CHAPTER IV.

IN COMMAND AT HASTINGS—CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND —EXPEDITION TO COPENHAGEN.

After a tedious but not disagreeable passage of exactly six calendar months, Sir Arthur Wellesley arrived at Portsmouth. He had spent one month out of the six at St Helena, of which he speaks in his correspondence as beautiful and salubrious; a fact worth noting when we bear in mind the use to which the island was subsequently turned. His leisure hours on board of ship he seems to have amused by drawing up papers on various subjects of public importance. Two of these at least are interesting at the present day, because they relate, one to the agriculture of India, another to the employment of African troops in the East, and of Sepoys in the West Indies. This interchange of force, which was a good deal thought of at the period, he unhesitatingly condemned, assigning reasons which it is impossible to question. But other subjects employed his thoughts at the same time. He heard at St Helena of the abrupt removal of Lord Wellesley from power and the appointment of Lord Cornwallis to succeed him; and remembering that Mr Addington was no longer at the head of the administration, he was not more annoyed at the ungracious proceeding than perplexed how to account for it. Like a wise man, however, he abstained from discussing the grievance, except in confidential communications with his brother; and laid himself out to ascertain quietly through what influence it had occurred, before he should take any decided steps to vindicate Lord Wellesley's reputation.

Lord Castlereagh was at that time President of the Board of Control. On him Sir Arthur waited immediately on his arrival in London, and learned, scarcely to his surprise, that great efforts had been made in many quarters to create in the minds of the King's ministers a prejudice against his brother. It appeared, also, that these efforts had not been entirely unsuccessful, for Lord Castlereagh, an old friend of the Wellesleys, expressed disapproval of the Governor-general's wars, and still more of his treaties, and especially of the treaty of Bassein. Sir Arthur set himself to remove so false an impression, and to a great extent he succeeded. But Lord Wellesley had many enemies, and, as the event proved, they were both powerful and vindictive. At that moment, however, the Whigs suddenly became his friends. They had given him no support while sharing with Mr Addington the honours and responsibilities of office, but being now in opposition themselves, they did their best to separate him entirely from Mr Pitt. In the 4th volume of the Duke's supplementary Indian Despatches, there is a letter which gives a curious account of a visit paid by the writer to the Marquis of Buckingham at Stowe, as well as of an interview with Lord Bathurst at Cirencester. Lord Buckingham, a follower of Mr Fox, presses upon Lord Wellesley the wisdom of throwing in his lot with the Whigs. "It is the best political game of the day, looking to the difference of the ages of the King and of the Prince of Wales." Lord Bathurst, a member of Mr Pitt's cabinet, reasons differently; and while expressing a hope that his old friend would return to former habits of thinking and acting, advises him "to take no decided part in politics immediately on his arrival, nor till his Indian question should have been settled." Of this course Sir Arthur heartily approved, and Lord Wellesley, as is well known, adopted and profited by it. The same letter speaks of a ride with Mr Pitt himself from Wimbledon Common to London. "We rode very slowly," Sir Arthur says, "and I had a full opportunity of discussing with him and explaining all the points in our late system in India to which objections had been made, which were likely to make any impression upon him." He then alludes to

Lord Wellesley's natural desire to have a Parliamentary inquiry into his conduct, and expresses himself well pleased with the manner in which Mr Pitt listened to the suggestion. "I have seen Mr Pitt several times since," he adds; "he has always been very civil to me, and has mentioned you in the most affectionate terms."

Sir Arthur's next point was to obtain a hearing from the Court of Directors, to whom, on Lord Castlereagh's suggestion, he volunteered to pay his respects in person. They declined to see him, but invited him, as they could scarcely avoid doing, to one of their great Wednesday dinners. "My proposal to wait upon them on my arrival," he says, "the chairman recommended that I should withdraw, because it had no precedent. The real reason, however, for which they refused to receive me was, that they were apprehensive, lest by any mark of personal attention to me they should afford ground for a belief that they approved of any of the measures in the transaction of which I had been concerned." The Directors of the East India Company are no longer the influential body which they were, when Sir Arthur Wellesley was refused the honour of a special interview with the Chairs; but a retrospect of their behaviour to those who served them best in seasons of difficulty and danger does not impress us with any exalted idea of the fitness of a mercantile corporation to administer the affairs of a great Empire.

