops, the force attached to the resident was weakened for the purpose of affording it.

A little after midnight the sleep of the resident was broken by a loud noise in the vicinity of his house. He rose and proceeded to the window, whence he perceived that the building was apparently surrounded by armed men. Hearing his own name mentioned, he opened the lattice and demanded who was there, upon which severa

voices exclaimed at once that it was the colonel, and several pieces were simultaneously discharged at the window, but happily without producing the intended effect. The object of the assailants being now manifest, the resident seized his sword, and was rushing down stairs to oppose the entrance of the assassins, when he was interrupted by a clerk in his service, who pointing out the hopelessness of contending with a numerous body of armed men, suggested that his master and himself should conceal themselves in a recess in a lower apartment, the door of which was scarcely discernible from the wainscot in which it was inserted. This retreat Colonel Macaulay was reluctantly induced to enter just at the moment when the assailants, having disarmed the guard, were forcing their way into the house. Having entered, every part of it, except the concealed recess, was carefully searched for the intended victim. Disappointed of finding him, they spent the night in plundering the house. At day-break a vessel, with British troops traversing the deck, appeared in sight, and the ruffians becoming alarmed, made a precipitate retreat. This afforded the resident the opportunity of escape; a boat was procured, and he was shortly on board a British ship.

The vessel which had appeared in sight so opportunely for the resident, was one of several which were conveying reinforcements to the British strength in Travancore. All of these

arrived in safety except one, having on board a surgeon and thirty-three privates of his Majesty's 12th Regiment. This vessel being detained by some accidents, put into Aleppi for a supply of water, and other necessaries. Two or three of the soldiers landing immediately on the vessel arriving at her anchorage, were told by some servants of the Rajah, that a large body of British troops were in the neighbourhood, and that if they were disposed to join them every requisite aid would be afforded for the purpose. The whole party were thus induced to disembark, when they were surrounded and overpowered, tied in couples back to back, and in that state, with a heavy stone fastened to their necks, thrown into the back water of the port. The ferocity of this deed would almost seem to justify the opinion avowed by some Europeans who have enjoyed the best means of judging of the state of Travancore, that in turpitude and moral degradation its people transcend every nation upon the face of the earth.

Two days after the outrage on the resident's house, the officer commanding the subsidiary force at Quilon received intelligence, that a large body of armed men had assembled in the enclosure round the Dewan's abode. This being an unusual occurrence Colonel Chalmers ordered his men to sleep, that night, on their arms. Immediately afterwards he was informed, that a body of armed nairs had been collected at Paroor, a few miles

to the southward of the cantonment, for the purpose of advancing upon his force. To avert an attack from two bodies of troops at the same time, a party, under Captain Clapham, was dispatched with a gun, to take post on a height, commanding the Dewan's house, so as to keep the troops collected there in check. The detachment had scarcely arrived at the point assigned for it, when it was discovered that a small hill, immediately on the flank of the post, was occupied by the Travancore troops, whose numbers appeared to be rapidly augmenting. The eminence on which Captain Clapham's party was posted was evidently a military object to the enemy, and it became necessary to prepare for defending it. A column of Nairs was soon seen advancing, which was challenged and requested to halt. The challenge and request were disregarded, and the column continued to advance, obviously for the purpose of charging the British detachment. When within ten paces, Captain Clapham gave orders to fire. The fire was returned, but it was followed up, on the part of the British force, with so much quickness and precision, that after several ineffectual attempts to gain the height, the enemy was obliged to retire.

On the following morning, Major Hamilton proceeded, at the head of a body of British troops, to take possession of the battery at the Dewan's house, a service which was effected without loss,

and the guns conveyed within the British lines. These guns had been ordinarily used for firing salutes, but on examination, after they came into the hands of Colonel Chalmers, they were all found loaded and double-shotted; and it is also worthy of remark, that they were taken not in the situation where they were usually placed, but on a spot having the command of the only road leading to the Dewan's house.

Before Major Hamilton could return to his position, he was required to push on with his party to Anjuvicha, to intercept the enemy, who, in great numbers, were crossing the river in that direction. He arrived just as a numerous body were crossing in boats, while another party was drawn up on shore to cover their landing. The British commander immediately attacked the party on shore, who were dispersed forthwith, pursued to the bar, and driven into the water. A battalion, on the opposite side, witnessed the defeat and destruction of their countrymen, without attempting to assist them, further than by a few discharges of small arms at a distance, from which they could do no execution. On the dispersion of the enemy on the nearer side of the river, Major Hamilton directed his artillery to open on the battalion on the opposite shore, and almost the first shot put them to flight. They subsequently returned with reinforcements, and an attempt was made to surround Major Hamil-

ton's force, but prevented by his retiring within the lines of the cantonment.

Almost simultaneously with the arrival of the news of these events at Fort St. George, the government of that presidency received from the collector in Malabar the translation of a letter, addressed by the Dewan of Travancore to the Zamorin Rajah in Malabar, and which had been confidentially communicated by the Zamorin's minister. It was an extraordinary composition, appealing to the attachment felt by the natives to their ancient superstitions, and expressing violent apprehension of the extension of the Christian faith. To resist this, the Zamorin was exhorted to rise against the British, who were to be forthwith expelled, and no amity thenceforward maintained with them. The Zamorin was informed that hostilities had begun on the 28th, and that within eight days the Company's battalions should be compelled to evacuate Quilon.

Some further communications with the Zamorin's minister took place, through a confidential agent, whom the Dewan deputed to hold a conference with him, and it was not undeserving of notice. On the Zamorin's minister suggesting the imprudence of a small state rising in hostility against so vast a power as the British, the Dewan's agent, after adverting to the application made to the Isle of France for assistance, said that it was well known that the greater proportion of the Company's forces

would soon be engaged in a Mahratta war, and in the defence of their northern frontier, against an invasion of the French. Thus did the accessibility to invasion of our northern frontier give confidence to those hostile to our power, and thus early were our enemies aware of the existence of that Mahratta combination, which it took several years to mature for action. Yet then, as under similar circumstances, before and since, there were doubtless many who saw nothing but uninterrupted peace and unassailable security.

Further projects of conciliation had been meditated, even after the attempt upon the life of the British resident; and to gratify the parties by whom that atrocity was contrived and executed, the temporary suspension of Colonel Macaulay was determined on. The news of the attack upon the troops at Quilon, however, put an end to these conciliatory movements, and negociation was abandoned for arms. It was now thought important to secure the continued services of Colonel Macaulay, and that officer was requested, in language almost apologetic, to resume the duties of resident, until the contemplated proceedings connected with the station should have been carried into complete effect. A letter was addressed to the Rajah of Travancore, explaining the circumstances under which the advance of troops into his country had become necessary; and a proclamation addressed to the

inhabitants, assuring them that the peaceable and well affected had no cause for apprehension, was issued with similar views.

The troops destined for service in Travancore were to advance in various directions. Lieutenant-colonel St. Leger was appointed to conduct the operations on the eastern side; Lieutenant-colonel Cuppage, with another body of troops, was to enter by the northern frontier; while Colonel Wilkinson commanded a detachment, assembled in the south country, for the preservation of tranquillity in that quarter, and for the purpose of reinforcing the army in Travancore, if found necessary. The troops assembled at Quilon remained under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Chalmers.

