Presented by the Author

TWELVE LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO THE

RIGHT HON. SPENCER PERCEVAL.

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TWELVE LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

SPENCER PERCEVAL.

WHEREIN A VIEW IS TAKEN OF THE PRESENT MAGNITUDE OF

THE BRITISH NAVY,

THE ROYAL ESTABLISHMENTS

FOR ITS

EQUIPMENT AND RECEPTION,

COMPARED WITH THOSE AT DIFFERENT PERIODS OF ITS STRENGTH, AND WITH THE DEMANDS THE COUNTRY NOW HAS FOR ITS SERVICES, AND WHICH MUST CONTINUE WITH HER POWER:

ALSO,

OF THE POLICY OF THE

MEASURES ABOUT TO BE ADOPTED

FOR THE SUPPLYING OF THE

EVIDENT DEFECTS

IN THE PRESENT

ANCHORAGES AND ROYAL DOCK-YARDS.

FROM

JAMES MANDERSON, Esq.

CAPTAIN IN THE ROYAL NAVY;

Author of a "Letter addressed to the Prime Minister, and First Lord of the Admiralty, on the Extension of the Naval Establishments of the Country;" and of an "Examination into the true Cause of the Stream running through the Gulf of Florida."

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INTRODUCTION

THE following Letters were at one time intended to make their appearance anonymously through one of the daily papers; but as difficulties presented themselves, the writing was discontinued.

They have not been written under the patronage and sunshine of power and wealth; but from the hope, that they may at some time prove beneficial to the essential interests of the British empire.

There are characters so suspicious, who imagine that the mind of man cannot be incited to action but by interested motives; hence they are ever ready to question, and doubt, if there be such a thing as the pure flame of patriotism; but if, in all ages, different characters had not existed in this country, where would her power and glory now have been.

The writer has, most assuredly, been exercised by great anxiety of mind, whether he should step forth in the cause of his country with an exhibition of the

facts which he knows to be true, or retire, like the multitude, into the vale of interested silence, and there strain every nerve to serve his private views, leaving the subject to those who may be better able to contend with a strong arm; as the armour of truth is not always proof against the shafts of injustice, and men in some situations of life are more exposed to them than in others. This he may have experienced as well as numbers.

Power is an adversary so much to be dreaded, that men shrink before its frown; as, says the proverb, "*might overcomes right:*" yet truth often makes her way to light, after being trampled upon for ages.

On some naval subjects, it would appear as if chance and caprice had been more the actors, than a decision founded on a strict investigation of what would be most beneficial to the country.

There is certainly much information necessary in the present day, when choosing a situation for a new naval arsenal. One that might be proper two hundred years ago, or when Holland was the most powerful adversary which England had to contend with by sea, when she had little to do with

the Atlantic Ocean, might be extremely improper in the present day. This is so evident, that the greatest wonder is, how a doubt can exist in any mind upon the subject, who is possessed of any information.

To run from the great ocean westward, near an hundred and twenty leagues east, an hundred of these through a strait blown over by westerly winds three fourths of the year, to a remote situation, where the country experiences extreme inconvenience, from having so many naval establishments there already, discovers that the subject is not yet properly digested.

To form expensive breakwaters to procure a mere anchorage in a dangerous situation, the fatal consequences of which no man can pretend to foresee, and this to the rejection of a safe harbour better situated for national services, when the country is aghast from being uncertain of what will become of her navy in peace, that right arm of her power, the shield of her shores, and the protector of her wealth, proves that some strange misconception stands in the way; and therefore that impartial deliberation is still necessary before the hand shall be rashly put forth.

The joys and wealth of interested individuals are often derived from the tears and distresses of their country.

It will appear that the sentiments expressed in the following Letters are not the offspring of fancy or misconception, but are formed from facts interesting to the country; if it were not so, they never would have appeared.

Let candour and impartiality decide, whether there be any inclination manifested to impose upon the understanding; let the writer then be judged by the facts he has produced, but not by opinions, unsubstantial as a shadow, not by prejudice, deaf to the voice of reason and truth as the inexorable habitations of the dead.

27th February 1812.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SPENCER PERCEVAL, &c. &c.

LETTER I.

SIR,

THE prime minister of Great Britain has been often addressed for various purposes; sometimes by the spirit of envy; sometimes by the spirit of disappointment; and sometimes by the desire to promote the essential interests of the nation over whom he presides. I trust, it will appear, that the latter can be the only motive that has induced me to address you on a subject pregnant with matters of the greatest moment to the British realms, and one on which the mind of the nation has been much occupied.

As you have done me no injury, I cannot, in justice, feel any resentment glowing in my bosom; but it can be no charge against your wisdom and penetration to assert, that in some things you must rely upon the information derived from others. How then are you to discover whether it be cor-

rect, whether its pretensions to disinterestedness be real or assumed, but by lending an impartial ear to all that may be offered on the subject, let it come from whom it may?

That governments are often liable to err, is a truth notorious in the history of nations; that the British government has often erred, is well known, both to its enemies and friends. It is the lot of humanity to be subject to error.

No one will surely deny, that the government of this country ought seriously to pause and reflect before it shall begin to execute plans for the extension of her dock-yards, and security of her navy, as palpable error might be fraught with consequences disastrous to her best interests, and a wasteful and unprofitable expenditure of her resources, which, in these days of unexampled danger, loudly demand the watchful care of unsullied patriotism and discriminating wisdom.

You have been already addressed, at some length, in a pamphlet*, pointing out the superior advantages the country would derive from the adoption of Falmouth harbour, rather than any other individual situation; but as it has been notified in the House of Commons, that a harbour at Northfleet, and a Breakwater in Plymouth Sound, were likely to be adopted, it cannot be deemed unnecessary to take a view of the policy of such measures, as it appears

* Printed and sold by Stockdale, Piccadilly.

from this selection, that there is some strange misconception, with respect to the situations of the naval establishments of the country, and the general services of the navy; much necessary information either impoliticly disregarded, or carefully concealed.

In discussing the consequences that appear naturally to arise from the selection mentioned, I would wish to avoid all unnecessary observations, and to reason only from the real existence of things, from indisputable facts, which can in no manner be supposed to have in view any personal application, farther than answering objections made by individuals or by numbers.

I shall then compare the situation of Northfleet with that of Falmouth, as it relates to the general services of the navy; notice its vicinity to four out of six of the royal dock-yards already established, and the alarming impolicy of thrusting another into the Thames, far removed from that ocean, into which so great a portion of the maritime power of Britain is constantly required to enter on numerous and important services; and this to the rejection of the most southern and western harbour on the coast of England, capable of being applied to every naval purpose.

It is not the eligibility of the situation of Northfleet, with respect to the formation of land and water that I mean to dispute; that its advocates

may assume in any degree they think proper; they may also expatiate on the advantages of the river Thames taking a winding in that place, which gives a western shore, and consequently a weather one, when the wind blows from that quarter over the river; but it is its situation, compared with those of all our foreign possessions, our great intercourse with many nations, and, as has been mentioned, with the general services required of the British navy. This brings us to a point of view where the eligibility of the formation of land and water, in a river remote from the Atlantic Ocean, is completely overshadowed by higher objects; and the mighty acquisition of a weather gage of a thousand feet is diminished into a point almost imperceptible.

Lay before you, Sir, a map of the world; trace the connection of the Atlantic with the Indian Ocean, and the British possessions there; then let your eye come back to the Cape of Good Hope, thence to Cape Horn, and pass along the various regions of South America; stand and ponder the probable destinies of the nations inhabiting that extensive country westward to the great Pacific, and their more than probable unrestrained intercourse hereafter with Great Britain, by means of her ascendancy on the seas. When this is fully contemplated, pass on to the Caribbee and Antilles Islands, behold the British power there established

by her arms; then scan the coast of North America, with whom Britain must one day contend, and teach the lesson she has taught mightier nations; cross the ocean to the Strait of Gibraltar, enter the Mediterranean Sea, and consider the various nations inhabiting its shores, the important interests and connections Great Britain has to defend there, against the power and influence of France; then come back to Cape Trafalgar, (proud name for England!) pass along the coast of Spain and Portugal; visit minutely that of France and her naval ports and arsenals; stand on the Island of Ushant; look to the north-west; then step over to the Lizard, there take post, and with the eye of political wisdom, view again the different regions you have passed over; then consider the extreme urgency of a speedy communication with the ocean westward; turn suddenly eastward, with your eyes full open; where is the Thames? Cast your eye near three hundred nautical miles, along that strait of the ocean called the English Channel, there you will see the South Foreland, and near it the Downs, that dangerous roadstead; eight leagues northward, beyond these shoals, sand banks, and flats, you will perceive the mouth of the Thames. —Ponder attentively the *distance* and *navigation* between your *station* and that *river;* turn over in your mind the general state of the winds in the English Channel, their frequent fluctuations from

south-west to north-west, and back again; then seriously ask yourself, in any exigency of service, how is a squadron of ships of war to get from the Thames into the Atlantic during the prevalence of such winds, which often continue for months together, and more often for several weeks?

Ask yourself, in the common calls of the service, how long ships and squadrons may be in getting from the Thames as far westward as your station, to its great impediment and delay? and how disastrous it might prove, in cases of urgency, without the English Channel, to depend upon any portion of the navy so far eastward? and what excuse could be made for it, when there cannot be the smallest plea of necessity, arising from the want of a western harbour?

This is so plain a circumstance, that it requires no seamanship, or the art of a navigator, clearly to comprehend the difficulties that stand in the way of ships of war clearing the Channel from the mouth of the Thames, in all urgent demands of the service, which cannot be limited to any time or season, when easterly winds are sooner or later expected, for at least some days.

The mercantile fleets that leave that river every year for the western ocean, are no proof of the eligibility of the situation for a great naval station, designed to give facilities and preponderance to the naval power of Britain; their history would

prove quite the contrary. Their being delayed by natural causes is only individual loss; but a great part of the navy being so detained, might not only prove a national loss, but be also attended with circumstances highly disastrous, and casting a gloom over pages of the history of the country? What weight has a mere convenience of land and water, against the preponderating considerations in the opposite scale? If it were the only place that the coast of England offered for such a purpose, that would silence all objections: but turn your eyes a few miles northward from where you stand; behold that secure harbour; that, Sir, is the harbour of Falmouth. Mark well its situation, as connected with the Atlantic Ocean, and therefore with all the regions you passed over.—It invites you to its entrance, to examine minutely the truth of the contradictory reports you have no doubt heard, and to an impartial consideration of all its advantages, compared with Northfleet or any other place; and here I shall for the present leave you.

I am, Sir,
with great respect,
your most humble servant,

December 1811. J. MANDERSON.

LETTER II.

Sir,

When I concluded my last letter, I left you at the entrance of Falmouth harbour, with an invitation to consider, with the unbiassed mind of patriotism, the unrivalled advantages it offers to all maritime exertions connected with the Atlantic Ocean. No doubt, you are fully aware, that in doing this you ought to be guided by the calls of your country, not by those of any individual; you ought to see through the eyes of the nation, not through those of party, interest, or prejudice; you are to judge, in these momentous days, for the interests of Great Britain. You cannot be displeased at being acquainted with the truth, if these interests be near your heart, which no one can doubt.

Here it may be asked, have you known no instances where the interested or prejudiced have endeavoured to mislead the government of a country?—have you not experienced any such thing during your own administration? If not, perhaps you may in this respect be pronounced singular.

The awful height of national strength and glory to which Great Britain has attained, and the gigantic power she has to contend with, raise serious and alarming emotions in the mind of every thinking man in these kingdoms; how much more so, then, must they do in the minds of those who have

to direct the complicated movements of the mighty machine of state, and who must be anxious to preserve it, as it is, covered with well-earned fame?

The naval power of the country has been so instrumental in raising her to this height, and in strengthening her arm, that to preserve it in vigour, must be the anxious study, and the glory of every minister who consults the true interests of the state.

Which then, as a naval station, is best suited to this end, taking all circumstances into consideration, Northfleet, or Falmouth harbour?

No one in any manner conversant with naval affairs, will take upon him to say, that the situation of the former can in any manner compare with the latter, in giving speedy communication to all the oceans and seas you were invited to pass over, and to all the regions of the earth stretched along their shores, or surrounded by their waters; what then are the reasons for which it is to be preferred?

There is a fine winding of the river Thames, which makes a sort of peninsula; there a dock-yard would be on the west side of the river, and a wet dock could be excavated, to hold a great part of the British navy in a state of ordinary, and ships might take in all their stores, as the French at Toulon, alongside of wharfs that might be constructed. These are, no doubt, matters deserving some consideration; but can no such conveniencies be attained at Falmouth? That it is possible, you must be

referred to the pamphlet already mentioned, to avoid at this time a repetition of some local circumstances. But without contending, that such conveniencies can be attained to the same degree of perfection at the one place as at the other, let it be inquired how the case stands, as it respects the active operations of the navy.

Two squadrons are immediately wanted for service in the Bay of Biscay, the Mediterranean, the West Indies, the coast of America, or any where else connected with the Atlantic Ocean; one is to be furnished from Falmouth, and the other from Northfleet. They are ready on the same day, the wind is at north-west; that from Falmouth sails free into the ocean, that from Northfleet can get no farther than the Downs. The wind keeps in that quarter for a day or two, then veers to the south-west, and so continues for weeks, veering between south and north west. One squadron is in the Mediterranean, the West Indies, or at the Cape of Good Hope, according as it may have been ordered; but the other is not to the westward of Spithead. This is by no means an improbable case, but one that would frequently occur, as you may convince yourself by consulting a correct register of the winds for any year past; whoever endeavours to persuade you to the contrary, keeps out of sight the main point at issue, and the most important advantages the country would derive from its adop-

tion as a naval station. Before this, the winding of the Thames at Northfleet and its western shore sink into insignificance.

Should it be answered, it is not intended that Northfleet should furnish squadrons for urgent services connected with the Atlantic, but with the German Ocean; this would bring me to what I proposed to notice farther, its vicinity to four out of the six royal dock-yards which the country possesses; those of Deptford and Woolwich are in the Thames; those of Chatham and Sheerness in the Medway; and the communication of all with the North Sea may be considered as at the same point.

If these four naval establishments be not sufficient to furnish ships and vessels for the service of the North Sea and Baltic, what establishments are to furnish them for the numerous and various services of all the regions southward and westward? It may be answered, Portsmouth and Plymouth are on a larger scale than any of those eastward, and therefore could furnish as many ships as the other four. But experience has proved, that where one ship or vessel, generally speaking, has been required eastward of the South Foreland, at the least two have been wanted southward and westward of the Land's End.

No temporary exigencies can make any impression on this most important truth, which will ever continue to be the same.

That this may not appear bare assertion, unsupported by the evidence of facts, I shall notice, in different months for some years past, the number of ships and vessels of war employed in the Channel, North Sea and Baltic, and to the southward and westward of the Land's End.

It will perhaps be thought sufficient to go as far back as 1799. In the month of May in this year, there were employed in the Channel and North Sea about 110 ships and vessels of war, about 12 of which might be of the line; to the southward and westward of England, about 290, 100 of which might be of the line.

In July 1802, in the Channel, &c. about 60 ships and vessels of war; without the Channel, 260; in port, fitting, 100 sail; the far greater part for the latter services.

In May 1803, in the Channel and North Sea, about 90 sail; to the southward and westward of England, about 400 sail; in port, fitting, 120 sail; a great proportion for the latter service.

In June 1804, in the Channel, North Sea, &c. about 160 sail; and about 260 to the southward and westward of the Land's End; in port, fitting, about 80 sail, mostly for the latter services.

In June 1806, in the Channel and North Sea, about 190 sail, 10 of which might be of the line; to the southward and westward of England, about 360 sail; in port, fitting, about 160 sail; great part

for the latter service, which need not be farther noticed.

In 1807, in the Channel and North Sea, about 190 sail, 10 of which might be of the line; to the southward and westward, about 380 sail, 110 of which might be of the line; fitting, about 120 sail.

In 1808, in the Channel and North Sea, about 150 sail; without the Channel, about 400 sail; fitting in port, 200 sail.

In August 1809, in the Channel, North Sea, &c. 150 sail, 25 of which might be of the line; to the southward and westward, 280 sail, 40 of which might be of the line; fitting in port, about 390 sail, mostly for the latter services.

In June 1810, in the Channel, North Sea, and Baltic, 175 sail, 12 of which might be of the line; to the southward and westward of England, about 425 sail, 70 of which might be of the line; fitting in port, about 170 sail, designed as before.

In June 1811, in the Channel, North Sea, and Baltic, about 190 sail; to the southward and westward, 420; fitting in port, 105 sail.

In this present month, December 1811, there are employed in the Channel, North Sea, and Baltic, about 150 sail; to the southward and westward of England, about 460 sail, without noticing those fitting in port.

From these statements, sufficiently correct to give a general idea where the navy of England has been,

is at the present time, and will hereafter be chiefly employed, it must clearly appear to every impartial mind, whether a new naval arsenal be most imperiously called for, on her eastern or western shores.

To place this question in a still more correct and important point of view, it will be necessary to examine, by what authority, and on what grounds, Portsmouth has been denominated a western port?

Look, Sir, at its situation on a chart, and give me leave to ask, whether it be nearer to the Atlantic than the German Ocean? You will perceive it is twice the distance from the former than it is from the latter; being 31 leagues from the South Foreland and 63 from the Land's End of England. It can have no claim then from situation to the appellation, a *western port:* what has it from the general state of the winds? Here it is as far from proving any claim, as three fourths of the year they generally blow from the western quarters. How then comes it to be called *a western port?* No reason can be assigned, but because it is to the westward of the four royal dock-yards in the Thames and Medway. But to call it a western port, when speaking of the eastern and western coasts of England, or of the German and Atlantic Oceans, is to adopt the error of common acceptation, which ought to be carefully avoided in all matters of national concern. How would it sound in your ears to call Plymouth an eastern port? Yet Plymouth is but eight leagues farther

from the North Sea than Portsmouth is from the Atlantic; and when the prevalence of westerly winds in the Channel is taken into consideration, it has a much stronger claim to furnish ships and vessels of war for services eastward, than Portsmouth can have for services westward. It is as near to Boulogne as to the Start; yet some men have called Portsmouth a *western port.* It is nearer to the Scheldt than to the Land's End of England; what right then has it to be called a *western port?* It is as near to the Scheldt as Northfleet to the Texel; yet it *is supposed* to be a *western port.*

Men may talk as they please, as best suits their partialities and prejudices; but here is the plain matter of fact before you, which no one can disprove or controvert: what call then has the country for another eastern naval arsenal? None.—Positively none.

Place yourself on the Isle of Grain, opposite Sheerness; if Northfleet were adopted, five royal dock-yards out of the seven the country would possess, one of them exceeding in magnitude all the others, are crammed into the space between the Isle of Sheppey and Shoebury, between the south banks of the Medway and Thames, whose point of confluence is the Nore.—Where is the Atlantic Ocean? Is not the question enough to make a British minister start with alarm, when, from the station you have taken, you view such a mass of naval establish-

ments near you, thrust into a space that has no communication but with the North Sea, and this through many leagues of sand banks, shoals, and flats.

Seriously reflect on the great events that have taken place, and which will undoubtedly hereafter transpire on the great theatre of the oceans and seas to the southward and westward of England, and where her means are to provide for them; then let your own unbiassed judgment decide, where a new naval establishment is most urgently wanted to promote the service of the country,—on her eastern or western coast?

I am, Sir,
with great respect,
your very humble servant,
December 1811. J. MANDERSON.

LETTER III.

SIR,

I LEFT you on the Isle of Grain, seriously to contemplate the alarming impolicy of having such a number of naval establishments near you, so far removed from the principal scenes of Britain's glory, and the operations of her fleets and squadrons, with another great establishment at Portsmouth, very

little farther from the North Sea, than the only remaining one at Plymouth is from the Atlantic ocean.

If such a palpable error, as this would be, cannot be perceived, it must be, either that the Thames and his windings have taken so complete possession of the imaginations of those who entertain it, that no other consideration can find admittance; or, that the vicinity of the eastern coast of France, the Netherlands, and Holland, so magnifies their fears, that they can perceive nothing else.