It was during this season of inaction, when Cheltenham was Sir Arthur's head-quarters, and he passed to and fro between that town and other places as business or pleasure required, that for the first and last time in their lives, the greatest Admiral and the greatest General whom England has ever produced met and conversed. "I had an engagement with Lord Bathurst," the Duke used to say, "and found in his waiting-room a gentleman who had lost an eye and an arm. We entered into conversation, neither of us being at all aware of who the other might be, and I was struck with the clearness and decision of his language, and guessed from the topics which he selected that he must be a seaman. He was called in first and had his interview; I followed,

and after settling our business, Lord Bathurst asked me whether I knew who it was that preceded me. I answered no, but that I was pretty sure from his manner of expressing himself that he was no common man. 'You are quite right,' was the answer; 'and let me add that he expressed exactly the same opinion of you. That was Lord Nelson.' He was then making his preparations for going on board the Victory, and counted on fighting the great battle in which he died."

Being upon the subject of Sir Arthur's meetings with the illustrious men of that age, I may as well give his own account of a somewhat remarkable scene in which he and Mr Pitt were actors, and which I am happily able to do in the words of Mr Pitt's best biographer.

"The Duke," says Lord Stanhope, "spoke of Mr Pitt, lamenting his early death. 'I did not think,' said the Duke, 'that he would have died so soon. He died in January, 1806, and I met him at Lord Camden's in Kent, and I think that he did not seem ill, in the November previous. He was extremely lively and in good spirits. It is true he was by way of being an invalid at that time. A great deal was always said about his taking his rides, for he used then to ride 18 or 20 miles every day, and great pains were taken to send forward his luncheon, bottled porter, I think, and getting him a beef-steak or mutton-chop ready at some place fixed before-hand. That place was always mentioned to the party; so that those kept at home in the morning might join the ride there if they pleased. On coming home from these rides they used to put on dry clothes, and to hold a cabinet, for all the party were members of the cabinet, except me, and I think the Duke of Montrose. At dinner Mr Pitt drank little wine; but it was at that time the fashion to sup, and he then took a great deal of port wine and water.

"'In the same month I also met Mr Pitt at the Lord Mayor's dinner; he did not seem ill. On that occasion I remember he returned thanks in one of the best and neatest speeches I ever heard in my life. It was in a very few words. The Lord Mayor had proposed his health as one

who had been the saviour of England, and would be the saviour of the rest of Europe. Mr Pitt then got up, disclaimed the compliment as applied to himself, and added, 'England has saved herself by her exertions, and the rest of Europe will be saved by her example;' that was all; he was scarcely up two minutes, yet nothing could be more perfect.

"'I remember another curious thing at that dinner. Erskine was there. Now Mr Pitt had always over Erskine a great ascendancy, the ascendancy of terror. Sometimes in the House of Commons he could keep Erskine in check by merely putting out his hand, or making a note. At this dinner, Erskine's health having been drunk, and Erskine rising to return thanks, Pitt held up his finger, and said to him across the table, 'Erskine, remember that they are drinking your health as a distinguished Colonel of Volunteers.' Erskine, who had intended, as we heard, to go off upon Rights of Juries, the State Trials, and other political points, was quite put out: he was awed like a school-boy at school, and in his speech kept strictly within the limits enjoined him.'"

Thus the Duke used to speak of the "Pilot that weathered the storm." He did not add, what the first Lord Sidmouth told me, that Pitt entertained the highest admiration of Sir Arthur Wellesley then, and used to say that he found him quite unlike all other military men with whom he had ever conversed. "He never made a difficulty, or hid his ignorance in vague generalities. If I put a question to him, he answered it distinctly; if I wanted an explanation, he gave it clearly; if I desired an opinion, I got from him one supported by reasons that were always sound. He was a very remarkable man."