The last-named officer was soon required to employ the force at his disposal. At six o'clock on the morning of the 15th January, he was informed that the Dewan's troops were advancing in different directions. On reconnoitering, in front of the British lines to the left, a large body of infantry drawn up with guns were perceived, on which Colonel Chalmers, without delay, ordered his line to advance in two columns to receive the enemy. The action that ensued lasted five hours, and ended in the flight of the Dewan's troops and the capture of several of their guns by the British force. The loss of the enemy in killed and wounded was great, that of the British very

trifling. Ten days afterwards, an attack made by three columns of the enemy on three different points of a detachment in Cochin, commanded by Major Hewitt, was repulsed with the most decisive success, although the British force was greatly inferior, in point of numbers, to their assailants, and were unprotected by either walls or batteries.

The share in the operations entrusted to Lieutenant-colonel St. Leger was conducted with remarkable spirit and brilliancy. The corps forming his detachment reached Palamcottah, after a very rapid march from Trichinopoly, and proceeded from thence to the lines of Arumbooly, which they reached on the 3d February. These lines were of great natural and artificial strength, but, after some short time spent in reconnoitering, it was determined to attack them by storm. The storming party, under Major Welsh, left the British encampment on the evening of the 9th, and, after encountering all the difficulties presented by thick jungles, abrupt ascents, rocky fissures, and deep ravines, arrived at the foot of the walls on the top of the hill, which they immediately surprised and carried, driving the enemy down the hill before them. The batteries in their possession were now opened and directed against the main line of the enemy's defences. A reinforcement arriving, at break of day Major Welsh proceeded to storm the main lines, and these also were carried in spite of a more severe resistance

than had previously been offered. The enemy appalled by the approach of the main body of the troops, to maintain the advantages which had thus been gained, precipitately fled; and, at an early hour of the day, Colonel St. Leger had the happiness of reporting to his Government that the British flag was flying on every part of the Arumbooly lines, as well as on the commanding redoubts to the north and south.

Having established a secure post within the lines, Colonel St. Leger pursued his success. A large body of the enemy had taken post in the villages of Colar and Nagrecoil, and the task of dislodging them was entrusted to a detachment under Lieutenant-colonel Macleod of the King's service. The country through which the detachment had to march was unfavourable, and the position which the enemy had chosen strong and advantageous. Protected in front by a battery, commanding the only point by which an assailant could approach, this defence was aided by a river, while in the rear were thick impassable woods. These advantages however were unavailing. The lines were attacked and carried after a sharp action, and the enemy forced to retreat in great confusion.

At this place the enemy had intended to make a determined stand. The Dewan himself had taken refuge there, and only fled on the approach of the British troops, whose proximity he naturally regarded with dislike. This success was a severe

blow to the fortunes of the Dewan. The forts of Woodagherry and Papanaveram (the latter one of the strongest places in Travancore) surrendered without the firing of a shot.

The fatal blow thus struck at the power of the Dewan was aided by the western division of the British troops. On the 20th of February a detachment from this force assailed, and most gallantly carried, some batteries erected by the enemy at Killianore; captured seven guns, and defeated a body of troops, consisting of about five thousand men. In the beginning of March, Colonel Chalmers advanced with the western division, to effect a junction with Colonel St. Leger, and encamped about twelve miles north of the rajah's capital. About the same period, the force on the northern frontier, under Colonel Cuppage, entered without opposition, and took up the strong position of Paroor, while the troops from the southern division of the army, under the command of Colonel Wilkinson, took possession of the defile of Armagawal, and proceeded to occupy the passes of Shincottee and Achincote. The Dewan now fled towards the mountains on the northern frontier, and being abandoned by his master, whom he had misled, parties were despatched in all directions to endeavour to apprehend him. Negociations commenced for the restoration of relations of amity between Travancore and the Company, and in a very short period affairs returned to their former state. The Dewan

wandered in the mountains, till compelled to retire by the difficulty of procuring food among rocks and jungles; a difficulty increased by the seizure of some of his followers, by whom he had been previously supplied. In this situation he came to the resolution of repairing to a pagoda, named Bhagwady, where he put an end to his life, by stabbing himself in various places. His brother was apprehended, and as he had participated in the atrocious murder of the thirty-four unhappy persons belonging to his Majesty's 12th Regiment, he was, by the orders of the rajah, most justly executed in sight of that regiment.

The occurrences which have been related illustrate a state of things too common in India—a sovereign abandoning himself and his territories to the guidance of a favourite minister, who soon becomes more powerful than the sovereign himself. In former times, indeed, the mayor of the palace in certain European states reduced the king to a cipher, and while ruling without check or control, suffered the odium of his bad government to attach to the unfortunate person who bore the royal dignity. In India that system is still in active operation; the indolence and the vices of native princes, aided sometimes by their peculiar circumstances, throw them into the custody of the bold or the designing; and from the thraldom which thus involves them, they rarely escape, but by the death of their keeper. Their people, in the

mean time, are generally exposed to the most dreadful oppression, and king and country have alike cause to rue the lamentable weakness which has invested a subject with the power of sovereignty, divested of the name.

Another and more gratifying subject of reflection is afforded by the evidence supplied of the great superiority of the army of British India over those with which it is ordinarily brought into action. The British force employed in Travancore was trifling, in point of number, when compared with the vast levies opposed to it; but the military skill of its commanders, and the high discipline of their troops, enabled it to subdue the entire country almost as rapidly as it could be put in motion. Such has ordinarily been the course of British warfare in India.

CHAPTER IV.

CAPTURE OF BOURBON AND MAURITIUS.

During the wars which followed the French Revolution, the injuries sustained by our commerce, from the enemy's settlements in the Indian seas, were severely felt. The principal seats of annoyance were the Mascarenha Isles, comprising the Isle of Bourbon, or Mascarenha, properly so called; Mauritius, or the Isle of France; the small Island of Rodriguez; and another of inferior note.

Such a group, lying on the very highway of the commerce between India and England, could not be left in the hands of an active and insidious foe with impunity, and the actual results fully realized all that might have been anticipated. From the Mauritius especially, French cruizers issued in vast numbers, to prowl over the Indian seas, and the consequent loss was immense. It has been said that previously to the fall of this island, the insurance offices of Bengal alone were losers to the

amount of three millions sterling from captures. The amount may be exaggerated, but there can be no doubt of it having been very great.

That such a course of things should have been allowed to proceed so long unchecked, argues little either for the wisdom or the activity of the British Government: but its toleration was in perfect harmony with the indifference usually manifested on such occasions. A persuasion had indeed long prevailed, that the Mauritius could not be successfully assailed by a hostile force, and this persuasion the French naturally used their best endeavours to encourage. A plausible error, once established, is hard to be shaken, and the currency of a belief that the island was impregnable, combined with the imperturbable apathy with which British statesmen have generally regarded the interests of our Indian possessions, must account for the supineness which so long left a valuable branch of commerce at the mercy of the enemy.

The enormous extent of the evil at length roused the British cabinet to some exertions. Admiral Bertie, who commanded on the Cape of Good Hope station, was ordered to enforce a rigorous blockade. The service was entrusted to Captain Rowley; and, to assist the contemplated operations, Lieut.-Col. Keating was, in 1809, despatched from India, with a small force, to occupy the Island of Rodriguez, about one hundred miles distant from the Mauritius.