Must invasion from these shores be spoken of?—Be it so.—The French are making preparations at Boulogne, in the Scheldt, and the Texel; of this you are fully aware; and the attempt is expected to be made soon, when the wind shall prove favourable for the purpose. Would you assemble a numerous fleet in the Thames for the purpose of meeting them? Would you not have one in Yarmouth roads, squadrons in the Downs, and at the Nore, and others watching the enemy's ports of preparation? What has an establishment at Northfleet to do with this? If those at Deptford, Woolwich, Chatham, and Sheerness, with the aid they may timely derive from Portsmouth, or even from Plymouth, are not adequate to furnish a force sufficient to defeat any attempt of the kind, they may be safely pronounced a burthen to the country, and therefore ought to be razed, and removed to situations better adapted to the purpose for which they are intended.

Since they were formed, the face of the world and the aspect of nations has altered greatly; and this country, has at this day, attained to a degree of maritime power and pre-eminence, which her wisest statesmen never could have contemplated, and which these old establishments in the Thames and Medway are little calculated to maintain. Because immense sums have been there expended, cannot be a conclusive reason, why other sums, equal in magnitude, are to be laid out at the same places, when the appropriation of them can by no means yield the country an adequate return. Therefore the sums to be expended would prove of far greater national benefit, if laid out at situations better calculated to promote the public service.

If it were to be contended, that they have yielded the nation advantages equal to the disbursements they have occasioned, it ought then to be contended likewise, that if it be so, there cannot be any necessity for an augmentation in a space already crowded with, and groaning under naval establishments.

It is possible for a minister and first lord of the admiralty not to be correctly informed of the different items of expences in naval establishments, for reasons which it is not necessary to notice.

The expence of forming a new naval establishment is generally produced as an argument against its adoption, let the situation recommended be ever so much more favourable for promoting the public

service than any other that can be found in the same quarter. But, on what strong foundation does such an argument rest?—On the want of proper information. For, by attaining this, it would hardly appear worthy of notice.

When the expence of forming a new naval establishment, in a situation the most preferable that can be found for numerous and important services, is mustered up in all the formidable array of calculation, the sums that the improvement and extension of one already formed would cost the country, in a few years, and from which she could not derive half the benefit, ought to be fairly arranged against it, when perhaps the former might appear overmatched.

This truth does not appear so plain, because the disbursements at old establishments are little noticed, and are looked upon as a matter of course, while the forming of a new one attracts all eyes; interest, prejudice, and individual convenience, take the alarm, and the government, as in the case on which I am writing, may be beset by an host of misrepresentations.

You will allow, that most public as well as private transactions are, sooner or later, to be ascertained whether right or wrong; some may remain doubtful; but some that have taken place at different royal dock-yards, are by no means of the latter complexion. It may not be necessary for me to point at these; but you can satisfy yourself of the sums ex-

pended at different times in different places, and ascertain, what benefit the country has derived from them. It is true, you may find it, as has been already hinted, extremely difficult to come at the exact sum applied to any particular purpose, when its accomplishment is found to be barren of the usefulness promised in projection. There are empirics in naval affairs as well as in physic*. Some erratic

* Scenes which at this moment present themselves to the mind, bring to remembrance a circumstance that happened while the late Mr. Windham was secretary at war during Mr. Pitt's administration. There was lying in Plymouth harbour a fleet of transports with troops on board, whose destination and time of sailing were uncertain; but from being unnecessarily long confined on board, a great mortality happened amongst them. This circumstance was noticed by a member in the House of Commons, when the secretary at war asserted there was no foundation for the report. The member applied for farther information, imagining he might have been misinformed, when he was again assured of the lamentable truth; he therefore felt himself justified in bringing the matter forward a second time. A second time it was denied by the secretary, who produced late returns, said to be from the officers, asserting the troops to be in a healthy state.

Thus an undoubted fact was denied and quashed in the legislative assembly of the nation. The Rev. Dr. Hawker of Plymouth can at this time certify, in what space of time he attended the funerals of a certain number of those unfortunate men.

This circumstance shows how difficult it may be sometimes to prove, at a distance, a truth well known at the scene of representation.

projections in old establishments have cost as much as would have prepared a new anchorage, (Falmouth harbour for instance), to contain as many ships and vessels of war as ever have been employed in the North Sea and Baltic at any one time. Where then is the policy, advantage, or economy, of sticking to old naval establishments, which the revolutions of time, by producing a great change in circumstances, have rendered of little effect but in one quarter. It is like the officers and crew of an old ship persisting in adding repairs to her decayed ribs, which in time cost as much as might have built two new ones on a better construction, until at last in a storm at sea she founder with them.

If it were to be observed, that, in forming a new establishment at Northfleet, the old would not be persisted in; that it was designed to do away those already formed; what effect ought this to have on forming one in a situation more convenient for communicating with the Atlantic than any the country at present possesses.

Squadrons in time get from the Nore into the western ocean, but it must generally be a work of patience; so must it often be from Portsmouth, and frequently from Plymouth. The frequent short durations of north-west winds, which would lead from a harbour on the meridian of Ushant into the western ocean, will not permit ships so to sail from the anchorages in the vicinity of the most western esta-

blishments in the Channel, and which, as has been observed, is nearly as far removed from the ocean westward, as Portsmouth is from the sea eastward.

Let any unprejudiced mind then say, which is most wanted for the general services of the country, a new naval establishment eastward, or westward?

I am, Sir,
with great respect,
your most humble servant,

December 1811. J. MANDERSON.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

IT has been observed, that in case the enemy were making preparations to invade Great Britain from rivers or harbours situated in the German ocean, that this would be timely known, and measures taken to defeat his plans, not by collecting a great naval force in the Thames, but by a proper distribution in various situations, so that he could have no chance of approaching near the shores of this island in any force, without encountering her maritime power, and enduring its destroying thunder.

It has also been observed, that if the four royal dock-yards now in the Thames and Medway were

not judged capable of furnishing a force adequate to meet such armaments, any number of ships could be timely drawn from Spithead, or even from Plymouth and Falmouth, as the prevalence of westerly winds in these seas gives four times the chance of sailing from western ports eastward, that can be found for proceeding westward.

I am aware, that it has been held out as a strong argument in favour of another eastern establishment, and received as such by many, because a the revolution the Dutch fleet left the coast of Holland, and ran as far to the westward as Torbay, while the English fleet, as is related, was detained all the time at Spithead by contrary winds.

Those who are not minutely conversant in naval affairs, are often induced to believe specious reasoning as unanswerable argument, and may be silenced by technical terms and representations, having full as much meaning as Dryden's "veer starboard, sea and land;" and the good citizens of London may be kept in a state of alarm by the assembling of a flotilla at Boulogne, which could not stand the shock of a dozen of English frigates for one hour.

At this distance of time, perhaps the research might be fruitless, in endeavouring to ascertain minutely the state of the winds at the period mentioned; and more especially, when it is considered that events, even of a late date, may be so obscured to the public eye, that it cannot correctly discover the

truth from the representation before it. It is one thing to be resolutely determined to execute a service, and another to be looking for subterfuges to evade it. For what reason the fleet was kept at Spithead, may appear mysterious, unless it were clearly ascertained, that a landing would not be effected to the eastward of that anchorage. The general aspect of the politics of the day must raise many doubts in the mind, as to the particular circumstances of the case. Be this as it may, there cannot be the same difficulty in ascertaining, at the present day, what would be the state of a fleet at Spithead, and one at any anchorage in or near the Thames, in all easterly winds.

It will be extremely difficult to point out a wind, in those quarters, when a fleet of ships of the line might safely sail from the Thames or its vicinity, and one could not from Spithead at the same time.

A fleet at the Nore would be shut in by land, a considerable distance, extending over twenty-seven points of the compass; and moving in this space, it would be besides entangled in shoals and flats. A gale of wind from south-east might prevent a fleet sailing from Spithead; but would it be safe to attempt it from the Thames at such a time?

A strong wind blowing into the space between the North Foreland and the opposite coast on the north, that is E. by S. to N. E. might prevent a fleet sailing from the Thames or the Nore, while one might from

Spithead. The space within a line drawn from the North Foreland to the land south-west of Harwich, can only be reckoned a bay about twenty-seven miles deep, and its mouth about the same width. The numerous sand banks and shoals spread within it, while they form an almost insurmountable barrier to a hostile fleet, when the marks for its navigation are removed, are also difficulties in the way of one attempting to get seaward from its interior, when the wind is not fair to run out, and more especially when strong gales blow directly in, which are fair for vessels leaving the Scheldt and Texel.

When all circumstances are duly weighed, it must be evident, taking all chances of easterly winds, that a fleet at Spithead would stand a better chance of getting to sea than one in or near the Thames.

Should it be demanded, whether it were affirmed, that a fleet at Spithead would be in a more favourable situation for meeting one from the ports of Holland or the Netherlands, than if anchored near the Thames? it is answered in the affirmative, if the hostile force intended running to the westward of the Isle of Wight before it attempted a landing. Should it be asked, how can that be, when the Dutch fleet passed to the westward in November 1688, whilst the English could not leave Spithead? it is demanded, in return, with

what wind a fleet would leave the Scheldt or Texel, when one could get from the vicinity of the Thames into the North Sea, and another could not at the same time get from Spithead into the Channel? It is extremely probable there is some difference in handling fleets in 1811 to what there was in 1688.

It is granted, that the winds may be commissioned to counteract the best plans human wisdom can devise; but this can be no argument against their correctness. All that man can do, is to proceed upon a correct knowledge of all circumstances connected with the object he has in view; if he be foiled, however the event might be lamented, he could not then be justly blamed.

Should it be farther demanded, whether I affirm, that a fleet at Spithead would be in as favourable a situation as one in the vicinity of the Thames, designed to repel invasion to be attempted somewhere in its neighbourhood? This would be to ask, whether I asserted a manifest error, as this most undoubtedly would be. Should it be then replied, if I allow the Thames, or its vicinity, to be the most favourable situation for this purpose, I must also allow the necessity for an extension of the naval establishments in that quarter. No such allowance necessarily appears in the case. Should it be remarked, if a fleet were kept at Spithead, it would be prevented from sailing to the eastward at the time invasion was attempted. Would the

government be ignorant of the mighty preparations? For such they must be, if seriously intended. No; it has long being acquainted with them. For what purpose then should a fleet have been kept at Spithead, designed to assist in attacking an enemy bound to the shores of Kent or Essex, or more to the northward? It has had numerous opportunities for sailing to the vicinity of the Thames, off the Scheldt or Texel, or any where else to the eastward. Would an army designed for that service be kept in the vicinity of Portsmouth, until it were known the enemy had sailed? Assuredly not. Would it not then be the height of neglect, to keep a fleet at Spithead designed for such a service, until the easterly wind should blow, with which the enemy would be expected to make the attempt, when it could have been at the place designed for its operations months before? What then has a new naval establishment in the Thames to do with any such preparation, were it necessary every year? How much less then for once, should it ever be attempted, which may be very doubtful.

If arguments are to be founded on such a supposition, do not those who use them undesignedly plead the cause of a new western establishment most urgently? Undoubtedly they do. For if four dock-yards on the eastern shores of Kent, and one on the eastern shore of Hampshire, a ready auxiliary, be not judged sufficient to meet the menaces

of France from the Netherlands and Holland, what is to meet them from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea? Whence are all those numerous services to be supplied, connected with the arduous contest in Spain and Portugal? —those of great importance, from the Rock of Gibraltar to the Dardanelles and Egypt, which, most probably, will hereafter become the scene of greater events than any that have appeared there in modern times.

Whence are squadrons, ships, and vessels of war, to be furnished, designed to be employed from the coast of Labrador to Cape Horn, and from Cape Trafalgar to the Cape of Good Hope; thence to Madagascar, the Persian Gulph, the Bay of Bengal, and generally through the Indian Ocean? Plymouth cannot furnish one third of them; besides being nearly as far from the Atlantic as Portsmouth from the German Ocean; and its communication westward, owing to the prevalence of westerly winds, far more difficult than Portsmouth can possibly find in effecting it eastward.

It must be granted, that the vicinity of the shores across the German Ocean makes a greater impression upon the mind, and agitates the pulse of the metropolis much more, when hostile preparations show themselves there, than if made at Brest; though the danger might not be greater, if so great. Many disasters have been occasioned by squadrons,

ships of war, and convoys of troops, being cooped up by westerly winds in the eastern ports of the Channel; and why this important and undeniable fact should not be candidly acknowledged and remedied, is most unaccountable. What has private opinion, mixed with prejudice, to do with the public service.

If the enemy were to attempt invasion from his coasts in the German Ocean, after putting to sea, he must immediately put his plans into execution; he would soon be discovered, and he could have no space of ocean to cover himself from his pursuers.

But if, instead of attempting it eastward, it were made from his ports situated in the Atlantic Ocean, how would the case then stand? What part could Northfleet take? It may be answered, that it could furnish ships to succour the ports westward, as well as they could those in the German Ocean, under the same circumstances.

This is not by any means so plain or probable. For, after ships are equipped at the eastern yards, they may be detained weeks, and sometimes months, before they can get into the Atlantic; and strong easterly winds might prevent them getting even into the English Channel.

But even allowing it might be as asserted, upon such an uncertainty as invasion, which may never be attempted, however policy may cause threatening appearances; ought a great naval establishment to

be formed in a situation little adapted to render effective aid to the general service of the country, merely to wait for an opportunity of foiling an attempt at invasion in one quarter? Sound policy forbids any such thing. Invasion could be but a temporary attack, which could be met by temporary measures. Such an attempt, in the present day, would prove a kind of desperation on the part of the enemy.

Now I am on the subject of the enemy leaving his ports in force, situated in the western ocean, it cannot be deemed superfluous to take a view of some of his late transactions there.

A force left Brest, in December 1796, to invade Ireland, and having arrived on the coast of that island, was compelled by the elements to retreat, and arrived again at the port it left, without being interrupted by a British sqadron*. A force of less note did effect a landing in that country, and another was defeated on its shores, on the 12th of October 1797. A landing was effected in Wales in 1797. A strong fleet sailed from Brest into the Mediteranean, arrived on the coast of Italy, sailed back again, took a Spanish fleet out of Cadiz, carried the same into Brest without being overtaken by the English fleet in pursuit, often at a loss to know what course the enemy had steered,

* Some of the scattered ships were taken, and others lost; but the great body were not met with.

or where he was. He might have transported a force of forty or fifty thousand men; I do not say with the same number of ships. Squadrons have frequently sailed, and others have been dispatched in pursuit; sometimes the enemy has been come up with, and sometimes he has eluded all the vigilance and sagacity of his eager pursuers. He has sailed to the West Indies, made a coasting voyage amongst the islands, and returned to port in the Bay of Biscay, without being intercepted. All these things he has undeniably effected from his harbours in the Atlantic; but we have yet to learn that he can play such a game in the North Sea; which is not at all probable. He might indeed put to sea, to push a squadron through the English Channel, during a strong easterly wind; or, in a favourable season, with a leading wind, might endeavour to get into the ocean by the north of Scotland, or into the Baltic, if he were sure of protection in a friendly port. But there are many reasons for supposing, that unless he had secret views for drawing the attention of the British government to the German Ocean, that he would rather have his ships of the line in the ports of the Atlantic or Mediterranean, than where they are. Experience has taught him what he can do there; he has yet to learn what may be effected in the North Sea.

With such facts before it, ought not the British government to enlarge the means of the nation,

on her south-west coast, to facilitate the operations of her naval power, and for more promptly supplying the numerous demands made there, sometimes sudden and urgent?

When it is known that a large naval force is designed to leave Brest, as the magnitude of the British navy could furnish a disposable squadron, it might be prudent to have at such a time what might be called one of reserve. Experience has clearly discovered, that a blockading fleet in the Bay of Biscay may be so far driven from its station, as not only to give an opportunity for the hostile fleet sailing, but also to be unacquainted with the course it has taken. At such a period a fleet of reserve might prove of essential service. When the blockading fleet should be blown off the French coast, and had no timely intelligence whether the enemy had sailed, or if he had, what course he had taken; knowing there was one in reserve, it could make the best of its way to cover Ireland, and there wait the approach of the enemy, who, as in the case of the squadron with La Hoche, might stretch far westward into the ocean, wait for a change of wind, and then make an attempt to execute his plans, when an English fleet could not make that coast to attack him, if not there before the wind changed to the westward.

The force of reserve would keep as near to the enemy's coast as possible; if he had not sailed, it

could dispatch information to the late blockading fleet, which might easily be found by preconcerted measures. If the enemy had sailed, it could wait to intercept his return, or otherwise act upon undoubted intelligence as circumstances might require; which could be communicated to the other fleet.

It will be evident, that a fleet of reserve ought to be in a western anchorage.

I am, Sir,
with great respect,
your most humble servant,

December 1811. J. MANDERSON.

LETTER V.

SIR,

THE subjugation of the nations bordering on the German Ocean may not remain for ever; the remembrance of what their forefathers were, and the privileges they themselves once enjoyed, will make them long for an opportunity to shake off the galling yoke. They will abandon those principles, specious in theory, which seduced them from allegiance to their legitimate governments, and paved the way for the ruin and destruction of their country. But whatever farther revolutions time may produce amongst the nations of the world, Great Britain must ever

have considerable naval forces dispersed over the great oceans, and others ready to reinforce them.

The shock of the French revolution has so agitated the world, and changed the aspect of nations, and the present period is so eventful, that it infallibly presages other changes in various parts of the globe, where the naval power of Britain must ever be visible to extend and secure her influence. The naval power of the states in North America will increase; the nations in South America, becoming independent, will desire to acquire some influence on the seas. That Spain, if independent, will always continue favourable to this country, can by no means be reckoned upon; the Mediterranean will continue a scene of action; the Indian ocean always requires a naval force; to the borders of whatever sea France can penetrate, there the flag of Britain must appear, menacing her advance, and ready to oppose her designs. Is it then of no moment to choose a situation, the most advantageous on her coast, for executing the services enumerated? If a nation existed whose independence and happiness rested upon her military power, which was often required to make sudden movements, and the line of territory, over which her armies had generally to march, to execute the services required, were bounded by a river often impassable, but near the termination of her dominions; and opposite the road on which her troops must march, if they crossed

at any other point, was a spot whence it could often be effected when it could not any where besides, by which weeks of march might be gained, many calamitous circumstances prevented, and important advantages gained; where would prudence station the force designed for such services?—Near the spot where a passage could often be effected, when it could not at any other place, or at old stations, formed in ancient times, when her armies were chiefly required to act in another quarter, but which were now found unfit for the services before mentioned? No one can be at a loss in giving an answer. What difference is there between a nation so situated and Great Britain, in effecting a passage into the Atlantic Ocean with her fleets and squadrons? The English Channel is often impassable for considerable periods of time, on account of the state of the winds, from the Downs and Spithead to the Atlantic Ocean, when that small part of it lying to the westward of Falmouth could be effected by ships or squadrons sailing from its harbour, the distance to the Land's End being nearly the same as from the Thames to the South Foreland; but with this important difference, that there are neither shoals nor sand banks in the way. Another consideration of great importance, and highly deserving the attention of every minister, is, that the south shore of the Channel terminates on the meridian of Falmouth, the ocean receiving every vessel from

the port that can gain a league of westing in the run across. Where then is its fellow to be found, in point of situation, for giving effect to all services westward? It would indicate a most unaccountable want of discernment with respect to the general services of the navy, and whence these services are to be supplied, were a situation chosen in the Thames for giving farther effect to naval operations, when two-thirds, and often a greater portion, of the ships and vessels composing the maritime power of Britain are employed to the southward and westward of the Channel; yet the proposition is gravely entertained and supported by many advocates, of forming one that shall exceed in magnitude any that the country at present possesses.

It has been observed, that if such a scheme is to be supported by the *supposition* of what may be required hereafter, by *temporary events*, how much more forcible do EVENTS which have ACTUALLY HAPPENED, and almost every year take place during war, plead in favour of an additional naval establishment westward? This is continually proved by numerous facts; making no demand on suppositions and imagined probabilities to appear in its behalf.