Sir Arthur returned from India, as he himself informs us, certainly not rich, but master of a modest competency. That indifference to the service, however, which ten years previously had induced him to think of quitting it, was at an end, and he now received with satisfaction an announcement from the Duke of York that he might expect shortly to be employed. The promise was in due time fulfilled, and he found himself in command of a brigade of Infantry which

was quartered in and about Hastings. Had he looked upon this as a slight rather than as a favour, no one could have been surprised. The descent was striking enough from the management of great armies in the field, to the routine duty of drilling and inspecting two or three battalions at a home station. But Sir Arthur never for a moment took so unworthy a view of the matter,—"I have eaten the King's salt," was his reply to some who remarked on the arrangement, "and consider myself bound to go where I am sent, and to do as I am ordered." Brighter prospects, however, soon dawned upon him. By the death of Mr Pitt, followed within a few months by that of Mr Fox, new combinations for the government of the country became necessary, and a body of statesmen holding different opinions on many points of more or less importance, came into office, with Lord Grenville as their head. Now Lord Grenville, an old friend of Lord Wellesley, had been no consenting party to the attacks upon his administration of the affairs of India; and believing that Sir Arthur would be better able than anybody else to defend his brother in Parliament, he proposed to him to stand for the borough of Rye, in which the Government interest was paramount. The whole proceeding was from first to last highly creditable to both parties. Lord Grenville knew that on general questions Sir Arthur Wellesley would be little disposed to support the administration. He avoided throwing out the faintest insinuation that such support was expected, but, assigning his reasons for making the proposal, made it on its own merits. Sir Arthur, on the other hand, with equal frankness declined to avail himself of the offer till his political friends should be consulted, and writing to Lord Castlereagh on the subject, received a reply which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of inserting.

"St James' Square, Wednesday evening.

"My dear Wellesley,

"I lose no time in replying to your letter, which I received just as I was sitting down to dinner. As far as I can venture, as an old and very sincere friend, to express an

opinion, I think you cannot permit yourself for a moment to hesitate in accepting Lord Grenville's proposal. Your presence in the House may be of the utmost service to your brother, and you must feel that this consideration is and ought to be conclusive. I am sure, whatever may have occurred to associate Lord Grenville with other connections in the Government, that Mr Pitt's friends, so far as their sentiments can be permitted to weigh on such a point, will be unanimously of opinion that circumstanced as Lord Wellesley is at present, both with respect to the Government and the active steps taken to arraign his public conduct, your first and only consideration must be the protection of his character and services from unjust aspersions, which your intimate knowledge of the details of his Indian administration must qualify you above any other individual to do."

Whatever hesitation Sir Arthur may have previously experienced, vanished on the receipt of this letter. He stood for Rye on the Government interest, was elected, and took his seat; and had the satisfaction of knowing that his straightforward statements of what his brother had done contributed mainly to the Parliamentary acquittal, which saved to Lord Wellesley his good name, though it robbed him of the bulk of his fortune.

The fate of the coalition cabinet of "all the talents," as it was called, is well known. The attempt to force upon George III. measures to which he was hostile, led within the year to the resignation of Lord Grenville and his colleagues; and a new administration, pledged to an opposite policy, came into office. Of that administration the Duke of Portland became the head. The Duke of Richmond was nominated to the Lieutenancy of Ireland, and Sir Arthur Wellesley was appointed to serve under him as Chief Secretary.

The state of Ireland both social and political was at that time very deplorable. Shut out from the administration of the affairs of their own country, the Roman Catholic gentry were agitating for the repeal of the disabilities under which

they laboured. The Roman Catholic clergy, having special objects of their own to serve, gave them in this agitation but a divided support, while the great body of the people, still suffering from the effects of the rebellions of 1798 and 1803, stood in some degree apart from both. Meanwhile the habits of both high and low were become alike demoralized and vicious. The upper classes took no thought of the lower, except to wring from them the utmost possible amount of rent; which they squandered upon a hospitality as rude as it was lavish, resulting in a majority of cases in ruin to themselves and to their families. The example thus set was not lost upon the lower orders. Idle and improvident, they aspired to nothing better than to keep soul and body together, by agriculture carried on in its rudest form, and eked out by universal mendicancy. And all were alike untruthful, corrupt, and selfish. Jobbing was the rule in every station of life; integrity, and respect for principle, the exception. On the yeomanry and peasantry of a nation so circumstanced, no reliance could be placed, for they were disaffected almost to a man; and to a section only of the gentry could the Government look for support. But support, especially support in Parliament, was not to be secured except as a matter of bargain. Noblemen and gentlemen commanding votes in their respective counties or boroughs, sold them to the best bidder; sometimes for a single session, sometimes for a whole Parliament; sometimes for a series of years. And as the party in power was generally in a condition to offer a better price than the party in opposition, the Government of the day, whether it were Whig or Tory, derived no small share of its political strength from the Irish constituencies.