On his arrival, he found only two families on the island, and of course took possession of it without difficulty. After some time spent in acquiring a perfect knowledge of the coast, Commodore Rowley resolved to make an attack upon the town of St. Paul's, the chief port of the Isle of Bourbon, and for this purpose requested the co-operation of Colonel Keating. A detachment was forthwith embarked from Rodriguez to join Commodore Rowley off Port Louis, the capital of the Mauritius.

On the evening of the 19th of September, the force destined for the attack stood for the Isle of Bourbon, and, on the following morning, disembarked to the southward of Pont de Gallotte, seven miles from St. Paul's. The landing was effected with great dexterity, and the troops immediately commenced a forced march, in order, if possible, to cross the causeways extending over the lake or pond of St. Paul's, before the enemy discovered their debarkation. In this they succeeded; and they had the further good fortune of passing the strongest position of the enemy before the French had time to form in sufficient force. By seven o'clock, the assailants were in possession of the first two batteries, Lambousiere and la Centiere, and the guns were forthwith turned against the enemy's shipping, whose well-directed fire of grape, from within pistol-shot of the shore, had greatly annoyed the British force.

A detachment, consisting of the second column,

under Captain Inbeck, was now dispatched to take possession of the third battery, La Neuve, which the enemy had abandoned; but, on its way, it fell in with the main force of the enemy, strongly posted within stone walls, with eight six-pounders on its flanks. They were charged in gallant style, but without driving them from their position. Captain Harvey, with the third column, then moved to support Captain Inbeck, and succeeded in taking two of the enemy's guns. The action now became warm and general. The French were reinforced from the hills, and from the ships in the harbour—the British by the advance of the reserve, which had previously covered the batteries. The guns of the first and second batteries were spiked, and the third was occupied by seamen under the command of Captain Willoughby, who soon opened its fire upon the shipping. The enemy now gave way, the fourth and fifth batteries were won without resistance, and at half-past eight the town of St. Paul's was in the possession of the British.

Till this period the naval force had been compelled to remain inactive, as they could not venture to attack the enemy's ships, lest they should annoy the British troops, who were within range. They now stood in, Captain Pym taking the lead, and opened their fire upon the enemy's ships, all of which cut their cables and drifted on shore. The seamen, however, succeeded in heaving them off without any material injury.

The force by which this brilliant exploit was

achieved was inconsiderable. The detachment embarked from Rodriguez consisted of only 368 officers and men. It was strengthened by 100 seamen and 136 marines from the blockading squadron; thus making a total of 604. The victory was gained with the comparatively trifling loss of 15 killed, 58 wounded, and 3 missing.

The success which attended the attempt seems to have paralyzed the enemy. General des Brusles, the commander of the island, marched from the capital, St. Denis, to repel the invaders, and on the evening of the 22d appeared with considerable force on the hills above St. Paul's; but, either from overrating the numbers of the British, or from some other cause, at which it were vain to guess, he retreated, and terminated his career by shooting himself. He left behind him a paper, which sufficiently illustrates the state of his feelings, though it but imperfectly accounts for his despair of success. It was to this effect: "I will not be a traitor to my country. I will not, in consequence of what I foresee from the hatred and ambition of some individuals, who are attached to a revolutionary sect, sacrifice the inhabitants in the useless defence of an open colony. Death awaits me on the scaffold. I prefer giving it myself: and I recommend my wife and children to Providence, and to those who can feel for them."

Judging from the temper with which Buonaparte was accustomed to regard unsuccessful com-

manders, the apprehensions of General des Bruslés cannot be considered unreasonable. It is gratifying to know that his wishes, with regard to his family, were not disappointed; they found in the British commander those humane and generous feelings which their deceased protector had invoked on their behalf. The widow of the general having expressed a wish to go to her own family at the Mauritius, Commodore Rowley immediately appointed a vessel, with a cartel flag, to convey her thither, with her children, servants, and effects.

The career of the British force had been highly brilliant, and, in addition to its actual achievements, it had obviously inspired a degree of terror altogether disproportioned to its extent; but it was quite unequal to undertake the conquest of the island; and this result formed no part of the plan of those who projected the attack. In the destruction of the batteries and the capture of the shipping in the harbour, a part of which were prizes which had been recently taken by the enemy, all that was sought for was attained. As much public property as could be carried away was embarked, the remainder was destoyed, and the island for awhile abandoned; the squadron resuming its usual occupation, and Colonel Keating, with his troops, returning to Rodriguez.

In the following year, preparations were made for a serious attempt to annihilate the French

power in the Indian seas; an attempt encouraged by the success of a desultory but brilliant exploit achieved by Captain Willoughby, who, at the head of about a hundred of the crew of the *Nereide*, which he commanded, landed at Jacolet in the Mauritius. The landing was effected under the fire of two batteries, and, as the assailants formed on the beach, they became exposed to a heavy discharge of musketry; but in ten minutes the first battery was in their possession, and having spiked the guns, they marched to the guard-house, which was protected by ten field-pieces, some regular troops, and a strong detachment of artillery. They were charged by Captain Willoughby and his little band, and immediately gave way, abandoning their guns and their commanding officer, who was made prisoner in the act of spiking them.

The British then pushed on to the second and stronger battery, to gain which they had to pass the river Le Gulet, swollen and greatly increased in rapidity by heavy rains. The difficulty of crossing the river having been conquered, the battery was immediately carried, and the commander taken. Here, as before, the guns were spiked, and the party were about to return to their first ship, when the troops which had fled from the battery again appeared, strongly reinforced by militia and irregulars. Captain Willoughby advanced towards them, and on his coming within

musket-shot, they opened their fire. Suspecting that they would again have recourse to flight, the British commander made an oblique movement, with the intention of getting into their rear, but the moment this was discovered by the militia, they fled, followed by the regulars, with a celerity that defied pursuit. Finally, Captain Willoughby burnt the signal-house and flag-staff, and, carrying with him some field pieces and stores, re-embarked with all his men except one, who was killed.

The organized system of operations against the French islands was not acted upon until later in the year. The first step was to renew the attempt against the Isle of Bourbon, with sufficient strength to take and retain possession of that colony. For this purpose, the force at Rodriguez, under command of Colonel Keating, was augmented from the three presidencies to the number of 3,650 rank and file, of whom about one-half were Europeans. Colonel Keating had been long occupied in training his troops, at Rodriguez, to the service to which they were destined, accustoming them to a country intersected with ravines and precipices, like that in which they were about to act. The transports, which conveyed the reinforcements, arrived off Rodriguez on the 20th of June; but the unfavourable state of the weather detained the expedition from proceeding until the 3d of July. Before it sailed, Colonel Keating

communicated to the commanders of brigades the information he had acquired as to the enemy's strength and position, and his own determination as to the mode of operations. This, in his own words, was "to strike the first blow at the heart of the enemy," to gain possession of the capital, and let further proceedings be guided by circumstances. Every thing during the night, or before daylight, was to be carried by the bayonet, Colonel Keating judiciously concluding that the French island force, trained in a system of firing from behind walls and houses, and from the opposite side of impassable ravines, would never be brought to stand against English bayonets.