I shall now notice only one argument more, which might be produced in favour of another eastern establishment. I do not remember to have heard it made use of; but when men are raking

their invention to find any thing that may appear to give support to a favourite plan, there is no knowing what might be produced without containing any thing substantial. It might be said, that in case of a great battle in the North Sea, an additional eastern establishment would be convenient to assist in refitting the disabled ships. If such a weak argument were to be used, it would be best answered by demanding, where, and how, have all the ships been refitted and repaired that have been disabled in the numerous obstinate and decisive conflicts that have taken place without the Channel of England, and hundreds of leagues from the British shores? A great new naval arsenal formed in the Thames might be more amusing to the metropolis and its environs than if formed near the Land's End; it may find many advocates from different motives; it might be pleasing to individual convenience; but it will be difficult, if not impossible, to prove that it could be rendered half so beneficial to the general services of the country. Is not this the important consideration that ought to supersede all others? Is it not the only one by which the government ought to decide?

I am persuaded, that from the facts which have been produced, (I contend not for opinion), it will clearly appear to every impartial mind, that, happen what may, there can be no plea of *necessity* for an additional naval establishment in the Thames, unless

it were designed to remove the present, and consolidate them in one situation, more advantageous to carry on the services for which they are designed. It is evident that there is not only a strong plea of necessity, but a loud and urgent call, from the general services of the country, for another naval western establishment, and that nearer to the ocean than any existing in the present day,

It has been shown, that out of the six royal dock-yards, four belong to the North Sea, being situated in the Thames and Medway: that the fifth, at Portsmouth, though called by some a western establishment, has no just claim to the appellation, being only half the distance from the North Sea on the east, that it is from the ocean on the west: and that, from the prevalence of westerly winds in the Channel of England, it has at least three times the opportunities of sending ships any where into the sea eastward, that it can find of sending them westward half the distance to the ocean; no particular instances of the prevalence of easterly winds can affect the general position: and, lastly, that the only remaining naval establishment at Plymouth is very little nearer to the Atlantic than Portsmouth is to the German Ocean; but from the general state of the winds, before noticed, it finds the task three times as difficult to get ships and vessels from its anchorages into the ocean westward, that Portsmouth finds to get them into the sea eastward. These, Sir, are no

specious theories, dogmatic opinions, or groundless assertions; they are undeniable facts. Let those who wish to keep them out of sight disguise them as they may to the eyes of those whom they wish to believe otherwise, ought not their language to be understood by every one who wishes to see the essential interests of his country attended to before all other representations? ought it not to be particularly intelligible to the government?

I am, Sir,
with great respect,
your most humble servant,

December 1811. J. MANDERSON.

LETTER VI.

SIR,

IN answer to what has been advanced in my former letters, it may be observed, that to supply the evident want of a more western naval establishment, breakwaters are to be formed in Plymouth Sound, to make it if possible a safe anchorage for ships of the line.

There are matters of fact connected with this undertaking, some of which I shall take a view of; and there are others, which can only be matter of

opinion, until the execution and time shall prove what facts shall arise out of it; some of these ought not by any means to pass unnoticed.

Lamentable, indeed, and disastrous would it be for the country, were the opinions on one side ever to be substantiated by fact; especially that of shoaling the water generally within such embankments, if ever executed.

Before I make any remarks on this part of the subject, I shall first examine what probable benefit the country is likely to derive from the execution of such a breakwater or breakwaters, more than if the expence were laid out in the improvement of Falmouth harbour; or whether there be any probability that it will not derive so much; and contrast the situations of the two places, not from opinion, but by substantial and undeniable facts.

Let it then be granted, that the undertaking about Plymouth Sound is finished, and that it holds the number of ships proposed; here is all that can be done with it. How is this to supply the urgent want of a western establishment for all naval purposes?

You must know well, Sir, that Plymouth cannot receive a third of the ships and vessels of war employed out of the Channel, and that Portsmouth is not sufficient for those it cannot receive; but that many are sent to the Thames and Medway, and when refitted, are often detained as long by westerly

winds, before they can get back into the Atlantic, as they might have performed a voyage from the most western harbour in the Channel to the Mediterranean, the West Indies, or even to the Cape of Good Hope. This is no unfounded assertion, as will appear hereafter.

Because there is a naval establishment in Hamoaze, that therefore there ought not to be another near it, let the wants of the country be ever so great and urgent, is a proposition so pregnant with mischief to the essential interests of the British Empire, that perhaps no one will be so hardy as directly to avow the opinion; although indirectly he support it by raising unfounded calumnies, and making needless objections, against the only harbour the country possesses near it, not much inferior in capacity, but easier by far of entrance, and more favourably situated for communicating with the ocean westward.

Yet it is only about this important part of the coast, that they are alarmed at the prospect of a new establishment; cram as many as you please into the Thames, where they are by no means wanted, these reasoners are supine and silent, or have little to say on the subject; but speak ever so softly of making one in Falmouth harbour, where the country could derive four times the advantage from it, they are immediately in arms, and the alarm

is sounded, as if all the French flotillas had put to sea.

Wherefore this should be, no satisfactory reason can be given; however prejudice may be clothed in plausible pretexts, and individual dislike put on the garb of professional authority.

Hamoaze can be but full; but it appears as if its advocates were apprehensive, that if government founded a naval establishment at Falmouth, it would be also determined materially to diminish that in Hamoaze. Hence the determined opposition to the measure from the neighbourhood of Plymouth; even from those who ought to blush, if a spark of patriotism warm their bosoms. But no such thing could follow, or be intended. What difference would it make to Plymouth, whether the ships and vessels it could not contain were sent to Falmouth, Portsmouth, or farther eastward? If the harbour to the westward of it were established, it would soon learn from experience, that its fears had been groundless; that the alarms raised by interested motives had darkened the eyes of its reason; and in time it would stretch out its hand in good neighbourhood.

It may be observed, that these remarks establish no point by which the government ought to be influenced; they, however, discover a source whence rumours may have arisen, which no doubt have

sounded in your ears; they discover a secret spring of action, which assumes the appearance of other motives.

It may be proper to discuss, in the first place, whether the expence in forming a breakwater or breakwaters in Plymouth Sound, is likely to yield the nation more solid advantages than if laid out at Falmouth, either in improving that harbour, or in forming a breakwater without it.

I by no means profess myself so much of an engineer, as to pretend giving calculations which might be depended upon; but I believe government has sometimes found estimates considerably short of the expence incurred. Estimations on such an undertaking as that proposed in Plymouth Sound, being liable to a variety of incidents, might not prove correct from the judgment of the most judicious calculator. I shall, however, mention what I have heard said would be the expence in removing a square mile of the banks in Falmouth harbour;—about half a million sterling. I cannot say upon what data this calculation was formed, but the space so cleared, allowing it to be a common mile, would contain fifty six sail of the line at moorings, one hundred and ten fathoms from centre to centre of the moorings, and the same distance from the banks. But as such a great distance from mooring to mooring, and from the banks, would not be necessary, the space could contain sixteen more, that is, seventy-

two. However, as the spaces cleared would join the deep channel, it might be reckoned to contain moorings for fifty-six sail of the line, supposing it even irregular.

Common fame says, that it will take, at the least, four times the sum mentioned to secure, as is supposed,* thirty sail of the line in Plymouth Sound. But allowing, what is not probable, that the expence to attain the one object shall be as great as to execute the other; from which would the country derive the greater advantage? From an embankment or embankments in Plymouth Sound, to secure, as is supposed, a space that would contain thirty sail of the line, or a space in Falmouth harbour that would contain fifty-six?

Before I notice the arguments that may be advanced in favour of each situation, I shall take a view of Falmouth outer road, mentioned in my former publication; a space extending more than a nautical mile from the mouth of the harbour to the Zone reef.

It would be no chimera to undertake the making of this space a desirable anchorage. It is the most favourable situation on the English coast for taking advantage of all winds to make a passage into the

* It may be probable that the number of the sail of the line I have mentioned, may be equal to those which Cawsand Bay and Plymouth Sound shall hold in conjunction, after the river breakwaters shall be finished, to be in a state of *security*.

ocean; and without measuring it by line, as Plymouth Sound, it would contain near double the number of ships at their anchors.

According to the data for estimating the expence in the Sound, to make a breakwater of two thousand yards on the Zone reef, would cost about a million and a half; and to make it as desirable, perhaps, as Spithead, by making a small breakwater at the outer Manacle rock, called the Penvin or Vaze, and another to the north-east of the principal breakwater, might not cost more than two millions sterling. When viewing the space, the idea might be thought chimerical; but the great sea that is rolled into Plymouth Sound by south-west gales, is in a great measure broken off here by the land in that direction; and the breakwater on and about the Outer Manacle rock would prevent its effects from being felt in the space mentioned.

The undertaking might not prove more gigantic or expensive than that in Plymouth Sound; no such lamentable consequences could be apprehended from it as at that place; and there is one thing certain, that it would prove many times more beneficial to the interests of the nation; whether in giving protection to fleets and squadrons, or convoys, destined to the southward and westward. He who attempts to prove the contrary, must begin with denying all the natural consequences arising from the difference of latitude and longitude, the situa-

tion of Ushant and the Land's End, and the most important effect of north-west winds when acting upon them.

I am, Sir,
with great respect,
your most humble servant,
December 1811. J. MANDERSON.

LETTER VII.

SIR,

I HAVE now to discuss the question, whether *the country* will eventually derive more benefit from a space in Plymouth Sound being secured, as is supposed, to contain thirty sail of the line, to prepare Falmouth harbour for fifty-six, or its outer road for sixty, and many other vessels?

However light this task may appear to some, it must be a serious consideration to an individual like myself, because it implies a difference in sentiment from many whose opinions are known to have great weight with the government, and are perhaps looked upon by it as next to infallible; yet it is hoped this will appear to proceed from a conviction founded on substantial facts, not from the most distant motive of mere contradiction, or unfounded prejudice. And it is some support to reflect, that

other opinions, as warmly advocated and powerfully supported in their day, have been by the disclosures of time proved erroneous; and that it had been better for the country the money had been sunk in the depths of the sea.

There are but two arguments that can be produced in favour of Plymouth Sound, which can be supposed to carry any weight; these are its vicinity to a dock-yard, and ships being enabled to sail from it in south-east winds. It has been before noticed how extremely erroneous it is to confine all naval improvements and expences to spaces that have been long occupied, instead of carrying a part of them to other situations where the nation would derive far greater advantages from their application.

It may not be unnecessary to take a short view of the British navy at different periods, and the establishments provided for maintaining it effective.

King Henry the Eighth founded the establishments at Deptford, Woolwich, and Portsmouth, about two hundred and sixty-four years since; at his death the English Navy amounted to about twelve thousand tons; that is, about equal to the tonnage of *eight ships of seventy-four guns each,* or to the tonnage of *eight large frigates,* and the *same number of sloops of war;* yet he had three establishments for its convenience and maintenance.

Had he been told, that in the year 1811, it would

amount to above *sixty times* as much, would he not have thought a dozen dock-yards too small a number? And if informed, that in the same year, eight hundred and fifty ships and vessels of war would be on commission, andtwo-thirds of themgenerally employed in the oceans and seas to the southward and westward of Great Britain; would he not have expected that the attention of the government would be particularly turned to the south-west coast, eagerly to lay hold of every eligible situation that could be found adapted for a complete naval establishment?

Chatham was founded by Queen Elizabeth, about one hundred and eighty-nine years since; at her death the navy contained little more than seventeen thousand tons.

Sheerness was founded by Charles the Second; at his death, one hundred and twenty-six years since, the tonnage of the navy amounted to about one hundred and three thousand; yet he had five royal dock-yards for its maintenance.

King William the Third founded that in Hamoaze, in the year 1691, about one hundred and twenty years ago; at his death, in 1702, the navy contained about one hundred and fifty-nine thousand tons.

Could King William have imagined, that after the British navy should consist of eight hundred thousand tons, about five times as much as in his day, that posterity would pinion itself down in endeavouring to improve the naval establishments

then existing, and *plan* and *counterplan* in these, with its eyes, as it were, rivetted upon them, till it was so puzzled, that it knew not which way to turn itself; expending sums to attain *small objects*, which, if applied to found establishments in more favourable situations for the calls of its necessities, would prove many times more beneficial to the country; that after it had eight hundred and fifty ships and vessels of war in commission, one hundred and fifty of these of the line, and above two thirds of the whole generally employed without the Channel of England, that it should not be capable of judging, whether another western establishment were necessary, but hesitated, whether it should not run into the Thames to seek out a spot,—he would have saved us this tremor of mind, this painful uncertainty, by establishing one at Falmouth on the same day he did that in Hamoaze, observing, although the case be as plain as any that can come before a nation, yet I perceive how doubtful it will appear in their eyes; and as I have none respecting the necessity and the advantages to be derived from the situation, in promoting the interests of the country, I shall save them the trouble of doubting, where there can be no doubt, and lay the axe to the root of prejudice, which will not then exist; but if they boggle at the entrance of Falmouth harbour, what would they do, if in their day they had to seek a passage into Hamoaze, and into the Medway and Thames?

Who can imagine that he would have hesitated in considering, whether a naval establishment at Falmouth, or a breakwater or breakwaters in Plymouth Sound, would prove of the greatest service to the country, after her navy had attained to such numbers and power, and so great a part of it was constantly seeking a passage through the Channel of England into the Atlantic Ocean, one third of which could not be contained in Hamoaze, or refitted by the dock-yard there; when the exigencies of war, brought forth by a tremendous and destroying revolution, should require more rapid movements by sea and land than had hitherto been known; and fleets and squadrons should be required, summer and winter, to blockade an enemy's ports and coast, who had overthrown the nations on the continent of Europe, and swallowed up their territories and seacoast from the Archipelago to the entrance of the Baltic, and by every means in his power was endeavouring to compass the destruction of the British realms?

But the fact is manifest to the country, that the royal dock-yard in Hamoaze is by no means adequate to the services that ought to be performed by such establishments as near to the Atlantic Ocean as possible. Therefore, if it were even within a league of the Land's End, and another safe harbour near it, under the circumstances that have long existed, and will continue to exist, while Great Britain shall

be independent; which may be hoped, through the blessing of Divine Providence, she will while the island remains; the adopting of such a harbour, for the *sole purpose of promoting the public service*, would not only be a wise measure, but also one absolutely necessary. How much more so then must it be, when there is not another establishment within sixty leagues of the western ocean; and that in Hamoaze, near half the distance, besides its entrance being very difficult, and all within it shut up, when the wind blows from any point to the eastward of north-north-east and ships waiting to get in, shut out by all winds blowing from the opposite points.

With respect to the appellation *dangerous*, if some men think themselves justified in calling the entrance into the port of Falmouth by that name, what ought that going into Hamoaze to be called? There ought to be reason in all things; but if they perceive no reason for applying it to the latter entrance, there is most assuredly far less for applying it to the former; therefore, in so doing, they discover "neither rhyme nor reason."

It would be an useless task for any one to attempt denying these truths, highly important to the interests of Great Britain, however their effect on the operations of the navy, connected with the ocean westward, may be covered with obscurity, and kept out of sight.

The plain, simple, and patriotic question, which

is the best situation, all things considered, for promoting the service of the country?—is one thing; and this question, mixed with interested motives, prejudice, and dislike, is another. Their views must be very different; so, most probably, would also be the effects of the execution of their plans.

It is well known, that from the present magnitude of the British navy, there is not room to lay it up in a state of ordinary at the present royal establishments; that those of the line have been long pushed into every *deep hole* of water that can be found in Hamoaze, in Portsmouth harbour, and at the other dock-yards in the Thames and Medway; into lakes, into creeks, and into corners; in many places made fast head and stern to prevent their swinging on the banks, by which they have been much strained by gales of wind blowing athwart them when raised high by the tides, and by the enormous chains with which they were fettered; at other places touching the bottom at low water during spring tides, and thus becoming liable to receive injury, and what seamen call *hogged*.*

If this were absolutely the case during the periods of former peace, what is to be expected now, when

* This term is used to express the appearance of a ship, which, by grounding often when at anchor or moorings, more especially when their stores and artillery are on board, falls at the head and stern, losing her former sheer or shape, and becoming round in the middle of her docks, like the back of a hog.

the navy is nearly doubled within the last twenty-three years? It is well known how they were *crammed* together in 1802, although there were then in commission *seventy ships* of the line, *ten* of fifty guns, *one hundred and thirty-seven* frigates, *two hundred* other ships and vessels of war; and the navy has since increased tens of thousands of tons.

Ought the noblest fabric of power ever possessed by any nation to be thus endangered? While the government hesitates, millions are every year flying out of the national purse for naval purposes, a great part of which might perhaps be more beneficially applied in making other preparations. In what manner this may be done, I must beg leave to refe you to a publication addressed to the late Viscount Melville, signed *Amicus Patriæ*. The knowledge of the writer on the subject of which he treats, is pregnant with useful information.

You must be well acquainted with the report of the commissioners of naval revision, which asserts, that room would be wanting to lay up *five hundred and thirty-five* ships and vessels of war in peace, *ninety-seven* of which would be of the line; *eighty-eight* frigates, and *three hundred and fifty* sloops of war, gun-brigs, and other small vessels: that is, supposing the peace establishment to consist of twenty sail of the line, fifty frigates, and one hundred sloops and other vessels.

A retrospective view of peace establishments of

the British navy, will be far from giving a correct idea of what may be necessary in the present state of Europe and of the world. That the state of nations will never assume their former appearance may be safely affirmed; and therefore the peace establishment of this country will have more objects to embrace than formerly, and some of greater magnitude. Allowing, then, that it may be found necessary to have an hundred ships and vessels of war more in commission than the number estimated, still, most probably, room would be wanting for the number mentioned.

How will any works in Plymouth Sound remedy this alarming defect? It is in vain for his Majesty's government to shut its eyes against a truth pregnant with so much evil; for, if it open them not in time to make wise preparation, open them it must in the day when neglect may be charged upon it.

This might be in some measure accomplished by putting a stop for a time to all farther projections in the old establishments, and drawing tight the reins of economy in their expenditures. The object to be attained is of far greater importance to the country than any that could possibly be derived from any plans that could be executed in them.

I apprehend I have said enough of Northfleet; there can be no necessity to look that way again; but it may be observed, that in military operations, it would undoubtedly be accounted an act of ex-

treme ignorance, or wilful perverseness, to place troops in a situation where it was certain they would be often hindered by natural causes from marching into the countries where their services were urgently required, when they could be placed in another situation far less liable to such obstructions. If this be not exactly the case between Northfleet and Falmouth harbour, in all naval operations connected with the Atlantic Ocean, who will prove to the contrary?

In my former publication addressed to yourself and the first Lord of the Admiralty, I have *proved*, that the deep water in Falmouth harbour will contain at the least *forty-six sail of the line* at moorings, besides other vessels, and leaving the anchorage of Carrack roads clear. I have *proved*, that a wet dock could be made of St. Just creek, which would contain *forty* or *fifty* sail of the *line* in a state of ordinary, of equipment, or many of them nearly ready for sea, besides offering eligible situations for docks. A more secure place is not to be found in any harbour. I have observed, in a former Letter, that if a common square mile of the banks was removed, the space would contain *fifty-six sail of the line ready for sea*; and the same or a greater number would also be exceeding safe in a state of ordinary.

Allowing, then, that to prepare the harbour and St. Just creek to contain an *hundred sail of the*

line, sixty of them ready for sea, and that when so prepared it would contain the same number in a state of ordinary, besides a proportion of smaller ships and vessels; and that this could be effected for the same expence it will take to secure, as is supposed, *thirty sail of the line* in Plymouth Sound; or even allowing it should cost ONE MILLION MORE to attain this great national object, in a secure western harbour on the meridian of Ushant, situated in the critical pass of the English Channel, and into which the largest ships can sail during all southerly winds at any time of tide, or find a safe anchorage without its entrance, when the wind blows so far within the land that they cannot sail in direct; from which measure would the country reap the greatest advantages?—There may be those who will assert, from the breakwaters in Plymouth Sound. But how many, amongst those whose minds are not blinded by prejudice, or fettered by interest, will believe them? Should any be disposed to find fault with the using of the word *prejudice*, let such say what other term is more applicable to a dislike not founded on reasonable objections.