To the Chief Secretary was committed, among other important trusts, the care of managing what were called the political influences of Ireland. This had been done time out of mind, with just so much of disguise as to render the corruption over which the veil was assumed to be thrown, doubly hideous. Now of hypocrisy in this or in any other case Sir Arthur was incapable. Taking office as a subordinate member of the Government, he took it with all its responsibilities, and he acquitted himself of these responsibili-

ties in civil life exactly as he would have done had they been connected with operations in the field. What concern had he with men's meannesses except to make use of them? As to calling jobs by any other than their proper names, or pretending to appeal to patriotism, when the point really to be touched was self-interest, such a course of proceeding lay quite apart from his idiosyncrasies. He never went about the bush in asking for parliamentary support. His negotiations were all open and above-board. Places, pensions, advancement in rank, sums of money, were promised in exchange for seats; and deaneries and bishoprics, equally with clerkships of customs and tide-waiters' places, balanced on one side votes in the Houses of Lords and Commons on the other. I have often heard him speak of the political system of that period, and always in the same terms. "It is not very easily defended on abstract grounds, but in this, as in everything else connected with the management of human affairs, we must look rather to results than to matters of detail. You condemn the Government for bribing the Irish gentlemen, and the Irish gentlemen for accepting bribes. I am not going to defend the Irish, or any other gentlemen who accept bribes. That is their concern, not mine. But if the object sought be the best possible Government, and if that Government cannot be obtained except through the venality of individuals, you surely won't blame those who turn even the moral weaknesses of individuals to good account?"

"Perhaps not; but can that be the best possible government which rests upon the moral obliquity of a whole nation?"

"In the first place, I deny that the whole nation is or ever was corrupt, though a portion of its more influential classes may have been so. For one member who was returned through what you call corruption to the United Parliament in 1807, ten took their seats the honest advocates of the opinions which they held. And if the Government, let it be composed of what party it might, was able to purchase the support of that tenth, by what you call corruption, it was surely justified in securing such support, rather than allow these members to go over to the opposition."

"But can you justify this practice of buying and selling seats in the legislature at all?"

"Now you are opening up the whole question of constitutional government. If you mean to ask whether I, as an individual, could bring myself to barter political influence for private gain, or whether I hold in any respect those who do so, my answer is, that no consideration on earth would induce me to make such exchange, and that I heartily despise a venal politician, to whatever party in the state he may belong. But my feeling in this matter ought not to turn me aside from the consideration of this great fact: under a constitutional monarchy we have to choose one of two things, but we cannot have both. Either we may so manage our political influences as that the wealth and intelligence of the country shall preponderate in the legislature, in which case property will be protected, at the same time that the freest course is opened to industry and talent,—or we may throw this influence into the hands of the needy and the ignorant, with the certain prospect before us of a scramble, sooner or later. Now I am one of those who believe that no nation ever has thriven, or ever will thrive, under a scramble. And, therefore, since I cannot command a majority in favour of order, except by influence, I am willing to use influence, even though the particular manner of using it may go against the grain."

"Of course, you allude more particularly to close boroughs?"

"No, I do not. Close boroughs are generally less open to be swayed by mercenary considerations than larger constituencies. Some of them belong to great noblemen, whose general views are either in agreement with those of the Government, whatever it may be, or opposed to them. These great noblemen are not to be bought by offers of place for themselves or their dependents; and still less by bribes in money. Others are in the hands of gentlemen who represent colonial and other special interests, which they will never sacrifice for personal considerations. It is in counties, and in what are called open boroughs, that the influence of Government tells the most, particularly in Ireland, where, in

my day at least, almost every man of mark in the state had his price."

It was thus that in after-life the Duke of Wellington used to speak of the political system which prevailed in Ireland during his tenure of office as Chief Secretary. He defended it only on the ground of its fitness for the circumstances which had called it into existence. He never made a secret of the scorn with which he thought of the jobbers who had profited by it; nor is there in all his published correspondence a line which, if fairly read, goes to prove that his opinions were different in 1807 from what we know them to have been in 1831. On the contrary, there occur, from time to time, expressions which show that he sometimes found it a hard matter to conceal from his correspondents what he really thought both of them and their applications.