On the 6th, the whole of the expedition came to a rendezvous about fifty miles to the windward of the Isle of Bourbon, when part of the troops were removed from the transports on board his Majesty's squadron, consisting of the *Boadicea*, the *Sirius*, the *Iphigenia*, the *Magicienne*, and the *Nereide*, under the command of Commodore Rowley, which immediately stood for the different points of debarkation. On the afternoon of the 7th, most of the ships had arrived at their destined stations off the island, and preparations were made for landing the troops. This was effected to some extent. Captain Pym landed the whole of the troops on board his frigate, the *Sirius*, at Grande Chaloupe, a part of the beach, about six miles to the westward of St. Denis, the capital of

the island; and Lieutenant Watling, of that frigate, with his men, took possession of a neighbouring height, thereby preventing reinforcements being sent to St. Denis from the neighbouring town of St. Paul's.

The other point of descent was the River de Pluies, about three miles to the eastward of St. Denis. The beach on that side of the island is composed of large shingles, steep, and difficult of access, and the wind, which is very uncertain in these latitudes, suddenly and violently increasing, the surf rose to an unexpected height. Captain Willoughby, ever the first at the post of danger, pushed off, with a party of seamen and a detachment of troops, in the *Estafette*, prize schooner. A few boats followed, and the men were landed with the loss of only four; but the schooner and several of the boats were dashed to pieces in the surf. Another small body of troops effected a landing somewhat more to the right, under Lieutenant-colonel Macleod. A small transport was placed upon the beach to act as a breakwater, in the hope that the men might be enabled to land over her stern or under her lee; this was ably performed by Lieutenant Lloyd, of the *Boadicea*, but the violence of the weather, and the natural difficulties of the situation, frustrated the success of the attempt, and it was found impossible to land any more troops that evening. Those who had succeeded in landing had lost a considerable part

of their arms, and all their ammunition was damaged.

It now became an object of importance to communicate with the detachment on shore, but all hope of doing so seemed cut off by the circumstances which suspended the landing of the troops. In this emergency the desired means of communication were furnished by that unconquerable spirit which our countrymen have so often displayed under circumstances which almost justify despair. Lieutenant Foulstone, of the 69th Regiment, volunteered to swim to shore;—his offer was accepted; he made the attempt, and succeeded, by diving under the surf, from whence he was dragged by a boat-hook. By the gallantry of this high-spirited officer, orders were conveyed to Colonel Macleod, the senior officer of the detachment on shore, to take possession of St. Marie for the night. That officer immediately marched with his slender force, and carried the fort at the point of the bayonet.

The impracticability of disembarking any more troops to the windward during the existing state of the weather being apparent, it was resolved to despatch the remainder to Grande Chaloupe,* where the landing was successfully effected.

* St. Pierre, who visited this spot in 1770, says, "We descended and came to the Grande Chaloupe. It is a frightful valley, formed by two mountains that are very steep. We walked part of the way, which the rain had rendered dangerous, and at

In the meantime, the brigade under Lieutenant-colonel Fraser, which had previously landed at Grande Chaloupe, had pushed forward a party, the commanding officer leading the way, to dislodge a body of riflemen, who occupied the heights and kept up a harassing fire. This was soon accomplished, and the brigade moved rapidly over the mountains towards St. Denis. They halted there during the night, then began to descend at four o'clock on the following morning, having in the interval been joined by sepoys, pioneers, and artillery. They found the enemy drawn up on the plain, in two columns, each with a field piece at its head, supported by some heavy cannon on the redoubt. A severe fire of ordnance and musketry was opened upon the British force, who, however, advanced in admirable order. On reaching the plain, orders were given to charge. The French remained steadily at their guns until the British grenadiers came in contact with them, when, finding that the thunder of their ordnance was to be met with the silent but deadly thrust of the bayonet, they retired and attempted to form behind the parapet of the redoubt. From this

the bottom we found ourselves between the two mountains in the strangest solitude I had ever seen; we were, in a manner, between two walls, the heavens only hanging over our heads: we crossed the rivulet, and came at length to the shore opposite the Chaloupe. At the bottom of this abyss there reigns an eternal calm, however the winds blow on the mountains."

they were speedily driven by the weapon they so much dreaded; the British colours were hoisted on the top of the redoubt, two guns which had been spiked were rendered serviceable and turned against the enemy, and the batteries to the west of the river St. Denis were stormed and demolished. Thus the main force of the island was totally defeated by a body of troops not amounting to six hundred men. The commandant, Colonel St. Susanne, escaped with difficulty, and the officer second in command was wounded and made prisoner.

About two o'clock in the afternoon, a brigade under Lieutenant-colonel Drummond, which had been landed that morning at Grande Chaloupe, arrived in sight of St. Denis, after a severe march over the mountains, harassed by the enemy's chasseurs, who hung upon their flanks. As they approached, they were exposed to a heavy fire of cannon, grape, shells, and musketry from the town, without a possibility of either returning or avoiding it. Colonel Fraser, however, kept up a brisk fire upon the town from the redoubt. About four o'clock, he was joined by Lieutenant-colonel Drummond's brigade; and Colonel Keating, who had landed at noon with the rest of the troops, appeared on the heights. Preparations were now made for a simultaneous attack upon the place, when, at the very moment of advance, a flag of truce arrived to treat for the surrender of the island,

Colonel Fraser having refused to negociate on any other terms,

The articles of capitulation stipulated for the immediate evacuation of all the military posts and the surrender of all public stores; the troops of the line and *Garde Nationale* to march out with the honours of war; the former to surrender as prisoners, the officers being allowed to retain their swords and military decorations, and embarked, as well as the troops, either for England or the Cape, with the exception of the commandant, St. Susanne, who was to be allowed to depart either to France or the Mauritius on his parole of honour. To these a provision of an unusual kind was added, —that funeral honours should be paid to the French officers who had fallen, according to their respective rank.* The laws, customs, and religion

* If Shakspeare be admitted as authority, a similar feeling was manifested by the French centuries ago. In Henry V., he introduces a herald from the French king, preferring this petition to Henry, after the battle of Agincourt:

"I come to thee for charitable licence—
That we may wander o'er this bloody field,
To book our dead, and then to bury them:—
To sort our nobles from our common men.
For many of our princes (woe the while!)
Lie drown'd and soak'd in mercenary blood.
So do our vulgar drench their peasant limbs
In blood of princes: and their wounded steeds
Fret, fetlock deep in gore, and wild with rage,
Yerk out their armed heels at their dead masters,
Killing them twice.—O, give us leave, great king,
To view the field in safety, and dispose
Of their dead bodies."—*Henry V.*, Act iv., Scene vii.

of the inhabitants, as well as their private property, were to be respected.

The ordnance found at St. Paul's and St. Denis amounted to 145 pieces of heavy artillery. The loss sustained in making the conquest was slight; eighteen killed, seventy-nine wounded, and four drowned in landing. That of the enemy was never precisely ascertained, but it was very considerable.