It then appears, that if the money to be expended in Plymouth Sound, in executing a measure covered with doubts of an alarming nature, were laid out in preparing Falmouth harbour for the reception of the navy, a great portion of it would not only find a safe port in war, almost touching the At-

lantic Ocean, and of easy entrance during all southerly gales, but also a safe retreat during peace; two important acquisitions long desired, and which would set the mind of the nation and of her government at rest on a great and weighty point, if obtained.

Can any works that shall be executed in Plymouth Sound, let their magnitude be ever so great, offer any such advantages? Its vicinity to a dock-yard is light in the balance against the *national benefits* in the opposite scale, as depots for all kinds of stores could be formed in Falmouth harbour, as well as in Hamoaze, and many of them more conveniently.

As to the advantages Plymouth Sound may be said to offer, in point of sailing from it, over the western harbour, I shall leave the discussion of that subject for my next Letter.

I am, Sir,

with great respect,

your most humble servant,

December 1811. J. MANDERSON.

LETTER VIII.

SIR

WERE not the subject on which I am writing one of the greatest importance to the country, nothing could induce me to enter the lists against those, whatever may be their motives, who are supported by power.

Few men in any situation of life feel an inclination to contend with a strong arm, unless where self-interest may be deeply concerned; and fewer still in the service of their country, where the favour of superiors, and of official power, are known to be so essential to promote their future prospects in life. Experience teaches them to be silent, if they wish to consult their own interest only: mere patriotism often proves a barren pursuit, as it may turn the hand of the mighty against itself, however unjustly.

Perhaps you will grant that it cannot be very pleasant for an individual like myself to question the accuracy and wisdom of opinions supported by such power and influence as they are known to be: I therefore most seriously assure you, were I not firmly persuaded that I am indeed pleading the cause of my country, and that to every impartial mind this truth will be made evident by the facts that

have been, and will hereafter be produced; no other consideration could induce me to offer myself to your notice, and that of the public. Wherefore should I?—what advantage could I possibly promise myself?—would not groundless assertions be publicly confuted?—and who would voluntarily expose himself to such disgrace?—the conviction of the mind ought to be strong, and her armour well assayed, that is exposed to such danger.

I have now to compare Plymouth Sound and Falmouth harbour in the balance of the winds; and to decide impartially, from incontrovertible evidence, in the favour of which situation it preponderates.

In producing facts necessary to establish this point it cannot be fairly supposed that I have the most distant idea of personal allusion. I have only to notice events and circumstances by which the proofs are incontrovertibly established; I enter not into the province of motives.

It has been before observed, that an argument advanced in favour of Plymouth Sound, is, that ships can sail from it in fresh south-east winds when they cannot from Falmouth harbour.

As to what might be effected at this port, many things must remain in a state of *general* uncertainty and doubt, until good will, experience, and perseverance, shall dissipate the mists of prejudice, and clouds of dislike, that now brood and hang over it; and the country shall shake itself clear of such a

combination, which it will undoubtedly do one day. Therefore it would only be the delay of time, to enter at present into any professional disquisition on the point, farther than to observe, that by compass south-east winds blow five points within the land forming the eastern side of the entrance; and a squadron could be anchored under this land, preparatory to its sailing, with such a wind at a proper time of tide: that when the news arrived at Falmouth, in 1797, of the French having landed in the Severn, it was blowing so strong from the south-south-east, that the squadron of frigates under Sir Edward Pellew, then in the harbour, could not weigh their anchors, and therefore cut their cables, and plied out of this dangerous entrance, getting without the Manacles in one tide *. This is an infallible proof of what may be done here by nerves, good will, and knowledge. But without grasping at all advantages that may be estimated from this impartial trial, for what has been done once, may be done an hundred times, when the execution proceeds not from temerity, but is effected by professional knowledge and perseverance; it shall be granted, that a squadron can sail from the Sound when the wind blows strong from south-east, and one cannot from Falmouth harbour; what then? It may be demanded, is not this an important advantage? It is certainly some advantage: but in the present investigation, to see every thing clearly, we must open our eyes, and look a little farther around us. All circumstances must be impartially viewed before priority of situation, with respect to the winds, can be assigned.

* This is the circumstance alluded to by Commissioner Bowen, in his instructions to the men of war.

Is it not an indubitable fact, that strong south-east winds seldom blow long on the south coast of England, generally veering to the westward; and that for one time a ship or squadron could make a passage into the ocean, when sailing from the Sound with such a wind, that it would be at least six times driven back.

The prevailing winds in the Channel are from south-west to north-west, sometimes veering to south, or even to south-east for a short time, then to north-west and north-north-west, but seldom continuing long at the latter point. Where a south-east wind blows one hour, a north-west wind blows at least six, upon a general average; therefore a squadron, in a situation whence it can sail with a north-west wind into the ocean, will stand six times the chance, at the least, of effecting a passage, that one will with a south-east wind, were the distance equal. This is exactly the case between Falmouth and the Sound in this point of comparison, but with this very important difference, which ought to be particularly kept in sight, in the course of

the argument, that the western harbour is not half the distance from the Atlantic that the Sound is.

Bare assertion ought to go for nothing where the interests of the country are concerned; and that they are deeply involved in the present measures, hardly any one will attempt to deny. Having no desire, arising from the most distant interested or tainted motives, for intruding opinions or garbled accounts to represent the truth, I appeal to FACTS, as they alone are worthy of the wisdom of government, and deserving the attention of the man of understanding, in a matter of such great importance to the country.

First, then, I appeal to the testimony of the winds, which are not to be intimidated by power, swayed by interest, nor blinded by prejudice or partiality.

I have now before me a log of their fluctuations in Falmouth harbour, from the 1st of August 1800 to the 30th of April 1802; and as it was not taken for any such purpose as that to which it is now applied, there can be no partiality in the account; if any inaccuracy in particular fluctuations, it must be as favourable to one quarter as to another.

By this log it appears, that from the 1st of August 1800 to 31st of December, including a period of five months, the winds were sixty-eight days in the south-west quarter, forty-two days in the north-west quarter, and twelve days in the south-

east quarter; but not above two days of what may be called south-east winds, and about fourteen days fair for vessels from any port in the Channel.

From the 1st of January to the 31st of December 1801, it appears they were in the south-west quarter one hundred and fifty-two days, in the north-west quarter one hundred and one days, thirty days in the south-east quarter; but not above seven days of south-east winds, and about sixty days fair from all ports.

From the 1st of January 1802 to the 30th of April following, in the south-west quarter forty-seven days, in the north-west quarter forty two days, in the south-east quarter seven days, and fair from all ports thirty days; not above two days of what could be properly called south-east winds.

Those days not reckoned in the account to make up the number included in the period of time, the winds were so variable as not to belong properly to any quarter.

It then appears, that for a period of time including one year and nine months, or six hundred and thirty-eight days, the winds blew from the western quarters above four hundred and fifty-two days; and in all that time there were not above eight days of proper south-east winds.

No ships would venture from the Sound with a thick rainy wind, just veered from south-west to south-east, or to south-south-east, and fluctuating

southerly, as they would be inevitably pressed on the coast; and if the wind were east-south-east, ships could sail out of Falmouth harbour direct.

But ships might sail, as they often do, from Falmouth with an unsettled north-west wind; for they have nothing to fear by the wind veering westerly or southerly, as they can easily run back into port.

The periods of time in which the winds are stated, may fairly be taken as a criterion for any other period of time. It is true they are not every year alike, some years being more easterly than others; but the period taken will be found as favourable in that respect as any other in the western parts of the Channel *.

It is, in the next place, to be proved from FACTS, what effect the general state of the winds on the south coast of the Island of Great Britain has upon the movements of her marine. It is well known that ships, convoys, squadrons, and fleets, are not always ready to sail when the wind comes fair to take them out of the Channel. Sometimes they get as far as Spithead from the Thames and Downs, sometimes as far as Torbay or Plymouth from Spithead, and sometimes as far as Falmouth from Plymouth. This is often occasioned by the short duration of easterly winds, when sailing

* In the Appendix is a table shewing more particularly their fluctuations for the time mentioned.

from eastern anchorages: But the point now to be brought clearly into view is, what effect the general state of the winds has, more particularly, upon ships and vessels waiting in anchorages about Plymouth, and in Falmouth harbour, for a wind to carry them westward into the ocean.

It is not opinions, but FACTS, that ought to have any weight. To such then I again appeal.

I can have no objections to look back for any length of time, as every year would furnish proofs more or less perspicuous; but in order to avoid prolixity as much as possible, I shall only cite a few cases for three years back.

May 10th, 1808, passed Plymouth, Rear-admiral Bertie, in H. M. S. Leopard, of fifty guns, with an outward-bound East India convoy; also H. M. S. President, of thirty-six guns, and Lightning, of eighteen guns, with an outward-bound fleet for the Brazils. The same day the wind veered to south-west; the Leopard and Indiamen kept the sea, but the Lightning put into Falmouth with part of the convoy, and the President keeping out, was forced eastward. On the 15th, sailed from Falmouth the following ships of war, with convoys, which had been forced into that port by contrary winds: Cambrian, with convoy for the Mediterranean; Amelia and Avenger, with convoy for America; Belette, convoy for the West Indies; and Lightning, with convoy for the Brazils: but the President did

not pass Falmouth until the 17th, with the Serapis store-ship and twenty-eight sail under convoy.

On the 25th of September 1809, H. M. S. La Rhin, of thirty-eight guns, sailed from Plymouth with seven victuallers for the squadron off Rochfort, and was forced into Falmouth by contrary winds on the 27th, whence she could not sail until the 2d of October. The day after she left Plymouth, nine vessels sailed from Falmouth, and made their passage westward. 7th January 1810, put into Falmouth, with contrary winds, the Nonpariel, of sixteen guns, from Plymouth, with six transports under convoy, bound to Gibraltar with provisions, &c.; on the 5th, had sailed from Falmouth, the Sandwich Lugger, of fourteen guns, with nine sail to the westward.

31st March 1810, put into Falmouth by contrary winds, H. M. brig Orestes, with the Alligator and Lapwing transports, for Cork, and Devastation bomb for Cadiz; all from Plymouth. On the 29th, had sailed from Falmouth, two packets, one for Lisbon, the other to the Windward Islands, and a brig called the John, to run it to Madeira; all of which made their passage into the ocean, while those from Plymouth could not sail again until the 8th of April.

12th July 1810, the Fervent, with a fleet of transports, with provisions, &c. from Plymouth to Cadiz, was forced by contrary winds into Falmouth; on the 11th, had sailed from the latter port, five packets

with foreign mails; one for Lisbon, and others westward, none of which returned; while the Fervent could not put to sea again until the 18th.

On the 14th of May 1811, H.M. S. Favourite, and Intelligent gun-brig, with a fleet of transports from Plymouth, having on board the 11th light dragoons and part of the 11th regiment of foot, bound to Portugal, put into Falmouth with contrary winds. On the 12th, eight vessels had sailed from this harbour to the westward, for Cork, Dublin, &c.

On the 8th of June 1811, H. M. S. Leopard, of fifty guns, having on board a detachment of the guards for Cadiz, was forced into Falmouth by contrary winds, and detained until the 12th. On the 7th, sailed from Falmouth, H. M. brig Seaflower, with dispatches for Lisbon, one vessel for Cork, one for Dublin, and another for Wales.

On the 9th of August 1811, sailed from Falmouth, H. M. S. Mercury and Spitfire, with the Jasper schooner and a fleet of transports, for Lisbon; on the 2d, had put into Plymouth, with contrary winds, H. M. S. Shannon and Cormorant, Serapis S. S. Diligence S. S. with about forty sail of transports, with troops on board, for Lisbon and Sicily; but did not get to the westward of Falmouth before the 12th.

If the annals of vessels sailing from, or being as far to the westward as Plymouth, and others sailing

at the same time from Falmouth, were to be minutely examined, they could produce a volume of evidence; much of it of greater importance than any of the cases I have noticed. But if the sailing of two vessels at the same time from Plymouth and Falmouth, let them he ever so insignificant in themselves, is often found to cause several days of delay in getting to the westward, the same will hold good in convoys, as is proved from the cases noticed, and also with respect to fleets and squadrons of ships of war.

Although the causes of this difference of time that may be experienced, when sailing from two anchorages not above fifteen leagues distant, are plain and easily understood; yet their vast importance, pregnant with incalculable consequences, does not appear to have been duly appreciated by the government, or to have made that impression on its mind, which certainly they ought to have done long ago; by which many lamentable events would have been avoided, that have happened to convoys and expeditions in the Chops of the Channel, besides others of a different nature.

It has been proved what effect the variable winds that prevail so many months every year, have upon vessels sailing from Plymouth and Falmouth at the same time; and it is caused by this plain, though most important circumstance, that by the time vessels from the western harbour have made two

thirds or one half of the longitude between it and Plymouth Sound, and the wind draw to the westward upon them, they have a clear run of near an hundred and fifty leagues to the north-east coast of Spain, if they can only make a due south course. But before they arrive so far to the southward, probably the wind has drawn more northerly, especially in the summer months, when northerly winds are so prevalent on the coast of Portugal, that they have been named by seamen the *Portuguese trade*. But if the wind should veer more southerly, the ocean is clear to the north-west; they have nothing to fear.

Now what is the situation of vessels that have made half a degree, or three quarters of a degree, of longitude from Plymouth Sound, if they can only make a due south course? They must fall in with the coast of France, if they stand on; and if the wind veer to south-west, where are they if it begin to blow? They must either seek refuge in the port of Falmouth, or run back to their old anchorage, as best suits their inclination, and wait for a future day to make another trial. Is it not then astonishing, why any man, who has the least regard for his country, should labour to darken and hide such important circumstances; should rack his invention for arguments to make them appear trivial, and as of no value? What loss could any individual sustain by the country reaping those advantages which she has a right to reap from a harbour so

near to the western ocean? And if it were individual loss, ought the country to sacrifice her wealth and interests at the shrine of such bell-idols? If the vessels and convoys mentioned had run back to Plymouth, instead of seeking protection in the western harbour, most probably they might have had several trials before clearing the Channel.

But before I leave this part of the subject, it may not be amiss to notice a case or two more, that have happened within the time I have prescribed to myself.

In 1808 an expedition was formed in Falmouth harbour, and sailed on the 9th of October, under Sir David Baird, on board of one hundred and fifty transports, carrying between twelve and thirteen thousand men, convoyed by H. M. S. Loire, Amelia, and Champion. On the 11th, it made the high land of Corunna; on the 12th, was on the coast of Spain; and on the 13th, entered the harbour of Corunna. On the same day it sailed, two transports left Plymouth to join it, one of which, having on board part of the 31st regiment of foot, got into Falmouth with the wind at south-west on the 11th, the day the expedition made the high land of Corunna; and the other, called the Charlotte, having on board part of the 26th regiment of foot, got into Falmouth harbour the very day the expedition entered that of Corunna.

If such an important fact as this be not worthy

of the serious attention of the wisest and most enlightened statesman, what ought to attract his notice? If it be not worthy of the most serious consideration of the British Government, where ought its eyes to be turned when forming expeditions destined to enter the Atlantic? Would it not be a lamentable error to suffer itself to be biassed by theories and unsubstantial opinions, after having such clear and decisive evidence to guide it?

Perhaps some men may have felt disposed to observe, that *if* the wind had been so and so, a fleet from Plymouth would not have been many hours sail astern of one from Falmouth. The wind might have blown from any point of the compass they choose to mention, and the same consequences have ensued, as they have often done, and will continue to do until time shall be no more, unless they can call another *if* to their aid: *If* the wind will continue *so long*, before it veer to the westward, as shall enable the fleet from Plymouth to weather Ushant in safety. But before it could do this, it must have made more than a degree of longitude west. When *ifs* are in the power of individuals and nations to command, to reason upon their probable effects may be well enough; but when they are placed beyond the reach of human power, to act upon the probability of their appearing when most ardently longed for, instead of acting upon realities known to occur almost every month

every year, and sometimes frequently in one month, proved by the testimony of ages, of centuries, of thousands of years; and when with these realities the interests of a country are interwoven in a most important degree, to act upon the probability rather than the reality, would be extremely impolitic and blameable, as it would be acting contrary to the dictates of prudence.

It is evident, that if the expedition under Sir David Baird had sailed from Plymouth instead of Falmouth, that the day it entered Corunna harbour, it must have been still in the English Channel. Every one in any manner conversant with the movements of vessels at sea, knows what a difference it makes in the way and course of the best sailing ships when close to the wind in a chopping sea, and when sailing some points free. What difference must it then occasion in a motley assemblage of ships and vessels forming a fleet of transports or a numerous convoy, where the best sailing craft must guide their operations by those of the dullest sailing, and most leewardly vessels amongst them. By the time vessels sailing from Plymouth with a northerly wind can, with equal safety, shape the same course for clearing Ushant as those from Falmouth, they must have made near a degree of longitude, as has been observed; and very frequently before this has been done, the wind veers to the westward. The consequences have been proved;

those from the western harbour have got into the ocean; those from Plymouth must either take refuge in the anchorage left by them, or measure their course back again.

The fate of Spain might have depended upon the arrival of the army under Sir David Baird; but if not, no thanks could be due from the country, to the wisdom that would place an expedition at Plymouth, rather than in a harbour fifteen leagues farther to the westward, situated at what may be called the important pass of the Channel into the Atlantic Ocean.

When reinforcements and stores were, as has been reported, urgently required by Lord Wellington's army, they were prepared at Portsmouth with all possible dispatch, and sailed with the first favourable wind. On the 1st of Febuary 1811, the convoy was met by a south-west gale when nearly off the Lizard, when it run back to Plymouth and Torbay. The Milford East-Indiaman was in company, commanded by Capt. Lermont, who had in the month of October preceding put into Falmouth harbour with an easterly wind, being homeward-bound from Bombay; he therefore now thought it best to take refuge there again, (as did some other vessels), declaring, as I have been informed, that he would rather run back to Spithead than trust his ship either in Plymouth Sound or Torbay. So much do men differ in opinion respecting the safety

of different anchorages; but experience is to be trusted before opinion. On the 16th of February, a strong gale came on from north-north-west, when H. M. S. Amethyst was unhappily wrecked in Plymouth Sound, with the loss of many valuable lives; similar disasters no breakwater can ever prevent, as the wind blew from the interior, and as it can in no manner soften the rocky ledges, reefs, projections, and ribs, nearly encompassing this anchorage. On this very day, when there was so much just cause for sorrow covering the land, sailed in safety, from the (*misnamed dangerous* by some men) harbour of Falmouth, the Milford East-Indiaman, Duke of Kent packet for the Windward Islands; H. M. S. Fylla, and several merchant vessels; next day the wind was south. On the 21st, the Franchise and transports were again off the Lizard, where they had nearly been three weeks before, and by the wind coming to blow from the south-west, the John and James transport was unfortunately run down in the dark, and between two and three hundred men of the 11th regiment drowned; the Wellington transport, laden with stores, was also run down at the same time and sunk, the captain and six men drowned. The fleet now put into Falmouth harbour, whence it sailed on the 9th of March, three weeks after the Milford and other vessels.

A squadron of his Majesty's ships having troops

on board, for the more speedily transporting reinforcements to Lord Wellington's army, which sailed from Spithead with the fleet of transports, and was in company when met by a contrary wind, after being near the Lizard, and had taken refuge in Torbay, from which anchorage it proceeded on its destination on the 16th of February, (the same day as the vessels mentioned sailed from Falmouth harbour), and is said to have arrived in the Tagus on the 4th of March. Here I would particularly request your attention, for the sake of your country only, and for no other reason, what might be the consequence of sailing from the western harbour, and any other anchorage eastward, at the same time. Although the distance between Torbay and Falmouth harbour be only *twenty-five* leagues, and a squadron of his Majesty's ships on an urgent service, may be supposed to make as good way as any of the vessels that sailed from that harbour the same day it left Torbay; yet the Duke of Kent packet, on the 4th of March, was in latitude 29° 42′ north, and longitude 25° 17′ west; being then *five hundred and six* leagues south-west by south, one quarter west, from the Lizard, and *three hundred and twenty-one* leagues south-west by west from Lisbon; therefore she had run above two hundred and forty leagues farther from the anchorage she left, in sixteen days, than the squadron of men of war had from Torbay, as the distance of the latter from Lisbon is about two hun-

dred and sixty leagues; but the Duke of Kent was *five hundred and ten* leagues from the western harbour.