Jobbing and dealing with jobbers, now to conciliate, now to reprove, though it occupied a considerable portion of Sir Arthur's time, did not engross it quite. The care of maintaining the internal tranquillity of the country devolved upon him; and he was much consulted as to the best means of resisting invasion from abroad. The former of these objects he endeavoured to accomplish by the establishment of an effective police: the model of that which at a subsequent period Sir Robert Peel introduced into both Ireland and England. Against the latter he guarded by selecting positions which should cover the approaches to Dublin from the coast; and by arranging for the rapid conveyance of troops to any point which might be threatened. But he did much more than this. He set his face against all displays of party-feeling, and declined to sanction either the commemoration by yeomanry corps of victories gained over the rebels, or the presentation to the Lord-Lieutenant of political addresses by the clergy. On the other hand, he never hesitated to require perfect obedience to the laws, from rich as well as from poor, from landlords not less than from tenants. An agitation was got up by certain noblemen and gentlemen against the payment of tithes; he denounced it as both unjust and unpatriotic, and put it down. On the other hand, he advocated the introduction of an educational system into the country which should enable the

children of Protestants and Roman Catholics to read the same books and sit in the same classes. He was favourable, also, to a State provision for the Romish bishops and clergy, on conditions to which at that time the Romish hierarchy would have gratefully assented. "Our policy in Ireland should be," he wrote on the 18th of Nov., 1807, "to endeavour to obliterate, as far as the law will allow us, the distinction between Protestants and Catholics; and that we ought to avoid anything which could induce either sect to recollect or believe that its interests are separate or distinct from those of others."

This with other and similar expressions, which occur more than once in his Irish correspondence, would seem to imply that already the conviction was maturing itself in his mind that penal and even disqualifying laws, on account of religious opinion, are a mistake. At all events, I have myself more than once heard him express regret that Mr Pitt's scheme for the Union of Great Britain and Ireland had not been carried into effect as it was originally concocted. It is fair to add, however, that as the discussion proceeded he generally qualified that opinion. "Ireland was then, as it is now, the greatest political puzzle the world ever saw. The more justly and kindly you treat the people, the more difficult it seems to manage them. Indeed the results of our own experience scarcely authorize us in assuming, that emancipation, if it had been sooner granted, would have worked better than it does now. But that does not affect my argument, that the failure of Pitt's plan was a great misfortune. We had the Pope with us and against the French Republic in 1800; and the Irish priests were mostly of the old school. If the State had paid them, they would have been true to the State, I believe; for they got little out of the people, and had nothing to expect but extirpation from the French. However I am arguing according to supposition only, and may be mistaken."

"Did you approve then of the exercise by the Crown of a veto on all ecclesiastical appointments made by the Pope."

"I did not think much about it in those days. The Romish party themselves proposed it, perhaps because they

knew it would be rejected. My duty was to obey, and to see that others obeyed the laws. It rested with the Government and the legislature to change or to retain them. But this I did think then, and think now, that Government ought to do what is just towards the governed, let the consequences be what they may."

Sir Arthur was thus employed when an event occurred in his family which could not fail to interest him deeply, I allude to the birth of his eldest son, the present Duke of Wellington. For on the 10th of April, 1806, he had married the same Lady Catherine Pakenham, to whom when a captain of cavalry he became attached, and on the 7th of February, 1807, she presented him with his first-born. We know that in the latter years of his life the Duke's fondness for children was great. There is every reason to believe that this amiable feeling was quite as strong in youth, and we need not therefore draw unfairly upon the imagination if we assume that he hailed the birth of this child with all a father's tenderness. Be this however as it may, the state of Europe was then such as to leave him little leisure for the indulgence of domestic sympathies. Before the boy was five months old, duty called him again into the field, under circumstances which are better understood now than they seem to have been both here and on the Continent a few years ago.

The treaty of Tilsit, which brought the war between France and Russia to a close, included certain secret articles, according to which the Rulers of the two states were to divide Europe between them. To Alexander of Russia the empire of the East was to be given, the empire of the West was to fall to the share of Napoleon. One obstacle alone presented itself to the accomplishment of that purpose; England ruled the waves, and till she should be reduced to a state of helplessness, all other combinations must fail. It was accordingly settled that towards the subjugation of England, France and Russia should put out their whole strength, and that the other powers, and especially the naval powers, should be constrained to co-operate with them. Now there were three of these powers, and only three, Den-

mark, Sweden, and Portugal, which maintained at that time friendly relations with England; and these, it was settled, should be required, by force or fraud, not only to close their ports against English commerce, but to employ their fleets in covering a great enterprise for the invasion of England itself.