The capture of the island of Bourbon was principally desired as a preliminary to that of the still more important settlement of the Mauritius; and in anticipation of our attempts upon that island Mr. Farquhar, the English governor of the Isle of Bourbon, published an address to the inhabitants of the Mauritius, the distribution of which he found means of effecting from the little island of Passe, which had been taken possession of by a party from his Majesty's cruisers. This acquisition was made in a very brilliant manner. Five boats from the *Sirius* and the *Iphigenia* proceeded on the night of the 13th August to the landing-place on the north-west side of the island, which was defended by a *chevaux-de-frise* and two howitzers. To gain this spot, it was necessary to pass a battery of several guns, and fortunately, the attempt was favoured by a heavy cloud suddenly obscuring the moon, which had previously been shining with great brightness. Before, however, the boats reached the landing-place, the enemy discovered and commenced firing upon them; two men were

killed and several wounded, but, nothing daunted, the assailants advanced and landed. Lieutenant Norman, in attempting to scale the works, was shot through the heart by a sentinel overhead: he was immediately shot by one of the seamen, who, headed by Lieutenant Watling, speedily ascended the walls. A brief but warm encounter followed, in which the British had seven men killed and eighteen wounded; but they succeeded in obtaining possession of the walls. Lieutenant Watling then proceeded to attack the batteries on the south-east side, where he was met by Lieutenant Chads, who had landed at another point and stormed and carried the works there, without the loss of a man. The two parties being united, the French commandant offered no further resistance, but surrendered at discretion.

The island was entrusted to the charge of Captain Willoughby, who availed himself of its proximity to the Mauritius to pay visits to the coasts of the latter island. His first attack was upon Pont du Diable, which was stormed and carried; the French commander and three of his men killed, and three gunners made prisoners. The guns were spiked, the carriages burnt, and the magazine blown up; after which, Captain Willoughby moved on to Grand Port, a distance of twelve miles. He remained on the island until sunset, and a strong party of the enemy, which attacked him, were put to the rout with the loss of six

men. On another occasion he destroyed the signal-house and staff at Grand Riviere, blew up the remaining works at Pont du Diable, and retired without molestation.

The British arms had hitherto been eminently successful, but the flattering hopes which their success had called forth, now sustained a severe check by a series of disasters, which for a time gave the enemy the dominion of the Indian seas. Among other prizes they succeeded in capturing the *Windham* and *Ceylon*, East-Indiamen. These ships, with another Company's ship, the *Astell*, were sailing for Madras, when they were attacked by a French squadron, under Commodore Duperne. The Indiamen maintained a very gallant and hard-fought contest with a very superior force for several hours; when the *Windham* and the *Ceylon*, having sustained serious loss in killed and wounded, and much injury in their hull, masts, and rigging, were compelled to strike. The *Astell*, after taking its share in the unequal struggle, effected its escape under cover of the darkness of the night. The French account of this transaction was marked with that bad faith which has too often characterized the official statements of our neighbours, and which was almost universal during the reign of Buonaparte; it asserted that the *Astell* had struck her colours previously to her escape,—an accusation which the captain and his officers publicly refuted.

The success of the enemy was not restrained to encounters with merchant ships. The French squadron, with the two Indiamen, their prizes, ran for Port Sud-Est, in the Mauritius, at the entrance of which lay the Isle of Passe, which the English had occupied and garrisoned. Four British frigates were also cruzing off the station, and in the attempt to make the port, the *Windham* East-Indiaman was turned and re-captured by the *Sirius*, Captain Pym. Having dispatched his prize to Bourbon, that officer formed the design of attacking the French squadron in the harbour; but, not being sufficiently aware of the difficulties of the navigation, the attempt terminated in defeat and serious loss. Three of the ships took the ground, and the fourth was prevented from closing with the enemy. These unfortunate occurrences enabled the foe to open all their guns upon a single vessel, the *Nereid*, commanded by Captain Willoughby. The fortitude and courage displayed by this officer and his crew were beyond all praise, and probably have never been surpassed. Deprived of all efficient assistance from the other frigates, the *Nereid* singly maintained the contest for the almost incredible space of ten hours. Captain Willoughby lost an eye, and was otherwise dreadfully injured in the head. A boat was sent from the *Sirius* to bring him off, but he declared he would neither abandon his men, nor strike the British flag while there was a single man on board

able to support it He kept his word—he fought the ship till every man of her whole crew, consisting of two hundred and eighty, was either killed or wounded; and when the enemy took possession of their dearly purchased prize, they found only a miserable wreck, peopled with the maimed, the dying, and the dead.

Of the remaining vessels, two, the *Sirius* and *Magicienne*, were so situated, that their abandonment became necessary, and after setting fire to them, their respective crews were landed on the Isle of Passe; the fourth, the *Iphigenia*, was with some difficulty warped up to that anchorage, the enemy making no attempt to prevent her. In this situation she lay, without the power of removing from it, while the state of the little garrison at the isle became every day more forlorn: their stock, both of provisions and water, was low, and they had no prospect of receiving succour. To complete their distress, they were blockaded by a French force; and as their means of subsistence were almost at an end, and escape was impossible, they were compelled to surrender.

No one object of this unfortunate attempt was achieved; its disastrous issue was complete: all the vessels engaged in it were either destroyed, or fell into the hands of the enemy. But though, as it subsequently appeared, the undertaking was ill-judged, the conduct of those engaged in it was such as to enable their countrymen to call up the

recollection, even of discomfiture, without a blush. Heroism like that displayed by Captain Willoughby and his intrepid comrades, sheds over defeat the lustre of victory. Amid scenes of blood and suffering far surpassing the ordinary horrors of warfare, these gallant spirits were insensible to every thing but their own duty and their country's honour. Never was duty more devotedly performed, never was honour more completely sustained.

The record of disaster, though drawing to a close, is not yet entirely complete. The *Africain* frigate was taken by the enemy, after a severe action, in which her commander fell; and another frigate, the *Ceylon*, shared the same fate. This vessel, having on board General Abercrombie, appointed by the governor-general to take the command of the troops destined for the reduction of the Mauritius, fell in with some French cruziers off the island of Bourbon. An action ensued, which was gallantly maintained for five hours, when the *Ceylon*, being dismasted and rendered ungovernable by this and other causes, was compelled to yield to adverse fortune and overwhelming force. It is said that the French commander observed, that he should have the honour of introducing General Abercrombie to the governor of the Isle of France sooner than he had expected. But this honour he was not destined to enjoy. In a few hours, the *Ceylon* was re-taken by the

English, when the general, thanking M. Hamlen for his kind intention, said he felt extremely happy in being able to return the compliment, by introducing him to Commodore Rowley.

The necessity of wresting the Mauritius from the enemy now became more than ever apparent, and preparations for the attempt were carried on with renewed vigour. On the 14th of October, Commodore Rowley sailed with a gallant squadron from the harbour of St. Paul's, to resume the blockade of the Mauritius, taking with him Major-general Abercrombie, to reconnoitre the situation of the French colony, and concert the necessary measures for its reduction. He arrived off Port Louis on the 19th, where he found the whole of the enemy's naval force at anchor in the port, two only of the ships being in a state of apparent readiness for sea.