Is not this fact particularly striking? All the art of sophistry cannot strip it of the unspeakable importance it assumes in a national point of view.

You will no doubt be exceedingly anxious to inquire, from what cause this great difference of situation could proceed? and be ready to imagine that the packet must be an extraordinary fast sailer. But the cause is not included in such a conjecture; the other vessels that sailed on the same day from the same anchorage, no doubt, were nearly in an equal degree advanced on their voyage. It can be easily ascertained where the Milford East-Indiaman was on that day, when she shall have returned to England.

The great difference of situation proceeded from the cause that has been brought into view; the western harbour being on the meridian of Ushant, and the vessels sailing from it getting clear into the ocean before the wind changed to the south-west, and before the squadron could clear the Channel.

Here, Sir, is a secret of incalculable value to the British Empire, which appears to have been concealed from the eyes of the nation and her government, and is at this moment endeavoured to be covered with the shade of everlasting oblivion. But there is the squadron *entering the Tagus*; and there is the

packet *three hundred and twenty leagues* south-west by west from it; and there is the fleet of transports, with troops and stores on board, now in Falmouth harbour, which sailed from Spithead the latter end of January, bound in haste to Lisbon, but cannot NOW leave their present anchorage until the 9th of March, on which day the Duke of Kent is in latitude 23° 12′ north, and longitude 38° 18′ west, or *seven hundred and forty-two* leagues south-west of the Lizard, and *five hundred and eighty-five* leagues south-west and by west, half-west, from Lisbon.

Now, allowing the fleet of transports to have only run *two thirds* of the distance that the packet had done on the 9th of March, (if they had sailed from Falmouth on the 16th of February), they would have run *four hundred and ninety-four* leagues from the Lizard, *twice the distance from Falmouth to Lisbon;* and if bound up the Mediterranean, equal to the distance a fleet of transports might have carried an army from the western harbour as high as Carthagena. Your own knowledge and penetration can clearly discern the consequences of a fact pregnant with important information to the British nation. It requires no professional disquisition to make it more clear; the statesman can better comprehend its magnitude, while professional representations might *labour* to *darken counsel*, without communicating the least useful information.

Surely, Sir, you must perceive of what conse-

quence such a situation may be made to the country in many great and important services.

Men may labour to cover the truth with doubt, and to perplex your mind; but here it is before you; what other guide can be necessary?

I pretend not to judge of the urgency of the reinforcements and stores being required in Portugal; you, Sir, are best acquainted with this circumstance: but if the convoy had put into Falmouth, when off that harbour, on the 1st of February, it certainly might have sailed when the Milford and other vessels did, instead of having its scattered parts to collect from Torbay, and different anchorages about Plymouth. As to the capacity of the western harbour, that is not left for any man to dispute; the numerous convoys that have sought and found *safe refuge* in it, have put it far beyond the power of prejudice to contradict, however it may garble facts. I have acquainted you in my former publication, that in the latter end of 1796, and beginning of 1797, there were lying in the harbour, during many severe gales of wind, three ships of the line, six large frigates, several sloops of war, eight or ten large East-Indiamen as transports, and at least *two hundred sail* of merchant vessels. None of these received any damage. If I recollect aright, it was about this time the Dutton East-Indiaman was wrecked in Plymouth Sound.

If, Sir, you have been told so much of the dangers

of Falmouth harbour, where not a life has been lost by shipwreck in the memory of man, nor most probably for centuries, how would your ears, and those of his Majesty's government, have been assailed, had half the wrecks, disasters, and drownings happened within it, as have about Plymouth? Whence then all this forbearance to one place more than to another? Because from being long resorted to, it now possesses a volume of personal convenience, and because it must be borne. Wherefore? Because there is a dock-yard near it, which has cost the nation amazing sums of money. This is certainly a reason, why the dangers about it must be in some degree encountered and made the best of, but no reason why a more advantageous situation should be kept out of sight, in order that other immense sums may be ingulphed in the same place, without an impartial examination, if their application at a different situation would not produce greater national benefits.

The expedition under Sir David Baird found no want of room, nor that under General Spencer in the same year, where it was lying on board of upwards of an hundred sail of transports, on the 12th of February 1808, during a strong gale of wind from the north-west; but all rode it out in safety. On the same day a vessel was driven ashore on Drake's Island, and several from their anchors in Hamoaze. Does not this prove, what every one

knows who is acquainted with harbours and bays, that vessels are liable to be driven ashore every where during storms? It proves, moreover, that they are less liable to drive in the port of Falmouth than even in Hamoaze. Is it not then astonishing, how this harbour should be so little thought of, or valued, when it is so capacious for expeditions and convoys, and so secure for vessels of all descriptions.

When Lord William Bentinck was charged with an important mission to the Sicilian court, that no delay might be occasioned in getting out of the Channel, *as was supposed*, when the wind should come fair, the Menelaus frigate was ordered to receive him at Plymouth, where he was detained some time by contrary winds, as were also nine packets at Falmouth. On the 27th of October, (1811), the wind came northerly, when the frigate and packets sailed from their different anchorages; two of the latter put back disabled, but seven effected their passage into the ocean. On the 29th, the Menelaus was forced into Falmouth harbour, whence she could not sail until the 7th of November. The *Dauntless*, with two transports under her convoy, sailed from Plymouth much about the same time as the frigate, and was also obliged to seek refuge in the western harbour on the same day. When the Menelaus sailed from Falmouth on the 7th of November, the *Marlborough*, one of the packets which left it on

the 27th of October, was on that day in latitude 44° 22′ north, and longitude 11° 28′ west; being then *one hundred and forty-three leagues* south-west by south, half west, from Falmouth, and *one hundred and nineteen leagues* south-west, one quarter west, from Ushant.

The *Walsingham*, another of the packets that sailed the same day as the *Marlborough*, on the 7th of November, was in latitude 45° 44′ north, longitude 12° 28′ west; being then one hundred and thirty-three leagues south-west, half west, from Falmouth, and one hundred and fifteen leagues south-west and by west, half west, from Ushant. Another of the packets, called the *Speedy*, which sailed the same day as the *Menelaus* from Plymouth, on the 7th of November, at noon, was in latitude 42° 58′ north, longitude 9° 26′ west; being then about one hundred and fifty-five leagues south-south-west from Falmouth, and one hundred and twenty-six leagues south-south-west, half west, from Ushant. The other four packets, whose situations I have not ascertained, were no doubt equally distant from the port they left.

Here, Sir, there is another trial of a different kind from those before noticed; one as desirable as could be wished; a stout, good-sailing, well-manned, and well-handled frigate, dispatched on an urgent service from an anchorage where, *it was supposed*, she would be in the best situation for clearing the

English Channel, is foiled by packets less able to bear up against storms and tempests, and sailing from a harbour which you may have been led to think unfavourably of. All hinged, and will continue to hinge, generally speaking, on northerly winds of short duration, which give to vessels sailing from Falmouth harbour an advantage so clearly decided over those sailing from an anchorage near a degree of longitude farther to the eastward.

The advantages that may be promised from Plymouth Sound in south-east winds have not once appeared during the last four years; and hence it may be fairly inferred, that they will very seldom appear; and when they do, may not be wanted: While at the same time it is apparent, that north-west winds, which give the western harbour such an important superiority of situation, are frequent almost every month in the year, more especially in blowing weather during winter, spring, and autumn. Which then is the safest to form a conclusion from, in a case, the decision of which must be so momentous to the vital interests of the country; from undeniable matter of fact, or the illusory phantom of *prospective speculation?*

Another advantage, of no small consideration, which vessels have when sailing from Falmouth harbour over those leaving any other anchorage in the Channel, during north-west winds, is, that they can cover themselves with the land until they shoot

from the Lizard in a south-west direction towards the ocean; and this southern promontory of England may be called the advanced post of her most western harbour, to protect it from the advancing billows of the stormy deep.

There are those who think that this harbour would be more advantageously situated, were it advanced southward to the parallel of the Lizard, or were the land south-westward drawn back to its latitude; as during south-east winds, vessels would then sooner clear the Manacles. Advantages and disadvantages are often mixed together in the affairs of men. Nature sometimes diversifies herself in the same place by gifts, and what may be called by man defects; she must be taken and made the most of, as she is found. Her gift of the secure and commodious harbour of Hamoaze is mixed with a rocky and intricate entrance, and the dangerous anchorage of the Sound without. Her gift of the advantageous situation, easy entrance, and secure harbour of Falmouth, is mixed with some difficulty in sailing out during south-east winds; but this difficulty is amply compensated by the advantages which occasion it.

It has been already observed, that strong south-east winds are seldom of any duration, generally veering westward, and sometimes eastward; but strong north-west winds are frequent, and the land projecting south-westward from the port of Fal-

mouth covers vessels sailing with such winds, until they make near a quarter of a degree more southing, and ten miles of longitude; that is, supposing them then three miles due south of the Lizard, at which time they will be near *seventeen leagues* south-west and by west from Plymouth Sound; while vessels that have run so far southward from the last anchorage would be above four leagues off the land, and exposed to all the fury of the winds and waves. I do not mean they would then be in the same latitude as those off the Lizard, for then they would be eight leagues south of the Rame Head; but I mean, if they had made as much southing in the same distance run from their anchorage, as those had from the western harbour.

If vessels sailing from the Sound with the wind at north-west should keep close-hauled, with the intention of having smooth water, they would then go at a slower rate, and be outstripped by those from the western anchorage. It is then apparent, let them shape their course which way they may, the situation of the land will not give them the same advantages during north-west winds, as is given to those from the western harbour for a run of five leagues.

But the important advantage which Falmouth harbour derives from lying so far within the Lizard, Blackhead, and Manacle Point, is its being covered by them from all gales of wind that blow from the

Atlantic Ocean; so that the waves rolled on by storms spend all their fury on these projections. The Manacle Point bears about south from it, so does the Island of Ushant; hence its security in all south-west gales. Nature has done more for it, as plainly appears from this important circumstance, than those could do, who would draw it out from its secure situation during ocean gales. During the four years from which I have produced instances of vessels and convoys sailing from the western harbour, and getting into the ocean, while ships and convoys sailing from Plymouth much about the same time have not been able to effect it, I have not been able to find out any instance of a convoy sailing from the anchorages about the latter place, when they could not from the former, if any vessels were in the anchorage bound westward. It is well known that many convoys have left Falmouth harbour with south-east winds; It is well known that the fleets of colliers bound to Wales generally beat out with southerly winds; what they can do, ships and vessels of war may certainly accomplish. I believe it has yet to be proved, that a convoy would venture out of Catwater into the Sound having a *strong* south-east wind. It has yet to be proved, that a squadron of men of war can leave the Sound with the wind from south-east by south to south-west by west, when it blows, after the breakwaters shall be formed. The same winds that prevent ships and

vessels sailing from this anchorage and Cawsand Bay at the present time will prevent them from sailing after the three mounds are executed. The advantage of winds is then reduced to a very narrow compass indeed; and the facts that have been produced, and numbers of the same kind that have happened, prove it to be more the child of the imagination than the offspring of experience.

However unpalatable the truths I have produced may be to those who are only actuated by interested motives or misplaced prejudice, they ought to be palatable to the nation, palatable to her government, and palatable to every patriotic mind. The opinions of men are often built upon foundations which the hand of time razes and destroys. They may be founded on the mud bank of prejudice, the sand bank of partiality, or on the clay of interest and personal convenience, but incontrovertible facts will for ever remain the same; and he who labours to make *any* anchorage about Plymouth appear as favourably situated as the harbour on the meridian of Ushant, for ships or fleets making a passage thence into the ocean westward, fights against the winds, that are not delayed a moment from advancing, let him clamour ever so loudly. They have received their commission from the God of nature, and will reign uncontrolled by the power of man while the laws of nature remain. Hence the useless task to represent any anchorage in the vicinity of

Plymouth as calculated to promote the public service equally with one so far to the westward.

It is in vain to oppose shadows of opinions, and phantoms of imagined probabilities, to substantial and decisive truths, which arise out of natural causes, evident to the perception of every one who chooses to look at them.

In theoretical disquisitions on this important subject, a chart may be spread in the metropolis, and the distance of coast between Plymouth and Falmouth represented as of little consequence; but experience speaks another language, a little of which I have interpreted to you; yet enough, I would trust, to convince you that I have not approached you with a bundle of opinions which might deserve only to be thrown into the fire; but with important facts, which no man can deny, however he may labour to evade their force. These will plead my excuse for a letter so long.

I am, Sir,
with great respect,
your most humble servant,

December 1811. J. Manderson.

LETTER IX.

SIR,

I HAVE viewed the breakwater or breakwaters in Plymouth Sound as executed, and have impartially considered, whether the country were likely to derive equal advantages from the formation of the expensive mounds, as if the money had been applied to the improvement of Falmouth harbour.

I have proved from incontrovertible and experimental *facts*, that no anchorage about Plymouth, however represented in the most flattering colours to the eyes of government, can lay claim to the advantageous situation of the western harbour for effecting a passage thence into the western ocean. Yet ome men have conceived what may be called a mortal and unreasonable hatred against it, without being able to produce one argument on their side, which does not equally apply to every anchorage in the world. If it had been as capacious again as it is, probably they would have evinced equal wisdom in objecting to it, had it been left to the present day to ascertain its merits, and the advantages it offered to the country. But there are other points connected with this subject yet to be noticed, and *one of them* pregnant with alarming evil.

You must be well aware there are two opinions

as to the consequences of forming breakwaters in Plymouth Sound: one, that it will then contain so many ships of the line in safety, and *most probably* will not cause a decline of the tide within it; the other, that some parts of it will still be exposed to so much sea, as to render it hazardous for so many ships to be trusted there as the number calculated; and that *most probably* the interior will shallow in a shorter or longer period of time.

It must be allowed, that it is only a matterof opinion; but the bare probability of a decline of the tide in the Sound and Hamoaze is alarming. No one can deny that the water will not have the same space to enter through as it had; and who can reasonably affirm, that it will be compelled so to do in equal quantity as before the interruption to its progress.

The most able and judicious engineers can only give estimates of the probable expence in executing such a work, and whether it may be likely to stand the shock of the waves by which it will be assailed; but the shoaling of the water will depend upon circumstances which experience may have taught other men to form an opinion equally correct.

The important ciscumstances arising out of the difference of situation require no calculations or conjectures, as experience has fully proved their effects. It must be admitted, however reluctantly, that there is a probability that the same quantity of water will

not flow into the Sound as before it met interruption; that there is a probability of strong southerly gales forming banks about the breakwaters: nor can it yet be ascertained how the tide may diversify itself for some distance within the mounds, and what consequences may arise from this.

But without noticing farther any thing besides the probable shoaling of the water, let it be inquired what would be the consequences of this evil? The Sound rendered unfit to contain ships of the line, for the attainment of which an immense sum has been expended, and a decline of the tide in Hamoaze!—Should this follow, it would have been better for the country if so much of her wealth had been taken to sea, and sunk half Channel over. What recompence could she ever receive for so great a sacrifice of her interest and wealth?

It might take half a century before the shoaling of the water became very apparent; it might take a longer time; or it might be effected to a considerable degree in a few years. But when only one foot of the decline of the tide were clearly ascertained, it would infallibly predict a greater falling off, as the operating cause would, in time, act in a compound degree.

Look, Sir, at what has been effected at Portsmouth, Deptford, Woolwich, and Chatham, principally by the obstructing of the tide in its accustomed course;

What security can be given to the country that the same effect will not be produced by the same cause at Plymouth.

If it were a cause of imperious necessity, in which the nation must risk much, from uncertain consequences, in order to attain some end, this would plead its excuse, be the effects what they might. But this is by no means the case; for it would be unspeakably more to her advantage, if things were to remain as they are, than to run the risk of drawing upon herself an evil pregnant with so much mischief: and she has clearly before her eyes the place where she can derive a positive good from the expenditure of her wealth without incurring any risk.

There are those who may affirm, that although the same quantity of water do not flow within the mounds as before they were formed, that this will only affect the tide in not flowing so high up the Tamar. It is impossible to conceive on what grounds such an assertion could be founded. The tide will maintain its ancient level; when the current is advanced so far in the Tamar, it has risen so many feet in the Sound; if therefore it should not flow so high up that river as formerly, it will be because it has not risen to the accustomed height in the outer bay. To whatever length it may then flow, there will be the same depth of water in the Sound as there is at the present time when it arrives at that point.

The probability is, that the tide will rise higher on the eastern shore between Staddon Point and the Mewstone, and not so high within it as formerly. It is allowed it is only matter of opinion; and, to say no more of it, may it not prove as correct as any other!

You will no doubt allow, that Mr. Pitt's administration, in 1805, was possessed of some sagacity and penetration; you will no doubt allow, that after being near twenty years prime minister, he must have been fully in possession of all the proposed plans respecting naval anchorages and harbours, from the Thames to Milford Hayen, and the probable consequences of his adopting any one.

Can it be supposed, that a mind so comprehensive, so well instructed by numerous events that took place in his own day; before whom the naval history of Europe stood clearly revealed, as also what was wanting to give more energy to the maritime exertions of his own country: can any one imagine that such a man, in a matter of such importance to his country, suffered himself to be led away by misrepresentation; and that he had not strong conclusive and patriotic reasons operating on his mind, why he should prefer Falmouth harbour, as soon as he became acquainted with its merits, to Torbay, Cawsand Bay, and even to Plymouth Sound; places that had been long before him, and minutely scanned by the piercing rays of his intellect?

The latter anchorages were advocated in his day, as well as the present, by men of power and influence, and decked out in all the fascinating dress that fanciful opinions could invent. The former appeared in its native dress, introduced by an obscure individual. Its appearance and situation, the winds and the Atlantic Ocean, attracted at once his attention and most serious consideration; he revolved, he inquired, and he decided.

It was observed at the time by a dignitary of the church, intimate with the minister, that "seldom any thing proposed by naval men met with the sanction of many others of the profession." How far this observation may be well founded, let others decide. But if there be any probability in it, it may proceed from a kind of professional jealousy, where many may think an assumption of particular knowledge on any subject connected with it as a kind of reflection on themselves. However unfounded such an opinion may be, yet it may certainly operate sometimes to the prejudice of individuals, as it may at other times in promoting the service of the country by heroic and persevering emulation. Good and evil are mixed in this life.

The minister's object at that time, which no one can doubt but is also yours, was to ascertain the truth; but from his researches and reflection, he

he concluded directly opposite to what you appear to have done.

He was well aware of the probability of the water shoaling in Plymouth Sound by a breakwater or breakwaters being formed in it; the consequences were too apparent not to be dreaded, and therefore had long withheld his hand. Besides, he was fully aware, that, let him expend on Plymouth Sound ever so great a sum, if in doing this no risk would be incurred, the country could derive no other advantage from it but that of an anchorage; and he strongly felt how much she was in want of another western harbour besides Hamoaze, without detracting from its merits, where ships and vessels could be refitted, and find shelter on the verge of the Atlantic Ocean, and sent into it again, when they could not from any other anchorage in the Channel. He had seriously felt the alarming want of a western establishment, when a number of ships and vessels of war poured into the Channel from the western ocean for supplies and repairs; the nearest establishment being near thirty leagues from it, the next about sixty, and the remainder above an hundred. We know how many convoys had been dispersed in the Channel; and from this circumstance, what numbers of vessels had become the prey of the enemy's cruisers and of the waves; while, if they had sailed from a harbour on the

meridian of Ushant, they would have been nearly out of the track of the one, and out of fear of the other.

The great increase of the navy was before him; he was convinced that new establishments must be formed, and that one in a western situation, if such a place could be found, was far more imperiously demanded by the general service of the country than in any other. His judgment clearly perceived, that a safe harbour on the meridian of Ushant, into which the largest ships of the navy might run at any time of tide, during all southerly gales, and have a safe anchorage off its entrance when the wind blew off the land, and into which they could get sooner than into any other anchorage during easterly winds, would be a most important acquisition to his country. These were the weighty reasons which induced him to prefer Falmouth harbour to any other situation.