It happened that there was assembled at Sheerness and other harbours along the east coast, a large fleet and a considerable army, with which it had been intended to support Russia and Prussia, while yet at war with France. Delays occurred however in the departure of the expedition which defeated its purpose; and now the Government determined to employ this force upon an enterprise which nothing short of the necessity of the case could justify. The Danish fleet was a powerful one, Danish seamen are excellent, it was essential to the very existence of England that these should be prevented from passing into the service of France. But there was only one mode by which that danger could be averted, viz. by prevailing upon Denmark to transfer her ships to Great Britain, on the distinct understanding that they should be restored to her in an efficient state, as soon as hostilities between England and France came to an end. To make this proposal, however, without having at hand the means of enforcing compliance, was felt to be useless. So the troops received orders to embark, and the fleet to prepare for sea, only a few persons, of whom Sir Arthur Wellesley was one, being made acquainted with the destination of the armament.

Sir Arthur no sooner became aware of what was in progress, than he applied to be appointed to a command. His application was not well received by the Government. They had found him eminently useful as a civil administrator, and urged him to abide at his post. This to a man not rich was a strong temptation, for the salary of the Chief Secretary of Ireland amounted in those days to £8000 a year. But neither the reasonings of his colleagues nor the suggestions of prudence diverted Sir Arthur from his purpose. "As I am determined," he wrote to Lord Castlereagh on the 7th of June, "not to give up the military profession, and as I know

that I can be of no service in it unless I have the confidence and esteem of the officers and soldiers of the army, I must shape my course in such a manner as to avoid the imputation of preferring lucrative civil employment to active service in the field." In the same spirit, and about the same time, he expressed himself to the Duke of Richmond. "I accepted my office in Ireland solely on the condition that it should not preclude me from such service when an opportunity should offer; and I am convinced that though you may feel some inconvenience from my temporary absence, supposing that it is intended I should return to you, or from the loss of the assistance of an old friend, supposing that it is not, you would be the last man to desire or to wish that I should do anything with which I should not be satisfied myself; and I acknowledge that I should not be satisfied if I allowed any opportunity of service to pass by without offering myself."

There was no resisting such arguments as these; and the Government gave way: but they yielded only on one condition, —that Sir Arthur should retain his Chief-secretaryship, a substitute discharging the duties of the office during his absence; and that on his return, should he be able to return within three months, he would put himself once more in harness. Well pleased to carry his point on any terms, Sir Arthur could not possibly object to these; so he handed over his office with its details to the gentleman appointed to receive it, and quitted Dublin for a season.

It is the province of history to tell how and with what measure of success the Copenhagen expedition was conducted. The plan of operations appears not to have quite satisfied Sir Arthur Wellesley, who was anxious to save the Danish capital from the horrors of a bombardment. His proposal however to starve out the Island, by cutting off its communications with the main-land, was rejected; and the troops disembarking, the siege began. While the rest of the army was so employed, Sir Arthur, with the division of which he was at the head, moved into the interior; and on the 29th of August, engaged and defeated a considerable force near the little town of Kioge. Fifteen hundred prisoners and ten pieces of cannon were the fruits of this victory,

which effectually hindered the population from rising, and placed the whole Island at the mercy of the invaders. And rigidly and strictly was discipline preserved by them. Wherever he went Sir Arthur placed guards over the houses; and hindered, as far as it was possible so to do, all plunder and brigandage. Once, and only once, marauders got the start of him; but the misfortune served only the more to bring his noble qualities into light. "Upon my march from Kioge," he wrote to the Countess of Holstein, "towards this part of the country, I heard with the greatest concern that a detachment of British troops, which had pursued the enemy on the side of Valve Slot Rye, had committed excesses in the convent, from which your Royal Highness and your servants had suffered. I cannot sufficiently express my concern at the occurrence of this event, respecting which I find that your servants had already had some communication with the officers of the regiment to which the men belong who have been guilty of these excesses. The zealous desire of these officers to remove the disgrace which these offences have brought upon their regiment has anticipated my wishes, and they last night sent me all the articles which had been taken from your Highness's servants, of which they gave the officers a list. I now send those articles, and entreat your Highness to pardon those excesses, in consideration of the ignorance of the soldiers that your Highness resided at Valve Slot Rye, and of the circumstances by which they were produced. Those soldiers were engaged in the pursuit of a defeated enemy, who made some attempt to rally, and fired from the houses and buildings in your Highness's neighbourhood."