Having left a sufficient force to watch the enemy's movements and blockade the port, he proceeded to Rodriguez, where the different divisions destined for the attack on the Mauritius were appointed to assemble. He found that the troops from Bombay had already reached their destination. They were soon followed by those from Madras: but the non-arrival of the divisions from Bengal and the Cape at the expected time was a source of great disappointment and anxiety, as the stormy season was approaching, and in the event of unfavourable weather,

the danger to the fleet would be extreme. He therefore suggested to the general the propriety of standing out to sea with the troops already assembled, and cruizing to the windward of the French island, to await the junction of one or both of the divisions so anxiously looked for. To this suggestion the general assented, and the 22d November was fixed for the departure of the fleet from Rodriguez. Every thing was in readiness on the previous evening, when the welcome intelligence was received that the Bengal division was seen in the offing.

That not a moment might be lost, it was resolved that the convoys just arrived should be supplied with the requisite provisions from the beach and shipping, and, without dropping anchor, be ordered to accompany the fleet then getting under weigh; and soon after the fleet, consisting of nearly seventy sail, stood from the anchorage of Rodriguez to the selected point of debarkation.

The coasts of the Mauritius are beset by dangerous reefs, and the island has only two good harbours. That called Port Sud-Est, which was principally used by the Dutch, is the more capacious, and being on the windward side of the island it is the easier of entrance, as well as the more healthy; but the wind almost perpetually blowing in, the difficulty of getting ships out counterbalances the advantage offered by the facility with which

they can enter. For this reason, Port Nord-Ouest was preferred by the French when the Mauritius came into their possession, and there, during the administration of Mahé de la Bourdonnais, who was governor from 1734 to 1766, the only town in the island was erected, in a narrow valley at the head of the harbour. This henceforward was the seat of government, and the port and town were denominated Port Louis.

The Portuguese, by whom the island was discovered, do not appear ever to have taken possession of it. It was first occupied by the Dutch, in the seventeenth century, who gave it the name of Mauritius, in honour of Prince Maurice of Nassau. These indefatigable traders are said to have been driven out of the island by the swarms of rats with which it was infested, and it is certain that they abandoned it about the year 1710. Whether the French had less dread of the disagreeable quadrupeds which had conquered their predecessors, or possessed better means of contending with them, is not recorded; but they took possession of the island after it was forsaken by the Dutch, and always attached great importance to it. Raynal dwells enthusiastically upon its political and commercial advantages, and especially on its value as the means of annoying the commerce of Great Britain.* The statesmen of

* This writer, after adverting to certain plans for securing the resources of the Mauritius, exclaims, "Then this island will be what it should, the bulwark of all the settlements which

that country had participated in this feeling, and much labour had been employed to place Port Louis in a posture of defence. They seem, however, to have relied too implicitly upon the reef which surrounds the island, and to have concluded too hastily, that the town would only be attacked by sea. To guard against such an attack works of considerable strength were constructed. As the approach of the English was not unexpected, additional means of defence were resorted to, and the fortifications on the sea-side placed in such a state, as to render an attack an act of extreme temerity. But the governor seems to have relied entirely upon his sea-works, and in a

France possesses, or may one day acquire, in the Indies; the centre of all military operations, offensive or defensive, which her interest will oblige her to undertake or to sustain in those distant regions. It is situated in the African seas, just at the entrance of the Indian ocean. Though raised as high as arid or burning coasts, it is temperate and wholesome. As it lies a little out of the common track, its expeditions can be carried on with greater secrecy. Those who wish it was nearer to our continent do not consider, that if it were so, it would be impossible to pass in so short a time from its road to the gulphs, in the most distant of those regions, which is an invaluable advantage to a nation that has no sea-port in India. Great Britain sees with a jealous eye, her rivals possessed of a settlement where the ruin of her property in Asia may be prepared. At the breaking out of a war, her utmost efforts will certainly be exerted against a colony which threatens her richest treasure. What a misfortune for France, should she suffer herself basely to be deprived of it!"

great degree to have neglected the means of defence on the land side.

The advantages of superior knowledge of the coast were now manifest. The French had supposed that the reefs which surround the island rendered it impregnable, and that the depth of water without the reef rendered it impossible for a fleet of transports to find anchorage. These impressions were not unknown to the British commanders; but, instead of supinely acquiescing in the popular belief, they took measures for ascertaining its accuracy. Every part of the leeward side was examined, and sounded with the most minute and scrupulous attention. This service was performed by Captain Paterson, of his Majesty's ship *Hesper*, and Lieutenant Street, commanding the government armed ship *Emma*. The soundings were taken in the night, to avoid observation, and it was by these means discovered, that a fleet might safely anchor in a narrow strait, between an islet called the Gunner's Coin and the main land, and that there were also openings in the reef here, through which several boats might enter abreast. The only objection to this place of debarkation was its distance from Port Louis; but this was not to be placed in competition with its manifold advantages.

On the morning of the 29th, the English fleet came to anchor in the strait. Two brigs, which drew but little water, anchored on the reef, within

a hundred yards of the beach, to cover the landing; the conduct of which was entrusted to Captain Philip Beaver, of the *Nisus* frigate. Soon after one o'clock, the debarkation commenced, and in three hours, ten thousand men, with their guns, stores, ammunition, and three days' provisions, were landed, without the slightest loss, or even a single accident. The enemy appear to have been astonished by the boldness and novelty of the attempt. On the first appearance of the British fleet, they abandoned a fort called Malastrie, the only fortified place in the vicinity. The landing having been thus happily effected, no time was lost in following up the success which had attended it. The troops were instantly put in motion, to prevent the enemy from gaining possession of a thick wood which lay on the road, and using the means which it afforded of harassing the flanks of the invading army. On reaching it, the advanced guard fell in with a picquet of the retreating corps, which, after a feeble attempt to dispute the passage, was driven from its position. This was the only opposition encountered till the columns reached the more open country. About midnight, they halted, and before day-break resumed their march. It was the intention of General Abercrombie not to halt again till he was before Port Louis, but the march of the preceding day, though short, had been so extremely harassing, that his intention could not be persevered in. The men

were greatly exhausted by their previous exertions, their way having lain for four miles among thick brushwood, through which the artillery and stores had to be dragged, with a degree of labour almost intolerable.

The inconvenience arising from the heat of the weather was increased by a deficiency of water. Several men and two officers had sunk under their exertions, and were left dead on the march. It was fortunate that these harassing circumstances were not aggravated by any operations of the enemy; but the condition of the troops rendered it obviously imprudent to attempt to reach Port Louis without rest. About noon, therefore a position was taken up at Moulin-à-Poudre, on a gentle elevation, a wood stretching along its front, and extending with some intervals to Port Louis, five miles distant. In the afternoon, the French General de Caen, with a party of cavalry and riflemen, approached the British lines to reconnoitre, and surprised a small picquet. They were driven back and pursued by some light companies. A few men were killed, and the general himself received a contusion from a ball.

Before daylight, on the following day a brigade under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Macleod, was detached to attack some batteries, the possession of which was necessary to enable the troops to draw their supplies from the fleet. Some of the batteries had already yielded to our seamen;

the remainder were evacuated as the troops approached. At five o'clock, the main body of the troops was put in motion. It shortly afterwards encountered a corps of the enemy, who, with several field-pieces, had taken up a strong position, very favourable for making an attack on the head of the column. The march of the British troops lay along a narrow road, with a thick wood on each flank. On meeting the enemy, the European flank battalion, which composed the advanced guard, formed with as much regularity as the bad and broken ground would admit, and charged the enemy with such spirit, as compelled them to retire with the loss of their guns, and many killed and wounded; but this advantage was obtained by the fall of Colonel Campbell and Major O'Keefe, two officers of distinguished ability. There was a signal-post on a hill, called the Vivebot, from whence every moment of the enemy could be discerned. The French being driven from their position, a corps ascended this eminence, removed the enemy's flag, and hoisted the British ensign in its place; which was then, for the first time, planted in the Mauritius.