It has yet to be made appear that he formed *his conclusions* from erroneous premises; it has yet to be made appear that the information laid before him was defective; it has yet to be made appear that any other information could have been communicated, more correct in substance, better instructed in consequences, and more impartial in narration.

He could perceive whether objections were founded on knowledge or dislike. As for a ship getting

upon a bank now and then, he knew such accidents often happened at all places frequented by the navy; and here he could discover nothing uncommon, nothing disastrous; nay, his researches discovered its safety. He well knew that various might be the reasons for ships getting aground in different anchorages, and that sometimes they might be very different from the representations of those under whom such occurrences took place. His mind was therefore fixed on the subject, and he declared, that "NO EXPENCE SHOULD BE WANTING "TO MAKE FALMOUTH HARBOUR OF THE SERVICE "IT COULD BE MADE TO THE COUNTRY."

How strangely are things altered since he made this determined declaration in favour of his country. To what must it be attributed?—to a change of position of the land and ocean, and of the influence of the winds?—no. To better information?—that cannot be. To what then?—let those on whose minds a different conviction has been wrought, say.

I should certainly feel ashamed, could it be proved from *impartial* and *incontrovertible evidence*, that I have advanced any thing unsupported by substantial facts.

Mr. Pitt's experience as a minister had taught him how cautious he ought to be when deciding for his country, where her most important interests were at stake. In fixing upon a situation for a new naval establishment, by this alone he was biassed.

He had experienced how liable a government was to be infested by political quacks and pretended patriots; but the thought, "*O my country!*" silenced all intruders.

I am, Sir,
with great respect,
your most humble servant,
January 1812. J. MANDERSON,

LETTER X.

SIR,

I HAVE now to perform the *task* of noticing and investigating the objections against Falmouth harbour, which have been so represented as to induce the British Government to turn itself against it.

I have seen enough of mankind to know how impatient power often is of controul; how indignant professional superiority in rank often is, to have the infallibility of its knowledge and opinions questioned. I therefore proceed to discharge what appears to me a trying duty to my country, not a work of pleasure. But be assured, Sir, I do it under the firm conviction, that I am labouring in the cause of truth; and that if those who at present think otherwise could be divested of unreasonable prejudice, even they themselves would thank me on behalf of

their country, which they no doubt earnestly wish well, however in some things relating to her dearest interests, they may have entertained erroneous ideas.

Any one who is solely influenced by patriotic motives, and who may have imbibed a notion of the advantages the country would derive from the adoption of a certain measure, and who therefore loves to contemplate the subject, until it fill the mind in such a manner that all others of the same nature are forced to bow before it; it cannot be supposed, but if such an one could be convinced of a fundamental error in the adoption of this measure, which was not applicable to another of the same nature, that he would not then relinquish his partiality. But where the mind is under the dominion of interested motives, or the judgment is eclipsed by prejudice, what hope can be entertained of effecting a change there, even by incontrovertible facts, to which they can give no satisfactory answer?

It is certainly to be lamented, that some valuable and experienced officers have conceived such a blind and unreasonable prejudice against this port, that they cannot perceive the weakness of their own arguments, inasmuch as they are more or less applicable to all anchorages; while they carefully conceal from themselves the advantages connected with it.

All men are liable to err; and where a difference

of opinion exists, those who have the evidence of facts on their side, must be allowed to have conclusive reasons for forming theirs, however little they may deserve notice on other points.

I shall first speak of the entrance, which has been held out as dangerous by some men.

No one who is well acquainted with this harbour would dare to lift up his hand in solemn asseveration, and give testimony to that effect. But as soon as ships of the line began to frequent it, after some preparation had been made for their reception, every little incident common to all anchorages, such as a ship touching a soft bank, a pilot making a mistake, for want of a more correct knowledge of circumstances, were clothed in the most terrific colours and handed about, until magnified into dangers more to be dreaded than the *Scylla* and *Charybdis* of the ancients, or the Naval of the sea on the coast of Norway. If this proceeding could lay any claim to impartiality and justice, it would deserve to be passed over in silence; but the smallest pretensions to such a claim cannot be discovered, or why should a place be sounded about as dangerous, when proof is wanting to support the assertion; while silence was observed on other places, known by the testimony of ages to be dangerous, and proved at the very time the groundless charge was sound-

ed? Such a mode of proceeding was to be expected from narrow, contracted, intersested souls, into whose contemplation the advantages their country would derive from the execution of the measure never entered, but were absorbed by the thought of the probability of their losing in expectation, or in accustomed returns. But better things might have been expected from others who suffered themselves to be carried away by the torrent of prejudice.

I have proved, in my former Letter addressed to yourself and the First Lord of the Admiralty, that the entrance of Falmouth harbour is unrivalled by that of *any harbour* in the Channel of England, either on the English or French coast. I have done this by decisive facts, not by bare assertion or dubious proofs. You were informed, that the honourable Admiral Cornwallis entered with his squadron more than once, in which were six first and second rates, with a scant westerly wind, and at low water. Had he perceived any such dangers and difficulties in getting in and out, as may have been represented to you, he certainly would not have run in a second time. Sir Charles Cotton afterwards went in several times, with the squadron under his command; and after all this, Earl St. Vincent was not afraid to trust himself in it with his fleet, consisting of three first, five second, and one third rate; nor to send in ships from his squadron to

refit, after the accidents, that have been made so much of, happened under his own eyes. His Lordship's knowledge and experience were not to be biassed by such events, being no stranger to them at old established anchorages, where there were fewer excuses to be made in their favour.

The harbour being blamed on this occasion, brings to my remembrance a circumstance I witnessed in San Fiorenzo Bay, in the Island of Corsica. When one of his Majesty's ships was coming to anchor, the captain being on bad terms with the master, took the office upon himself, and moored the ship so slack, that one of the cables was much rubbed; which when observed, he said, "*the master ought "to be tried by a court martial for it;*" although the latter had as much to do with the transaction as the cables themselves.

I once saw a vessel lying upon the top of the Black Rock run there at the ebb tide, and where she lay until the following flood, and got off without receiving any material damage. She had come from the West Bay (formed by St. Anthony's Point and that of the Manacles) with a fair wind; and although there are three hundred fathoms of water between the shore and the rock on the west side, and six hundred fathoms on the east side, yet she could not find room to enter without running on the few fathoms of space occupied by the rock. But no

doubt her master had his pocket full of excuses, an the entrance was to blame, not him.

The decisive fact, of the largest ships in the navy being able to run in, and having run in, at low water with a scanty wind, most completely confutes all representations of the imagined dangers of the entrance. If not, what farther proofs are necessary? If you will order ten sail of the largest ships in the navy, and put on board of these proper pilots, they may run in any day, at any time of tide, if the wind will permit, which they can do free with all southerly winds; a most important point, and would be so held out, if it could be affected at some other places.

The numerous convoys that have entered and sailed out in safety, not one by one, but by dozens in the entrance at a time, are farther proofs of its safety, which no one acquainted with it ever doubted. On what is a contrary opinion founded? It ought most undoubtedly to be able to produce facts, at least as decisive and convincing as those produced against it, or it ought to be for ever put to silence.

But if the entrance of Falmouth harbour be held out as so dangerous, supposing there had been no naval establishment formed in Hamoaze to this day, and government had it in contemplation, can it be in any manner imagined, that many who now plead so strongly for Plymouth Sound would do so on account of its being a safe anchorage, or for the *easy*

entrance into Hamoaze?—Not at all. Taking what has been done with respect to the harbour westward of it as the criterion, would they not have cried out, "Have you not heard of the tremendous sea that is rolled into the Sound in southerly gales, and with what force it dashes against the iron-bound coast? Are you unacquainted with the disasters that have happened there, and the numerous wrecks that have strewed the shores? If a vessel part or drive, no shelter to run for; no *soft bank* to receive her; destruction howls around. Are you not acquainted with its rocks, ledges, and bays; the *Tinker*, the *Shovel*, the *Panther*, the *Winter*, the *Cobler*, the Leek-beds, and others too tedious to mention? Know you nothing of the rocky entrance into Hamoaze? Look at the *Devil's Point* and other horrible places. Do you wish to have the navy dashed in pieces?" That such would be said, and could with a great degree of truth be said, there can be no doubt. But you now find, Sir, how *good will*, *convenience*, and *interest*, have smoothed all these things down, and made up their minds to bear with them without murmuring, and without any *disagreeable representations*, much less those unfounded and aggravated.

The harbour to the southward and westward, which does not require a quarter part of the smoothing, would be courted by the next generation; all

its imagined deformities and bad qualities would die, and be buried along with the present.

Another objection held out is, that there is not so much room to get under weigh as at Spithead, Torbay, Cawsand Bay, and Plymouth Sound. And in what harbour on the English coast is there? Therefore some more precaution is necessary. Is it not used at all other places where it is necessary, without being held out as an insurmountable objection? But it was proposed, and determined upon, to remedy this inconvenience in a great measure. Yet the ships it will contain may be got under weigh, with proper precaution, without any danger. This is asserted without the least fear of contradiction founded on truth. Within the last *twenty-five years*, upwards of *two thousand* sail of ships and vessels of war have been in and out of this harbour; and notwithstanding all the inadequacy of the pilotage, so far from any one being lost, none ever received any material damage. It is not affirmed that so many different ships and vessels have been in and out, but the aggregate; many, making the number, having often sailed in and out during the period mentioned.

Others cry out, ships cannot sail with such and such winds, when blowing strong. Will those have the condescension to give the information, where that *secure* anchorage is, whence ships can

sail with all winds? It is a notorious fact, they cannot do so from the *insecure anchorages* on the southern coast of England. Can they do so from Torbay?—No. Can they do so from Cawsand Bay?—No. Can they do so from Plymouth Sound?—No. Will they be able to do so when breakwaters are formed in the Sound?—By no means. Let them stir, if they dare, during southerly gales; when, to use a sea phrase, signifying violence, the winds and sea will make every thing *sneer* outside of the breakwaters and the passages leading into the Sound; and it will be well, if at such a time they do not make something *sneer* within the breakwaters. No such place can be found in the world, unless open bays of many leagues extent were to be taken into account; and then it must not blow stronger than a ship can carry sail, otherwise she would be driven ashore.

Others say, the water is too deep in Falmouth harbour; before ships can get their anchors up, they are on the banks. That anchors may catch the steep edges of the banks, when vessels are incautiously run upon them before the anchors are hove above the surface of such banks, may be allowed; but if properly cast in the deep channel, no such thing could happen. But what would you, Sir, and the nation, give to have the water as deep off all the royal dock-yards in the Thames and Medway, and at Portsmouth?—You would think

several millions well bestowed to accomplish the same. As many millions, perhaps, as would prepare the western harbour to contain near as many ships of the line as the whole of them.

What weight ought such objections to carry, or on what foundations do they rest?

Before I close this Letter, I must beg leave to make a supposition, which will apply to the present subject. Suppose, then, that instead of the land being formed about Brest as it now is, that it stretched twenty-eight leagues on the north side, southward and westward to Ushant, and fifteen leagues in the same direction from the Saints, which were farther to the south, and joined to the main; and that the French government found it absolutely necessary to increase its naval establishments in the space; and on the north shore, fifteen leagues south-westward from Brest, and directly on the meridian of the Saints, or the termination of the south land, there was a safe harbour, nearly as capacious as the former, and easier by far of entrance, but from being little frequented, was little known either to the generality of the officers of the marine, or to men of influence and power: that its merits were now fairly represented to the government, when up-started an host of objectors, some saying one thing, and some saying another, and all of them strongly recommending an expensive breakwater at the entrance of Brest, which had been agitated for a long period

of time before the western harbour had been brought properly into view;—can it be difficult to imagine, by what reasons the head of the French government would suffer himself to be influenced? Would not the buzz of prejudice, the whispers of interest, and the murmurs of ignorance, be consumed by the fire of his reason; and the mud walls of objections, imagined by their erectors firm as rocks of adamant, be overthrown by his penetration? Having heard all that could be objected, would he not say to some, "Tell me not of the dangers of the entrance, for in doing this you only discover how unfit you are to approach me with any opinion upon a subject so important to the interests of the empire. Have you examined it carefully, and witnessed facts that ought to be conclusive; or have you built your opinion upon that of others equally informed with yourselves? Can you controvert the facts now before me? Turn then aside, and let me hear no more of such things." To others, "You say you were kept in that harbour by particular winds, when you wished to get to the eastward or westward: have you been there for a series of years, and carefully observed what effect the prevailing winds would have upon ships, squadrons, expeditions, and convoys placed in that anchorage?—whether, taking all circumstances into consideration, it be not the most favourable for the purposes wanted? Have you never been de-

tained at Brest by winds blowing into it? Could you sail during south-west winds from the anchorage, if secured?—By no means. Is not this a general objection to all anchorages? What consideration does it then deserve in the present case?" To others, "You acquaint me of the difficulties you experienced in getting out with a fair wind, and that your ships were run upon a bank. This proves that the place is not sufficiently known; the rise of its tides, the ground they occupy, fit for such ships as those you commanded, and the set and velocity of their currents. When all these things are better known, fewer accidents of the like kind will occur. Others had been there before you; they experienced no such difficulties, nor see any reason for the unqualified censure you have pronounced." "You must allow their knowledge and experience in their profession to be equal to your own. But have you not known of ships run aground in Brest harbour, and about its entrance; and (supposing the same occurences to have happened as in Plymouth Sound) have you not known ships wrecked there, with the loss of numbers of valuable lives? To what motive ought I to attribute your silence on these weighty considerations?—Not to any desire that I may perceive the subject in the only point of view in which it ought to appear before me. Granting that the breakwater answered the purpose of securing a number of ships during south-west gales of wind, with

the execution being covered with doubt; this is all that can be promised or expected. But when it is doubtful whether this may not cause the water to shoal in the anchorage thus secured, by which it would be, in time, rendered altogether useless, and the tide to decline generally in Brest harbour, rendering the passage into it more intricate, difficult, and dangerous, than at present (supposing it as difficult and intricate as that into Hamoaze); the bare probability of evils ensuing of such unspeakable magnitude, pregnant with disaster to the dearest interests of the empire, ought to raise most serious reflections in the mind of every man who has the least regard for his country; they are sufficient to determine me on no account to run the risk.

"Besides, the same expence it will require to execute the breakwater will prepare the western harbour to contain a greater number of ships in a more advantageous situation, and it can be applied to the purpose of laying up a considerable portion of the navy in a state of ordinary, when its services shall be no longer required at sea, and to the purposes of docking and refitting; considerations now become of more urgent importance than the obtaining a mere anchorage, which is however happily combined with them in this advantageous situation, to which you all seem insensible. Whatever may be your motives for the opinions and objections you have expressed, I am only to be influenced

by one consideration; and it is the only one by which I ought, and shall determine,—the utility the adoption will prove to the military movements of the state.

"It is well known to the world how tenacious the sons of the ocean are of old customs and places they have long frequented, and that these partialities may so blind their judgment as to bid defiance to the most obvious facts to work any conviction upon their minds; but this can be no reason why their country is to give way to such partialities, when they are hostile to her interests.

"Who can doubt the valour and knowledge, as seamen, of the British veterans of the old school? But does not the efficacy of their present mode of warfare clearly discover the effects of obstinately adhering to old customs? Who pointed out their error in conducting fleets?—A man who was not bred to the sea. Does not this prove, that an error in a profession of unspeakable importance may be discovered by one who is not of that profession? It requires here no seamanship to discover matters of the greatest consequence to the empire. Let any one look upon the two situations, with a register of the winds before him for years past; what can he say?

"Much as I may admire your abilities in your profession, I could not in any manner feel myself justified, in a matter of such vast importance to the

vital interests, and very existence of the empire, in being determined by your opinions, which are evidently the offspring of misconception, local prejudices, and partialities. I have before me facts which supersede all opinions. You look at a part, I view the whole machine of state, and have to consider what is most likely to add to its strength, and accelerate its movements. Such ought to be the motives of governments; those of individuals may be very different."

If such may be fairly supposed the *reasons* by which the head of the French government would be influenced in a case, the decision of which would be most important to the general movements of the marine in the supposition made; how much more powerfully would they operate on his mind, if Brest, instead of being so situated, were on the north side of a long channel of an hundred leagues in length, communicating with the North Sea, and terminating as supposed, and through which the French navy had all its communication with the western ocean, where numerous colonies and interests were to be supported and defended; armies transported, reinforced, and supplied; on the prompt execution of all which great services depended the prosperity of the states, the fate of allied nations, and the independence of the country; while there was not another naval establishment within less than forty-five leagues eastward? Or, if under such circumstances

France had four naval establishments in the Scheldt, one at Cherbourg, and one at Morlaix, but none in the Atlantic or Mediterranean; and her ancient establishments, as supposed, were become insufficient for her great and preponderating navy, while the urgent want of a more western establishment than that of Morlaix was severely felt. If to remedy all, it were proposed to make a breakwater at Morlaix, which could answer no purpose but that of securing a number of ships at anchor, while it was doubtful if even these would be very secure, and if the breakwater might not be the cause of ruining the anchorage altogether, and also another great establishment in the Scheldt, while she possessed an excellent harbour at Ushant, capable of being applied to all naval purposes; what would you, Sir, what would every sound politician in this country, think? Would it not be thought that she was acting under some strange infatuation or gross misrepresentation; no doubt you would think so, if the harbour at Ushant were applicable to the purposes she so much wanted. By the supposition, it is an excellent harbour, fit for all such purposes.

This, Sir, is the exact point of view in which this country stands. By what ought the government to be influenced?—by the urgent wants of the country, or by the plausible objections of individuals? It need not be asked, who will say Falmouth harbour is not worthy of the attention of the govern-

ment; but it may, and ought to be asked, who will prove it so?

But amidst all the ostensible objections you may have heard against it, perhaps the most cogent have never appeared before you in their own shape;—its distance from the metropolis, and being strange to the navy in general. But time, that works such miraculous changes, such as overcoming all the terrors of the dangers in Plymouth Sound, and the difficulties of the passage in Hamoaze; as his labour would not be half so much required in the case of Falmouth harbour, a few years would bring it from dislike into popularity and favour; it would be viewed by many with other eyes than at present.

I am, Sir,

with great respect,

your most humble servant,

January 1812. J. MANDERSON.

LETTER XI.

Sir,

It was my intention to have taken no farther notice of the objections made against the harbour of Falmouth; but on reconsidering the matter, it may be desirable to you, and to every one who wishes well to his country, to see a subject, so closely connected with the best interest of Great Britain, minutely investigated.

Although I have not moved in the sphere of life to which others have been raised by the dispensation of an All-wise Providence, who "ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will;" yet you will allow, it is possible to gain much by reflection; you will allow, I may have had many opportunities of discovering the springs of action in the human mind; you will allow, that patriotism is on many a tongue to whose heart it is a stranger; you will allow, there are those who, if they can gratify the ruling desire of the mind, are not much concerned what may be the consequence to their country.

This age abounds with self-imagined, philosophizing, and infidel patriots, whose cries and yells have resounded through the world, and the ruins of Europe proclaim their fearful infatuation.

May not the mind of man be led into error on one

subject as well as another? It is certainly at all times desirable to discover what is truth, and what is error; some questions may be calculated to bring what may be thought matter of opinion to issue. First, then, are there any who affirm, that the western harbour is not as well calculated for a naval establishment as any one of those where they are now formed? I do not pretend to know whether you have been led to believe so or not; but I can safely say, if it should be the case, you have been led into an error that may hereafter prove of serious consequences to the interests of the British realms.

You will allow, there is a wide difference when viewing any subject with impartiality and candour, and viewing it through the medium of prejudice and dislike. Now the matter of importance here is, to discover the truth, stripped of partiality and of prejudice. The harbour will speak for itself, if fairly viewed. You have in your possession the correct and impartial survey of Lieutenant Mackenzie, taken thirty years ago. You can have the report of Commissioner Bowen and of Captain Hurd.