We are not surprised to find an officer, who, at the head of an invading force, could thus act, receiving from people of the country such communications as the following:—

"Thullargsholm, 4th Sept., 1807.

"SIR,

"It is an obligation to me to thank you, most sincerely and of my heart, for the protection you have given me in these days your troops have laid in my neighbourhood.

I can never forget it; I shall still remember it; and I beg you most humbly that you never will withdraw me this protection so long your troops are staying here; it will still be a comfort to me and family, in letting us live in rest and security. I cannot finish this without giving the best testimony to the people that you have given me to guard. They have always behaved there as people belonging to a great and generous nation.

"Most humbly, &c.,
"TÖNNEGEN."

The Countess of Holstein writes still more gratefully:

"Lethrobourg, Sept. 5th, 1807.

"In presenting to Mons. le Chevalier de Wellesley my acknowledgments I take the liberty of offering some fruit, only regretting that it is not more worthy of his acceptance.

"A Lieutenant Rila, of the dragoons, has just arrived in search of the Chevalier, that he might pray him to set at liberty certain prisoners. Not finding his Excellency here, he has charged me to become a suitor for these unfortunate men in his room; and I send their names in the hope that, looking to the noble and benevolent character of the Chevalier de Wellesley, I shall not ask in vain. With sentiments of the most distinguished regard, I subscribe myself

"S. C. E. COMTESSE DE HOLSTEIN."

CHAPTER V.

RETURN TO CIVIL EMPLOYMENT—BEGINNING OF THE PENINSULAR WAR.

Such was Major-general Sir Arthur Wellesley commanding a division in Lord Cathcart's army; the same strict disciplinarian as when warring on his own account in the Carnatic, the same that we afterwards find him when freeing the nations of the Peninsula, pursuing the invaders into their own country, and marching upon Paris. Wherever his influence extended, the troops were under rigid control. Stubborn and resolute in the day of battle, they were gentle in their bearing towards the peaceful inhabitants, who not unfrequently came to them for protection against the outrages of stragglers from their own armies. It will be long before Denmark can forget, she has by this time, I doubt not, forgiven, the wrong which a stern necessity compelled England to put upon her. But as often as, in her history, the proceedings of 1807 are referred to, the name of Arthur Wellesley will be mentioned, not only with respect, as that of a gallant and successful soldier, but with gratitude and veneration, because he was a just and generous man.

One of the last acts of Sir Arthur in this brief campaign was to obtain leave for the prisoners whom he had taken at the battle of Keoge to return on parole to their own homes. He waited after this to conduct the negotiations for the surrender of the fleet, and then lamenting the outrages that followed, the destruction of the dockyards and the burn-

ing down of a considerable portion of the city, he took his passage in the frigate which carried the despatches, and returned home.

He reached London on the 10th of September, and resumed at once, from his house in Harley Street, the duties of Chief Secretary for Ireland. Among his letters I find one addressed, on the 1st of October, to the Duke of Richmond, in which reasons are assigned why the city and county of Limerick should not be brought under the operation of the Insurrection Act; and on the 14th he is in Dublin, deep in Irish affairs. Indeed it is impossible to discover from what he has left on record, that during these three months of active warfare his thoughts were ever diverted for a moment from the channel of civil administration. But so it was with him under all circumstances. There never lived a man who more entirely than he possessed the faculty of abstracting his attention from one subject and applying it to another. Indeed it seemed as if in that capacious mind there were room enough for any number of arguments at the same time, each of which, as occasion required, could be brought forward, or thrust into the back-ground, without sustaining by the process any damage in logical distinctness.

Among other matters referred to him for consideration at this time, was a project entertained by the Cabinet of avenging the disaster of Buenos Ayres by the conquest of Spanish America. As was his custom on all important occasions, he handled the subject in elaborate minutes, of which not fewer than 14 remain among his papers. The first is dated in November, 1806, the last in June, 1808. They are very remarkable documents, evincing not only a thorough knowledge of the art of war, but showing that before he began to write, he had mastered the geography of the proposed seat of operations, and was thoroughly acquainted with its resources, civil as well as military. Had his plans been carried into effect, there is no telling what changes might have been brought about in the condition of the new world. But before any decided steps could be taken in that direction, a wider field of enterprise presented itself on which