The weather still continued oppressive, and the troops were greatly exhausted. These circumstances, combined with the lateness of the day, rendered desirable a suspension of active operations until the morning, when a general attack was determined upon. During the night, a mistake

occurred, which was productive of unfortunate results. A party of marines arrived to join the British force; they were dressed, as customary in India, in white and blue, and in the darkness were unhappily mistaken for French soldiers. An alarm was given, several corps stood to their arms, some gave fire, and the consequence was that many were wounded, and a few killed. But misapprehension was not confined to the British: the enemy were likewise disturbed by a false alarm, during which, it has been said, the National Guards betrayed such a degree of irresolution, as had considerable effect in determining the events of the following day.

On the approach of morning, preparations were made for the intended attack; but they were interrupted by the arrival of a flag of truce from General de Caen, offering to capitulate upon conditions. Three of the conditions were, that the troops and seamen should be sent to France; that the four frigates and two corvettes in the harbour should be retained by the French; and that inventories should be taken of all the articles belonging to the French emperor, and such articles restored to him at the conclusion of peace. General de Caen did not then foresee that this last article, had it been complied with, would produce no benefit to the individual in whose favour it was framed; it was not then anticipated that peace never would be made with the French emperor, nor that he was to end his days on an island in the Southern Ocean

immeasurably inferior in every respect to that for the surrender of which, General de Caen was negociating; that even over that narrow and barren rock he should hold no sovereignty, but should sojourn there a prisoner to the power from whose victorious forces such insolent terms were now demanded.

The articles which stipulated for the retention of the shipping, and the property of the French emperor, were rejected; that which claimed for the enemy's troops and seamen immunity from the ordinary fate of the vanquished, was assented to;—a fact which could not fail to create surprise in all acquainted with the relative situations of the invading and defending forces; while it was equally calculated to excite regret, not unmixed with indignation, in all who valued the honour of the British arms. That such a condition should have been demanded was nothing remarkable; it was but a fresh instance of that insolent pride, which, in modern times, had invariably marked the conduct and demeanour of the "great nation," and which, under Napoleon and his captains, attained its climax; but that a British officer should have been found to yield to the demand, is one of those rare instances in the military history of his country, which call up on the cheek of an Englishman the hue of shame. There was not the slightest pretext for the indulgence thus unreasonably asked, and thus unreasonably con-

ceded. We were in a condition to dictate our own terms. We had reduced the enemy to an offer of surrender, with only a part of the army destined to the undertaking; and, during the progress of the negociation, the Cape squadron arrived with the remaining force, amounting to two thousand men. To the British army, without this addition, the French could have offered no effectual resistance; thus re-inforced, all pretext for hesitation was removed; the duty of the British general was clear, and his compliance with a demand quite unusual, and almost unprecedented, cannot be regarded otherwise than as a surrender of a portion of the national honour, and consequently of national interest—for the loss of the one involves that of the other. At this time, it was more important than at any previous period, that no portion of either should be sacrificed. The French were masters of the entire continent, and England stood alone in arms against the people who had enslaved all Europe. The superiority of the French over other nations in the arts of war had been loudly proclaimed by themselves, and implicitly admitted by almost all the world; and to this universal belief in the omnipotence of French tactics, and the immutability of French fortune, much of their success was to be attributed. It was, therefore, of immeasurable importance to break the charm which hung over these alleged invincibles, and to exhibit them as

ordinary men. To beat them, and then, as if alarmed at what we had done—as if glad to be rid of them at any terms—to give them safe-conduct to their own shores, was to confirm the prejudices from which such fearful consequences had flowed—to sign and seal a certificate of our own weakness and the enemy's strength, and to send him forth, bearing, under the hand of the British commanders, a testimonial of the homage of England to the great idol before whom all Europe bowed.

The pretence for such acts of discreditable submission is always that of humanity—a desire to curtail the horrors of war; but here the hope of offering successful resistance to the invaders was beyond the reach of even the sanguine mind of a French general; and there is no reason for believing that, had the British commanders been stedfast in rejecting the obnoxious article, the negociation would have come to an end, or even that its progress would have been greatly impeded. But, if it had—if the insane confidence of the French commander in the good star of his country had led him to protract the surrender of the island, and if hostile operations had, in consequence, been renewed, on his head would have rested the guilt of the additional bloodshed. The British general would only have discharged his duty, in refusing to assent to terms unsanctioned by the usages of war.

With the enemy prostrate and powerless at his feet, there was but one safe and honourable course, and, in departing from it, he committed an error, which judged upon military and national principles, must be pronounced unpardonable. His own feelings doubtless prompted him to treat a vanquished enemy humanely and generously, and the honour of his country demanded this; but those estimable feelings were indulged to an undue extent, when he forgot the distinction between a victorious and a beaten army, and suffered the one to usurp the privileges of the other. Conventions were in fashion about the time of the capture of the Mauritius, and this may, in some degree, account for the course taken there, though it cannot excuse it. Such temporizing expedients cannot be too severely reprobated; they are, in truth, no more beneficial to the general interests of humanity, than they are creditable to the nation which submits to them. War is a fertile source of evil and misery, but no rational man expects to see the necessity for it banished from the world. While the nature of man remains unchanged, war will occasionally be inevitable; and, if it must arise, to pursue it with vigour and decision is the most effectual way to shorten its duration, and thus to diminish the mischief of which it is the cause. To cripple the resources of an enemy, is to lead him to desire peace—to restore to him the men we have vanquished, to be again employed in

active hostility against those whose weakness has released them, is but to feed the flames of war, and to assist in perpetuating their ravages.

The prize was gained at a comparatively small cost. Our loss amounted to only twenty-nine killed, ninety-nine wounded, and forty-five missing. The conquest placed in our possession a large quantity of ordnance and shipping—some of the latter of great value, the island having long been the depôt for the prizes made by the French privateers in the Indian seas. At home, the island was justly regarded as a most valuable acquisition, but the terms upon which it was obtained excited general disgust, and became the subject both of private and public reprobation.

The Mauritius is still ours, but the Island of Bourbon was, at the peace of 1814, restored to the French. This has been the usual course of events —what we have gained by our arms, we have lost by our diplomacy; our soldiers and seamen having poured out their blood in the purchase of conquests, to be calmly yielded up by the liberality or the incompetence of our statesmen. The Island of Bourbon is, from its position, of less importance than the Mauritius, but the possession of both is necessary to the security of our Eastern possessions and commerce; and, by surrendering one, we have compromised our power of retaining the other. In the event of a war, it will be a question, whether the French shall recover the Mauritius,

or the English the Isle of Bourbon. The dominion of the Indian seas we ought never to have surrendered; it is an essential appendage to our commercial greatness, and to the safety of our Asiatic empire. Never was a more mistaken policy, than to settle a probable enemy upon the road to our most valuable possessions, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the colony which is the key were to them.