I observed in my former publication, that the sailing in and out of a harbour, is no proof of possessing an accurate knowledge of its capacity and merits. This all the navy knows to be an undeniable truth. Who then are the men who have examined the port

of Falmouth with patient labour and the eye of impartiality; who know the various depths of its capacities, the sets and velocities of its tides? If, Sir, none appeared but those who can answer this question truly, you would be surprised to view the number. Who else can be qualified to give his Majesty's government that information which ought to be conclusive* ?

No one can justly take offence at observations founded on truth, and certainly necessary to discover, whether the censure passed against a harbour in a situation so important to the country be founded on truth, on knowledge, or bare assertion.

If the mere act of getting aground in one of his Majesty's ships, gave a qualification to decide on the merits of a harbour or anchorage where this happened; where, Sir, is the place that would not have been condemned long ago, if the circumstance operated impartially upon the mind? Therefore, to make it an objection to one place, and not to another, where the occurrence is pregnant with much more danger, discovers that some unaccountable misconception darkens the judgment.

* How many men in different ages of the world have sacrificed the knowledge of what would be highly beneficial to their country to their own self-interest! swimming with the tide of power to honours and preferment, while stifling the noblest feelings of the human soul; whose *philosophy* and *patriotism* have been, "It will last our time; let us get what we can, and those who come after us take care of themselves."

What is the capacity of this harbour?—how many have condemned it who never cast a lead in its waters, who never were a mile in its interior, and many who never were in it at all. Let impartiality say, what a competent jury to decide for the country, where her essential interests are so deeply concerned!

From the entrance of St. Just Pool to Tregothnan Point, is four nautical miles and a half; this space will contain moorings for *forty-eight ships of the line*, at ninety fathoms distance from each other. If there be a place or two in the space too narrow for them to swing, there is room enough in others for two to lie abreast. The depth of water through all the space is not like that where many of the ships of the line are laid up at other naval establishments, some nearly on the bottom, and others touching, at low spring tides; but here they might have all their stores and artillery on board, and be many feet from touching during the lowest tides.

From the entrance of Carrick Outer-road to that of St. Just Pool, is about a mile and a quarter: in my former publication I have acquainted you with the ships I have seen there, and their disposition; I shall therefore take the number at the low rate of fourteen ships of the line that can lie at their anchors. This makes *sixty-two* sail of the line the harbour will contain in its present state, even if

they had all their stores and artillery on board*. This number can be compared with that any other harbour can contain, moored at the same distance, and having room to swing.

Is the harbour of Falmouth secure? Who shall answer this question? Let facts and experience decide. Where are the wrecks, where are the disasters, worth noticing? As it is spoken to in another Letter, nothing more need be said here, than observing, that when the winds blow across Carrick Outer-road, the water is always smooth; and if a ship were to drive, it would be on a soft bank. When the wind blows into the harbour, its course is nearly along the deep channel.

Is the entrance of this harbour safe and easy? Who shall answer this question? Those who may have been in it a few times?—those who may have been run upon a bank through the timidity or ignorance of a pilot?—or the long train of proofs ascertained from time immemorial?

The entrance is much easier than any harbour on the English coast. The decisive fact, of the largest ships in the navy being able to run into it direct from sea, without waiting for any tide, is of the greatest importance: where is the harbour besides, where this can be done? It is true, some men may

* I am far from pretending that ships bound to sea ought to be any where but in Carrick Roads; but ships of the line refitting might be in St. Just Pool or Mesac Channel.

represent this circumstance as not worth attending to: so it may be said of any other facts of the greatest consequence to the country. Allow me, Sir, just to mention some which you can clearly comprehend.

In the war carried on in Spain and Portugal, how many misrepresentations have been held forth? The victory of Albuera, has it not been called a defeat in this country? The French army being forced to retreat out of Portugal, and driven from the frontiers of that kingdom, has it not been held out as a matter of choice on their side, and as of no importance in the course of the war? The taking of Ciudad Rodrigo in the presence of their army, has it not been represented as of no consequence? Many similar events might be mentioned, but these will suffice. Now, Sir, are you at all disposed to assent to the veracity of such assertions?—Undoubtedly not. Wherefore?—Because your own knowledge and judgment clearly decide to the contrary. Can you then think it impossible that misrepresentations of a similar kind may be held out respecting a harbour that might be rendered invaluable to the country?—can it be thought impossible to have as clear proofs to decide by in this case as in those mentioned? If the driving of a formidable army of an enemy (who had overthrown many nations) from a country to which he had sent it to take possession, and place a king over it; if the baffling and wasting of this army, and foiling his

most experienced generals; if the wresting strong fortresses out of his hands; if these important events in war can be (as you know they have been) represented as trivial circumstances, as no national benefits;—by the same mode of representation, why may not the most important advantages the country can derive from a maritime situation be as strangely perverted? Why may not a secure anchorage, capable of great improvement, by far the best for situation, in many important occasions in war, in possession of the country, into which *any ship* may run during all southerly storms and tempests, from which they can get into the ocean when they cannot from any other anchorage, cost the nation what it may in endeavouring to secure it; why may not such a harbour, teeming with consequences of such magnitude to the country; why may it not be defamed and misrepresented? Perhaps it may be thought there cannot be the same motives. But wherefore? If the mind of man be averse to any measure, whatever it may be, can it be imagined that it will not produce plausible arguments in one case as well as in another, and thus endeavour to cover the subject with doubt and obscurity?

The events of war might turn the scale in the peninsula; but no such thing could happen to the situation brought into view, but by some terrible revolution in nature.

Perhaps you may ask, how are you to know who

are right in their assertions respecting this western harbour? Have any facts been laid before you in these Letters, and in my last publication?—Most important ones. Who can controvert them? How is the question to be answered?—By facts that cannot be controverted, or by opinions supported only by assertion? It may be observed, that you have facts on the other side, from the difficulty a squadron of ships of the line experienced in getting out. Some things arising from trivial circumstances, and some things trivial in themselves, may, from different causes, assume an appearance of importance to which they are by no means entitled. This accident is exactly one of that description. I have explained the cause of it before, to which every candid mind will assent, because it is true. If a ship be near a lee-shore, and she do not choose to set sail enough to carry her clear, what will become of her? If a ship weigh in a channel, and cast with her head towards a bank when a strong tide is tending thitherward, and the current operate more powerfully than the wind on the canvas she has spread, where is she to go? If a ship weigh in a channel between two banks, over one of which she has water for some distance, but not so over the other, and she cast with her head towards the shallow bank, will she not be more liable to get aground than if cast in the opposite direction? Here are two simple causes that will occasion such

accidents, and when better known, could be afterwards avoided by using proper precautions.

But the thing was trivial in itself when compared with numerous accidents at other situations, which have caused no representations to their disadvantage. This, unluckily for the country, happened at a time when prejudice and dislike were on the tip-toe looking out; hence the importance it has assumed, but to which it is by no means entitled on any consideration whatever.

I need but refer you to Lieutenant Mackenzie's correct survey, for the depth of water on the Three-fathom Bank. I need but refer you to Commissioner Bowen's directions, printed at the Admiralty Office in 1805.

"*At half-tide you may pass to the westward "of the White Buoys more than a cable's length, "carrying five fathoms over Falmouth Bank.*"

At half-tide the water has three hours to rise, what must there then be, from two hours before high water until two hours after? Is this true? who can prove to the contrary? The depth of water here is as well known to those *who have examined the space*, as that in any other harbour or bay can be.

It is freely granted that there is not so much room to get under weigh in this secure harbour as there is in the open bays about Plymouth; therefore more precaution is necessary. Precaution occasions trouble; trouble, although amply repaid by security, may occasion dislike.

Skilful pilots, as at other king's ports; those who are accustomed to take ships through all the intricacies of the navigation from the Thames and Medway into the North Sea and Channel, who are not only conversant with the depth of the water, the set and velocity of the tides, but also with the effect of the sails on the vessels under their charge; if as well acquainted with the western harbour as where they now practise, would smile at all the imagined dangers of sailing in and out.

Being masters of their profession, and having full confidence in their own knowledge, they would not be interfered with, contrary to its dictates.

Many accidents, of a nature similar to that under view, have often happened at all places frequented by shipping of all descriptions; and if to ships of war with the same impunity, neither a Minister nor First Lord of the Admiralty might ever have heard of them, unless by chance; but if the consequences were serious, times innumerable they have been put down as occurrences common in naval affairs.

Does it not then appear strange, why such ado should have been made about the trivial circumstance of two or three ships getting on a soft bank for some time, from which nothing occurred but a few hours delay.

The whole that can be fairly said against the

secure harbour of Falmouth amounts to this,—that it has not capacity, in its present state, to hold a large fleet of ships of the line at their anchors; and that some difficulty was experienced in getting out at one time by a strong squadron consisting of nine ships of the line, eight of these first and second rates.

It may be hoped, that to every candid and impartial mind, it has been satisfactorily explained whence much of this difficulty arose; and that time and experience would remove the greater part of it out of the way. Therefore, to use more arguments in attempting to convince the mind determined not to be convinced, could answer no end; as it must be incontrovertibly evident, that the want of accurate local knowledge has given rise to many groundless surmises and conclusions.

The facts that have been laid before you must give some comprehension of the consequences of so many frigates coming into the Channel from oceans and seas southward and westward, waiting at other dock-yards for repairs, occupying the docks of ships of the line, or sent off to the Thames and Medway, whence the difficulty of getting back has been clearly ascertained.

A fleet of transports, of the same quantity of tonnage, might often transport to Spain and Portugal three times the number of men, in the same period they could from Spithead, when north-west and

south-west winds were prevalent, as they could go out and return several times before those at Spithead could have an opportunity of sailing; for they would not attempt putting to sea with a wind which would carry clear into the ocean from Falmouth, as in the case of Sir David Baird's army. You can easily inform yourself how many weeks transports were at that time lying at Portsmouth waiting for a wind to proceed to Portugal.

If the sailing from Plymouth at the same time as from Falmouth often make weeks of difference of time in getting into the western ocean, what must be the case from an anchorage forty-five leagues to the eastward of Plymouth?

These weighty considerations are so important to the country, that if they make no impression upon the mind, it must and ought to excite wonder and astonishment.

If indeed it make no difference to a nation warring for her existence and independence against a powerful enemy, prompt in his measures, and rapid in his movements, whether she can attack him at any vulnerable point this day or a month or two hence; whether she can timely re-inforce and supply her armies, which, for want of this, may be forced to retreat before superior numbers, and give up the fruits of dear-earned victories; or view a retreating and baffled army, which might have been attacked and routed,—if all this be matter of no moment.

then it makes no difference whether this western harbour sink under misrepresentation or not. If it make no difference, whether squadrons, cruisers, and convoys, may get a month or two sooner into the ocean from one place than from another, then let prejudice triumph, and the country give her cares to the winds on the subject of anchorages and naval establishments, and go quietly to rest. But if these events be important to the best interests of the British empire, whatever may be asserted to the contrary, this western harbour could be made the WORKING LEVER of Great Britain on the Atlantic Ocean, in all her warlike operations connected with it. Where is the situation besides, to which such vast consequences can be justly ascribed?—In this point of view, other anchorages sink into insignificance. The truths that have been produced, and which cannot be denied, fully prove this is the point of view in which it ought to be minutely considered*.

* Many reflecting men have been of opinion, that some national restraint ought to be laid on the press respecting the promulgation of her measures in war. Is an expedition preparing?—See the force, and even the regiments, to be employed, and its probable destination, announced to Europe weeks before it can sail. Is a convoy preparing?—See it blazoned, and the time it is to sail. The same if one be expected home. The commanders of the French privateers have frequently declared, they need but consult the English newspapers to know what time there would be a prospect of a successful cruise, and have heartily

Should any be disposed to do me so much injustice as to suggest, that I have written at the instigation of interested individuals; in the face of day, I disclaim any such unworthy motives: I also disclaim personal hostility to any man; but I own an inflexible conviction of the truth of what has been advanced. Allow me then, Sir, a small portion of patriotism, a grain of that independence of soul by which your own mind is actuated, and some knowledge of the subject under discussion; you will then discover a spring of action, which, while it scorns dishonourable servility, will encounter difficulties, as it has done, in a cause pregnant with matters of unspeakable magnitude to the throne and to the state.

I am, Sir,

your most humble servant,

February 1812. J. MANDERSON.

laughed at what appeared to them extreme folly. Every national loss, proceeding from the desire of being foremost in babbling, is folly; and the nation would do well to lay a wholesome restraint upon public information inimical to her interests.

LETTER XII.

SIR,

I MAY be allowed to entertain the hope, that to every disinterested and patriotic mind, I have proved satisfactorily, *where that harbour is, in the possession of Great Britain,* the situation of which, connected with the prevailing winds on her south-west coast, leaves it unrivalled for the important and momentous services of transporting armies and reinforcements to any situation, to any country or climate southward and westward; for the expediting of fleets, squadrons, and ships of war, to the same destinations; and of all convoys bound in like directions.

The exhibition of a few facts, out of hundreds that must have happened, as the cause has been the same since the earth received her present state at the flood, and which will hereafter happen, as time rolls on, clearly demonstrates what might be the consequences of sailing from Plymouth and Falmouth at the same hour, and with the same wind; —the loss of an army; the conquest of an allied nation; the loss of a fleet; the loss of invaluable colonies. If breakwaters in Plymouth Sound were heaped high as the adjacent land, they could not in any manner remove the strong objections against it

in this respect; they could not give it the command of winds and circumstances, of which the sister harbour of Hamoaze is in possession, and which it will continue to possess, in defiance of all human power, while the island of Great Britain remains. Why then should any one, who has the least regard for his country, endeavour to magnify trivial circumstances and defects into alarming dangers and insurmountable objections?

The port of Falmouth is a safe anchorage; it is proved to be so by the experience of ages, by the testimony of numerous convoys: If then, Sir, you are led to believe otherwise, the representation is widely different from the truth, and cannot be supported by well-authenticated evidence.

The country knows what Plymouth Sound is; but it has yet to be proved what it will be after she has paid dearly for the trial of experience. No one can doubt but much of the rough sea which now rolls in during southerly gales will be broken off; but to what extent it will deserve to be called secure, cannot be safely asserted without taking into the account the probability of the water shoaling within the breakwaters. If a fleet of transports, or a convoy, were to be caught there by a gale of wind from the north-west, or from the southward, the fate of many of them may be predicted without pretending to the spirit of prophecy. That many of them would drive can hardly be doubted; and if so, what

would become of them? Let the fate of the Amethyst, the fate of the Pearl, the fate of the Dutton East-Indiaman, and the fate of many other vessels, during this period of time, declare what would be the fate of others that should come in contact with the shores of the Sound.

Far be from me any pleasure in reciting such lamentable disasters!—far be from me any desire to aggravate the dangers of Plymouth Sound, or any anchorage near it! I sincerely wish it were ten times securer than it is, and that there was not one half of the fearful evidence that can be brought against it; but truth demands an impartial display of facts to be set before the eyes of the nation; and if any shall be displeased at this, what can be his motive? I am writing in the cause of my country, not in that of individuals; I am labouring, however unsuccessfully, in the cause of truth, not in that of error; what desire then should I feel for suppressing any realities on one side, or for aggravating them on the other?

The judicious improvement of Falmouth harbour could not, in any manner, affect its present undeniable security. More disasters, shipwrecks, and loss of lives, have happened, from unavoidable dangers within Peulee Point and the Mewstone in one year, than within the Shag Rock and Pendennis Point, perhaps from the first day that a boat spread sail on the waters within them. Loss of lives from shipwreck is, I believe, altogether unknown; for, al-

though a *few* vessels have been stranded and wrecked, their crews were in no kind of danger. The utmost of my inquiries have not been able to find out more than three or four small sloops deserted, and drifting about for want of ground-tackle; a vessel which imagined herself lying-to at sea in a gale of wind from south-west, but was carried by the tide into the harbour, and on the shore of Trefusis, before the crew were aware of her situation; but no lives were lost, or in danger; another, a prize-ship, having stranded one of her cables in shifting her birth, run athwart-hawse of another vessel, by which her rudder was unshipped, and having no anchor ready to let go, was run on shore.

Should my information on this point be incorrect, any one can examine it more minutely, and "leave unsearched no nook." If such inquiry should prove more productive, let it be publicly exposed, with the issue of a search equally severe and correct, for the same period of time, in the anchorages about Plymouth. The exhibition will more firmly establish what I have asserted, as I refrain from an enumeration now in my possession; those already mentioned being sufficient to prove the position, which is all that can be reasonably required.

If the advantage of situation, for giving timely effect to all the warlike operations of Great Britain, of whatever kind they may be, in all the oceans and seas where at least two thirds of her maritime

power is employed, and always required; where she has numerous colonies to protect, and invaluable interests and commerce to defend; if such a situation ought not to arrest the attention of her government, when searching along her coast, to fix upon a place for a new naval establishment, it will be difficult to point out the considerations by which it ought to determine. Those I have enumerated are of magnitude and unspeakable importance; they will for ever remain the same; their demands will not cease, or grow less; they may and will increase, while a few hours conflict would decide the fate of any armament that might leave the opposite hostile shores in the German Ocean.

If there were not one naval establishment in the Thames or Medway, if it were necessary, the whole navy of England might be placed in any anchorages eastward, off any of the enemy's ports in the North Sea, months before he could attempt to put his designs into execution. It would be absurd to suppose the British government ignorant of a formidable armament there preparing. I must then confess, that I am altogether at a loss to perceive what additional security the country would derive from another naval arsenal in the Thames. Would this prevent the enemy from approaching if he really meant it?—No. Would it prevent him from getting any nearer to the coast, than if the ships and vessels of war designed to encounter his force were

partly drawn from the ports in the Channel, supposing the four dock-yards already eastward could not furnish enough?—By no means. From what, then, is the additional security to proceed? Logic may exhaust her powers in making representations; but it is only men, ships, and arms, that can decide the question; no matter whence they came, if there in time enough; and that they may from ports in the Channel, no shadow of doubt can exist.

But while all the navy of England might sail an hundred times over, from the most western harbour in the Channel, into the North Sea, it might be, that during all that time not one ship could get from the Thames to the westward of Plymouth. The general state of the winds proves the probability

If the proposition would be called absurd, as no doubt it would, to form an establishment at the south-west coast of England for the naval services of the North Sea and Baltic, how much more would the proposition deserve the appellation, for forming one in the Thames for services connected with the Atlantic Ocean, when it is known that westerly winds generally prevail three fourths of the year? yet, for what other purpose could another be formed there?

The securing of the navy in peace is undoubtedly a great national object; but it has been proved this can be effected to a great degree in a western situation, by far the most favourable the country

possesses, for giving effect to her arms by sea and land in numerous and important services. Where two objects, so essential to the vital interests of the country, can be combined, ought objections, even of some magnitude, be suffered to operate against it? How much less, then, those chiefly founded on erroneous assumptions? In an economical point of view, one well worthy of serious consideration, perhaps the nation could not derive so much benefit from any sum expended at a different place, without at all taking the unrivalled situation into consideration. But when this is added, how much more powerfully ought it to operate upon the mind?

In the course of this investigation, I trust it has been proved, that the port of Falmouth is the most favourable anchorage in the possession of Great Britain for all services connected with the Atlantic Ocean; that the entrance is easy, and by no means dangerous; that the harbour is secure, capable of great improvement, fit for all naval purposes, and might be rendered more efficient than any one place occupied hitherto.

I have not intentionally deviated from matter of fact, but have endeavoured, as far as practicable, to make truth appear stripped of all opinions.

The time will come, and must come, perhaps produced by disaster, from delay in re-inforcing armies or fleets, or calamitous events at other anchorages, when the nation will look into this subject with her

eyes cleared from the darkening mists of prejudice and misrepresentation. The cause may be a national lamentation; and however some men may be disposed to treat such a suggestion with ridicule and contempt, the inferences to be drawn from the facts stated, which are out of their power to contradict, are too apparent and too serious not to make a deep impression upon every impartial and reflecting mind.