CHAPTER V.

CONQUEST OF THE DUTCH SETTLEMENTS.

While Lord Minto held the office of governor-general, his attention was directed, with laudable perseverance, to the reduction of the power of the enemy in the East. He understood the value of our Indian possessions, and he felt the necessity of securing them. The subjection of the Republic of the United Provinces to the dominion of France, had placed the colonial possessions of the Dutch in the hands of England's most inveterate foe. Among the most important of these were the Molucca Islands and the settlements in Java. The British cabinet suggested the blockading of those islands; the more vigorous policy of Lord Minto planned and directed their conquest. They were, in succession, attacked with the same spirit that was displayed in the movements against the French Islands, and the expedition was followed by the same results.

The first attack was on the Island of Amboyna, a place which has attained an infamous celebrity, from the atrocities of which it was once the scene. The island had been taken by the British during the first war with revolutionary France, but was restored at the peace of Amiens: since that period, it was understood that the means of defence had been greatly augmented, and that several additional works had been raised at considerable labour and cost. The principal fortress had, however, the radical defect of being overlooked and commanded by eminences of superior height. The naval part of the expedition designed for the reduction of Amboyna, consisted of the *Dover*, Captain Tucker, the *Cornwallis*, Captain Montague, and a sloop commanded by Captain Spencer: the chief command was entrusted to the first-named officer. The military force, composed of a part of the Company's Madras European Regiment, and a small body of artillery, was placed under the command of Captain Court.

On the morning of the 16th February 1810, the plan of attack was arranged by the commanders, and on the afternoon of that day the expedition was in motion. By a series of very skilful and well-executed manœuvres, the attack was kept concealed from the enemy till it was too late to offer any successful resistance to the landing of the British force. When the vessels got under weigh, they stood across the bay, as if intending

to work out to sea; but, by a dexterous management of the sails, they were kept drifting towards the landing-place: the boats in the meantime were all out, with the men in them, but were kept on that side of the ships which was out of the enemy's sight. On approaching within a short distance of the shore, the ships, according to signal, bore up together; and when within about a cable's length of the landing-place, the boats were all slipped at the same moment: the ships immediately opened their fire upon the batteries, and the party in the boats proceeded to land without opposition. The entire force of the British did not much exceed four hundred men. It was immediately on its landing formed into two divisions; the first, under Captain Phillips, proceeded to attack one of the batteries, which though defended with obstinate bravery, was finally carried, and three of the guns brought to bear upon the enemy in his retreat.

With the other division of the British force, Captain Court had advanced to dislodge the enemy from the principal fort. It being inexpedient to make the attack in front, it was necessary to take a circuitous and most fatiguing line of march. Vast steeps had to be ascended and descended successively, for five hours, and it was frequently necessary for the men to use their hands to assist their progress, and to trust for safety to the hold which they were able to gain upon the slight and thinly

scattered shrubs. These difficulties being surmounted, the British reached an eminence which commanded the enemy's position. The perseverance which had been displayed seems to have struck the garrison with panic, for they immediately spiked their guns and retreated. On the following day the island was surrendered to the British force, the number of which has already been mentioned. That of the enemy amounted to above thirteen hundred men, and was supported by two hundred and thirty pieces of ordnance. The surrender of Amboyna was followed by that of the subordinate islands, five in number.

Another brilliant exploit was the capture of Banda Neira, the principal of the spice islands: this took place in August of the same year. The service was performed by Captain Cole, who had been despatched from India with the *Caroline*, *Piedmontaise*, and *Baracouta*, to the relief of the division off Amboyna. Captain Cole had requested from Admiral Davy permission to attack some of the enemy's settlements, which lay in his way, and it was granted; but not without a cautionary intimation of the disproportionate strength of Banda Neira to the means at his disposal. Not dismayed by this warning, Captain Cole departed on his course, and, having obtained from the government of Penang twenty artillery-men, two field-pieces, and some scaling-ladders, he proceeded into the Java sea, against the south-east

monsoon. During the passage, which occupied six weeks, the ship's company were daily exercised in the use of the pike, sword, and small arms, and in mounting the scaling-ladders placed against the masts, as a preparatory exercise for any attempt at escalade. On the evening of the 8th of August, the Banda Islands became visible, and preparations were made for an attack. It was intended to run the ships into the harbour before daylight in the morning, but, about ten o'clock, they were suddenly fired upon from the Island of Rosigen; an occurrence perfectly unexpected, as the British commander was not aware that the island was fortified. The attempt to take Banda Neira by surprise was thus, for the time, frustrated; but, on the following night, it was renewed with signal courage and good fortune.

The party destined for the service was about 390 strong, but those actually engaged did not exceed 200. While the ships were standing towards the land, the men rested with their arms by their sides. At eleven o'clock they were ordered into their boats, and directed to rendezvous close under the lee of the point of Great Banda. The night, however, was dark and stormy, and, at three o'clock, only a few boats had reached the place appointed, the rest having been driven to leeward. As the success of the attack depended upon its taking place under cover of darkness,

Captain Cole determined not to wait for the arrival of the remainder of the boats, but to make the attempt without delay. They, accordingly, pulled for the shore, but, within a short distance of it, the boats grounded on a coral reef; and, after labouring through a boisterous night, the men had to wade up to their waists in water. The landing was effected close to a battery of ten guns. This was immediately attacked and carried by the pikemen, the officer and his guard being made prisoners without the firing of a single shot, although the enemy were at their guns, with matches lighted.

Though success had crowned their daring, the situation of the British force was now most critical. Daylight was approaching, and the bugles of the enemy were spreading alarm throughout the island. A rapid movement was made towards Fort Belgica, and in twenty minutes the scaling-ladders were placed against the walls. So silent was the march of the British, that the garrison were not aware of their approach till they were within a hundred yards of them. The out-works were speedily carried, and the ladders hauled up, under a sharp fire from the garrison; but they were found too short for the escalade of the inner walls. A rush was then made for the gateway, which, at that instant, was opened to admit the colonel-commandant and three other officers, who lived in houses at the foot of the hill. The enemy fired a few guns

and kept up a discharge of musketry for about ten or fifteen minutes; they then fled in all directions. A few were killed, and among them the colonel-commandant, who refused to receive quarter, and fell in the gateway sword in hand: some threw themselves from the walls, but the greater part escaped.

A flag of truce was forthwith despatched to Fort Nassa, demanding its surrender. It was answered by the verbal submission of the governor; but the Dutch colours continuing hoisted, Captain Cole despatched a second flag, announcing his determination to lay the place in ashes if they were not immediately struck. This threat, aided by a well-placed shot from Fort Belgica, produced the desired effect, and the handful of Englishmen, who had been engaged in this gallant enterprize, were then undisputed masters of the island, with its two forts and various batteries, mounting nearly 120 pieces of cannon, and which had been defended by 700 disciplined troops besides the militia.

The only possessions now remaining to the enemy, in the East, were Batavia, in the Island of Java, and its dependencies. An extraordinary value had been placed upon these settlements by the Dutch, who used to call Java the most precious jewel in the diadem of the Company, and Batavia the Queen of the East. Unfortunately, like most other Eastern potentates, Batavia was regardless of the lives of her people; for though