Let any one sit down with this disposition, and examine the history of his country only since the year 1777, and ask himself, if squadrons and ships of war had been prepared at Falmouth, instead of ports far to the eastward, what would have been the probable effect in many severe contests with the enemy? A squadron has been detained by contrary winds at St. Helen's, at a most important crisis, for upwards of a month. Let him ask himself, if re-inforcements and expeditions had sailed from this western harbour, instead of the anchorages which they left, (taking the cases mentioned as the rule of judging), what might have been the probable consequences? Nay, let him confine his inquiries and reflections to the last nineteen years; he will find enough to satisfy his mind, of the vast importance this western harbour could be made in promoting many services highly essential to the vital interests of the British realms.

If the expedition under Admiral Christian had

sailed from it, the shores of the Channel would not have been strewed with wrecks, and the lifeless bodies of Britain's warlike sons. Many others, and multitudes of convoys, have been so dispersed. They have been known to be ten days from Spithead, and afterwards dispersed in the Chops, or in the western part of the Channel. The expedition under General Spencer had sailed about that time in December 1807, when it was scattered and driven back; but if it had sailed from the port of Falmouth, it might have been off the coast of Portugal on the day it was driven back. So might many fleets of various decriptions have been out of the track or effects of the storms that proved so disastrous, while they were yet not clear into the ocean.

The impartial examiner will infallibly discover, from the cases cited, what may be the consequences of sailing, at the same time, from this harbour, and the anchorages in the vicinity of the most western establishment the country at present possesses. During the last four years, upwards of *forty* convoys of various descriptions, many of them having troops and stores on board, and a number of them from Plymouth, have been forced to seek refuge in this harbour. If there had been no refuge there for them, or if they had run back to a more easterly anchorage, most of them would have been detained longer in the Channel than they were.

Had the minister who, in his latter days, was

filled with surprise when this harbour appeared before him in its native simplicity, without any borrowed representations, and who, when he had viewed it attentively, considered its important situation and invaluable connections, then embraced it, with what may be called the arms of national desire; had he beheld it sooner undisguised, and been in possession of the same circumstances he now was, there can be no doubt, but at his death it would have been firmly established. Therefore any representations, which are known to those acquainted with the movements of ships and fleets to be common to all anchorages, would have come too late to have produced the impolitic effect which they have done, and would have been thought the same of now as at other naval ports, and nothing more.

No one can err who shall tread in his footsteps towards establishing the port, for the only purpose of promoting the interests of his country, say to the contrary who will.

No doubt, Sir, you are aware, that there are those who, if seated in power, would tread in his footsteps to accomplish this desirable national object; men high in the ranks of society, high in rank in the navy, high in political attainments; men of ability, experience, and discretion, whose judgment has decided from the undeniable facts that have been adduced;—can it be said, they have not good reason on their side for so deciding? What then must

those have who have decided directly contrary; upon what proofs is their decision founded?

Any one who has been in the naval service of his country but a few years, and whose mind is unbiassed, would be filled with astonishment, were he to be told, that the important advantages possessed by such an anchorage were to be sacrificed to the trivial representation of a few ships getting on a soft bank for a short time, and because others could not sail when the wind blew strong into their anchorage. He may have seen ships aground in many anchorages; he may have seen them locked up at Spithead, in Torbay, Cawsand Bay, and Plymouth Sound. He may have seen them, after striking in the latter places, firing signal-guns of distress, and the whole dock-yard in motion, straining every nerve to get out anchors and cables to ships and vessels in the foaming anchorage. He may have seen a squadron, after having run twenty-five leagues back, blown out of its anchorage, and buffeting about in the Channel. He may have heard of a fleet of East-Indiamen, with some ships of the line, being locked up at St. Helen's by a strong wind from east-south-east; nor could they move, though outward-bound, until the fair wind was overblown. He may have heard, that when the French were in Bantry Bay, that the Channel fleet was prevented sailing from Spithead the day it intended, by one ship running foul of another. He may have seen

and heard much more than all this; and when he found none of these anchorages forsaken, no pains taken to improve such circumstances to their disadvantage, would he not wonder, why those, many of them of less consequence, were to be made objections against *one place* only, and that place *one* where, for reasons important to the country, they ought to be more patiently borne with than any where besides. Far be it from me to insinuate, that his Majesty's government does not think it has sufficient reasons for its present determination. But this government, as is well known, decided otherwise in 1805; at which period then were its reasons most conclusive; at which period had it the clearest and most impartial evidence before it?

Being under the strong conviction, that you have not hitherto clearly discerned things of great moment to the beneficial interests of Great Britain, and that important facts connected with this subject may not have been observed in the light in which they ought to appear, I cannot suffer myself to think, that you can be in any manner displeased at any attempt to penetrate your mind with a conviction of the truth, where the interests of your country are so deeply concerned.

I have done this under many discouragements, and in retirement; supported only by the well-grounded hope, that I was labouring in the just cause of my country, although I should make my-

self more disliked by individuals than hitherto, who cannot controvert the truths that have been produced.

Because this western harbour has been little known, is no argument against it. Because it may not be desirable personally to many, is no argument against it; but it may, however, be most desirable to the country. Because it may have been avoided by individuals, only proves their dislike; it proves nothing more, neither is it the smallest argument against the superior advantages it offers to the country above all the harbours in her possession.

I have given no opinion on the subject, but as to the improvement of this western harbour. The *unrivalled situation*, *easy entrance*, and *security*, stand upon infallible testimony, that of facts, and the experience of ages; who then will convince me of having made any misrepresentations? If then what I have laid before you be solemn matter of facts, say, Sir, if it be not worthy of your most serious attention?—Judge you then from it for the country, and let the country judge for herself.

I am, Sir,

with great respect,

your most humble servant,

12th *February* 1812. J. MANDERSON.

APPENDIX.

A Log of the Winds, taken in Falmouth Harbour from the 1st of September 1800 to the 30th of April 1802.

The points marked are by compass; by allowing two points to the left hand, will nearly give the true point.

Year 1800.

September.		October.		November.	
Day.	Winds	Day.	Winds.	Day.	Winds.
1,	east.	1,	*n. w.*	1,	variable.
2,	east.	2,	*w. n. w.*	2,	*s. s. w.* to *s. w.*
3,	variable.	3,	*w. n. w.*	3,	*s. w.* to *w.*
4,	ditto.	4,	*w. n. w.*	4,	variable.
5,	ditto.	5,	variable.	5,	*n. w.* to *n. n. w.*
6,	ditto.	6,	*s. e.* to *s. s. e.*	6,	*n. n. w.* to *s. w.*
7,	ditto.	7,	*s. s. e.* to *s. s. w.*	7,	*w.* to *s. w.*
8,	ditto.	8,	*s. s. w.* to *w. s. w.*	8,	*s. w.* to *w.*
9,	ditto.	9,	*w. s. w.* to *w. n. w.*	9,	variable.
10,	*n. n. w.*	10,	*n. w.*	10,	*n. w.* to *s. w.* to *s. s. e.*
11,	*n. n. w.*	11,	*n. w.* to *n.*	11,	*s. s. e.* to *w.*
12,	*s. w.*	12,	*n.* to *n. n. e.*	12,	*w.* to *n. n. w.*
13,	*s. w.*	13,	*n. n. e.* to *n. n. w.*	13,	variable.
14,	east.	14,	*n. n. w.* to *w.*	14,	*w.* to *w. s. w.*
15,	east.	15,	*w. n. w.*	15,	*w. s. w.* to *w. n. w.*
16,	variable.	16,	variable.	16,	*w. n. w.* to *n. n. w.*
17,	*s.* to *s. w.*	17,	variable.	17,	*n. n. w.* to *n.*
18,	*s. w.*	18,	variable.	18,	north.
19,	*s. w.*	19,	*e. s. e.*	19,	*n.* to *n. e.*
20,	*s. s. w.*	20,	east.	20,	*e. n. e.*
21,	*s. w.*	21,	variable.	21,	*e. n. e.* to *n.*
22,	*s. w.* to *w.*	22,	*n. w.* to *n.*	22,	north.
23,	west.	23,	north.	23,	*n.* to *w.*
24,	*n. w.*	24,	variable.	24,	west.
25,	*n. w.* to *n. n. w.*	25,	*s. s. w.*	25,	*w.* to *n. n. w.*
26,	*n. w.*	26,	*s. s. w.* to *w. s. w.*	26,	*n. n. w.*
27,	*n. w.* to *s. w.*	27,	*w. s. w.* to *n. w.*	27,	west.
28,	*w.* to *n. w.*	28,	*n. n. w.*	28,	*w. n. w.*
29,	*n. w.*	29,	*n. n. w.* to *w. n. w.*	29,	*w. n. w.*
30,	*n. w.*	30,	*w. n. w.* to *s. w.*	30,	*n. n. w.*
		31,	variable.		

Year 1800.

December.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	*n. w.*
2,	*n. n. w.*
3,	*s. w.*
4,	*w. n. w.* to *n.*
5,	*n.* by *e.*
6,	*n. n. e.*
7,	*n. e.*
8,	*n. e.*
9,	variable.
10,	*e.* to *s. e.* and *s.*
11,	*s.* to *s. s. w.*
12,	north.
13,	north.
14,	*s. s. e.* to *s.*
15,	*s.* to *s. e.*
16,	*s. e.* to *e.*
17,	*e. s. e.*
18,	variable.
19,	*s. w.*
20,	*s. w.* to *w. n. w.*
21,	*w. n. w.* to *w.*
22,	*w.* to *s. s. w.*
23,	*s. s. w.*
24,	*s. s. w.* to *w.*
25,	*w. n. w.*
26,	west.
27,	*w. n. w.*
28,	*s. w.* to *s. e.*
29,	*s. e.* to *w. s. w.*
30,	variable.
31,	*s. s. w.* to *n. w.*

Year 1801.

January.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	variable.
2,	*w. n. w.* to *s. w.*
3,	*s. w.* to *w.*
4,	*w.* to *w. s. w.*
5,	*w. s. w.* to *n. w.*
6,	variable.
7,	ditto.
8,	*s. e.*
9,	*s. e.*
10,	*s. e.* to *s. w.*
11,	*s. w.* to *s. s. e.*
12,	*s. s. e.*
13,	*s. s. e.*
14,	variable.
15,	*s. w.* to *s. s. w.*
16,	*w. n. w.* to *s. w.*
17,	*s. w.* to *n. w.*
18,	*w.* to *s. s. w.*
19,	*s. s. w.* to *n. w.*
20,	*n. w.* to *w. s. w.*
21,	*w. n. w.*
22,	*w. n. w.* to *n. n. w.*
23,	*n. n. w.* to *n.*
24,	*n.* by *e.* to *n. n. e.*
25,	variable.
26,	*s. e.* to *n. e.* and *w.*
27,	variable.
28,	*n. w.* to *n. n. w.*
29,	*n. w.*
30,	*w. n. w.*
31,	west.

February.	
Day.	Winds,
1,	*s. s. w.*
2,	*s. w.*
3,	*w. s. w.*
4,	*w.* by *s.* to *s. w.*
5,	*s. w.* to *w.* by *s.*
6,	*w. s. w.* to *w. n. w.*
7,	variable.
8,	*w. s. w.*
9,	variable.
10,	*e. n. e.*
11,	*n. e.*
12,	*n. e.*
13,	*n. e.*
14,	*n. e.*
15,	*n. e.*
16,	*n. e.*
17,	east.
18,	*e. n. e.*
19,	variable.
20,	*n. w.*
21,	*w. s. w.*
22,	*w. s. w.*
23,	*w.* to *w. n. w.*
24,	*n. w.*
25,	*w. n. w.* to *w. s. w.*
26,	*s. w.* to *w. n. w.*
27,	*n. w.* to *s. s. e.*
28,	*s.* to *w. n. w.* to *w. s. w.*

Year 1801.

March.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	*w. s. w.*
2,	*w. s. w.*
3,	*w. s. w.* to *w.*
4,	variable.
5,	ditto.
6,	ditto.
7,	*n. e.* to *e.*
8,	variable.
9,	west.
10,	variable.
11,	*s. s. w.* to *w.*
12,	*w. n. w.*
13,	west.
14,	*w.* to *w. s. w.*
15,	west.
16,	west.
17,	*w. s. w.*
18,	*w. n. w.*
19,	*n. w.* to *n.*
20,	*n. w.* to *s. w.* to *w.*
21,	*w.* to *w. n. w.* to *w.*
22,	*w.* to *w.* by *n.*
23,	*w. n. w.* to *n.* by *w.*
24,	*n. w.* to *w. n. w.*
25,	west.
26,	*w.* to *w.* by *s.*
27,	*w. s. w.*
28,	*w. s. w.* to *s. w.*
29,	*s. w.* to *w.*
30,	var. *s. e.* by *e.*
31,	*e. s. e.* to *e.* by *s.*

April.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	*e. s. e.*
2,	east.
3,	east.
4,	*n. n. e.*
5,	*n. n. e.*
6,	variable.
7,	*w.* to *w. s. w.*
8,	*w.* to *n.*
9,	*n.* to *w. s. w.*
10,	*w.* to *w. n. w.*
11,	*n. n. w.*
12,	*n.* to *n.* by *w.*
13,	*n. w.* to *n. e.*
14,	*n. n. e.*
15,	*n. n. e.* to *n. e.*
16,	*e.* to *n. e.*
17,	*n. e.* to *s. s. e.*
18,	variable.
19,	*n. n. w.* to *n. n. e.*
20,	*n. n. e.*
21,	*n. n. e.* to *e. n. e.*
22,	*e.* to *e. s. e.*
23,	*e. s. e.*
24,	*e. s. e.*
25,	*e. s. e.*
26,	*e. s. e.*
27,	variable.
28,	variable.
29,	*e. s. e.*
30,	*e. s. e.*

May.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	*n.* to *s. e.*
2,	easterly.
3,	*s. e.* to *s. w.*
4,	*n.* to *s. w.*
5,	variable.
6,	easterly.
7,	ditto.
8,	*e.* to *n.*
9,	northerly.
10,	north.
11,	*n. w.* to *w.* by *s.*
12,	*w.* to *n.*
13,	north.
14,	*n.* to *w. s. w.*
15,	*w. s. w.*
16,	*s. w.* to *s.*
17,	*s. w.*
18,	*s. w.*
19,	north.
20,	northerly.
21,	variable.
22,	*s. w.* to *s.*
23,	*s.* to *n. n. w.*
24,	variable.
25,	*s.* to *s. s. e.*
26,	*s. s. e.* to *s. w.* to *n. w.*
27,	variable.
28,	*s. s. w.* to *s. w.*
29,	*s. w.* to *n. w.*
30,	*w.* to *e.*
31,	variable.

Year 1801.

June.		July.		August.	
Day.	Winds.	Day.	Winds.	Day.	Winds.
1,	*s. w.* to *w.*	1,	*w.* to *n. n. w.*	1,	variable.
2,	variable.	2,	*w. n. w.* to *n. n. w.*	2,	ditto.
3,	*w. s. w.* to *n. w.*	3,	variable.	3,	ditto.
4,	variable.	4,	*w. n. w.* to *w.*	4,	ditto.
5,	westerly.	5,	variable.	5,	northerly.
6,	variable.	6,	*w.* to *s. s. w.*	6,	variable.
7,	*s.* to *n.*	7,	*s. s. w.* to *s. w.*	7,	easterly.
8,	variable.	8,	*s. w.* to *w.*	8,	*n.* easterly.
9,	north.	9,	*w.* to *n. n. w.*	9,	*n.* to *e. s. e.*
10,	*s.* calm.	10,	northerly.	10,	*e. s. e.*
11,	*s.* to *n.*	11,	*s. w.* to *w.*	11,	easterly.
12,	*n.* by *e.*	12,	*w.* to *n. w.* by *n.*	12,	variable.
13,	*n. n. e.*	13,	*w.* to *s. w.* to *w.*	13,	ditto.
14,	northerly.	14,	variable.	14,	north.
15,	north.	15,	ditto.	15,	*n. n. w.*
16,	northerly.	16,	*n.* westerly.	16,	northerly.
17,	variable.	17,	variable.	17,	easterly.
18,	ditto.	18,	*w.* to *n.*	18,	ditto.
19,	ditto.	19,	variable.	19,	ditto.
20,	ditto.	20,	easterly.	20,	var. and calm.
21,	easterly.	21,	*n. e.*	21,	easterly.
22,	*e.* to *s. w.*	22,	variable.	22,	ditto.
23,	variable.	23,	*n.* easterly.	23,	ditto.
24,	ditto.	24,	northerly.	24,	variable.
25,	north.	25,	ditto.	25,	ditto.
26,	north.	26,	variable.	26,	easterly.
27,	*n. n. w.*	27,	ditto.	27,	variable.
28,	variable.	28,	southerly.	28,	ditto.
29,	ditto.	29,	*s.* to *e.*	29,	ditto.
30,	ditto.	30,	variable.	30,	*s. w.*
		31,	ditto.	31,	*s. w.* to *n.*

Year 1801.

September.		October.		November.	
Day.	Winds.	Day.	Winds.	Day.	Winds.
1,	*n. w.*	1,	*s. w.*	1,	*s. w.* to *w.*
2,	*w. n. w.* to *n. w.*	2,	*s. w.*	2,	*w.* to *s.* to *w.* by *s.*
3,	*n. w.* to *s. w.*	3,	west.	3,	*n. w.* to *e.*
4,	*s. w.*	4,	west.	4,	*s. s. e.* to *s. w.* to *n.*
5,	*s. w.* to *s.* to *s. s. w.*	5,	*w. n. w.*	5,	north.
6,	*s. s. w.* to *s.*	6,	variable.	6,	*n.* to *s. w.*
7,	north.	7,	*n. w.* to *s. w.*	7,	south.
8,	*n.* to *s. s. w.*	8,	variable.	8,	*s.* to *s. s. e.*
9,	*s. s. w.*	9,	ditto.	9,	*s. e.* to *e.*
10,	*s. s. e.*	10,	ditto.	10,	*s. e.* to *s.*
11,	variable.	11,	*s. w.*	11,	*s. e.* to *s. w.*
12,	ditto.	12,	*s. w.* to *w. s. w.*	12,	*w.* to *n. w.*
13,	ditto.	13,	*s. w.* to *w. s. w.*	13,	northerly.
14,	ditto.	14,	*s. w.* to *w. s. w.*	14,	variable.
15,	northerly.	15,	*s. w.*	15,	northerly.
16,	easterly.	16,	*s.* westerly.	16,	*w. n. w.* to *s. w.*
17,	*s. e.*	17,	ditto.	17,	*w.* to *s. w.*
18,	*e. s. e.* to *n.*	18,	*s. w.* to *w.* by *n.*	18,	variable.
19,	west.	19,	*w. n. w.* to *n. w.*	19,	ditto.
20,	northerly.	20,	north.	20,	ditto.
21,	north.	21,	*n. w.* to *w.* to *n.*	21,	*s. w.* to *n.*
22,	variable.	22,	*n. n. e.* to *n. e.*	22,	north.
23,	northerly.	23,	*n.* easterly.	23,	ditto.
24,	variable.	24,	ditto.	24,	*n. w.* to *n.*
25,	*s. w.*	25,	*n. e.*	25,	*n.* to *n. w.*
26,	*s. s. w.* to *s. w.*	26,	northerly.	26,	*w. n. w.* to *n.*
27,	*s. s. e.* to *s. s. w.*	27,	*n.* to *w.*	27,	*n. w.* to *s. w.* to *n.*
28,	*s. s. w.*	28,	*s. w.* to *n.*	28,	*n. n. w.* to *n.* by *w.*
29,	variable.	29,	*w. n. w.* to *n.*	29,	*n.* to *n. w.* to *s. e.*
30,	ditto.	30,	*w. s. w.*	30,	*s. e.* to *w. n. w.*
		31,	*w. s. w.*		

Year 1801.

December.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	*n. w.* to *w. n. w.*
2,	*w. n. w.* to *n. w.* to *w. n. w.*
3,	*n. w.* to *w.* to *n.*
4,	*w. n. w.* to *s.*
5,	*s. s. e.* to *s. w.*
6,	*w. n. w.* to *n. w.*
7,	*n. w.* to *w. n. w.*
8,	*w. n. w.* to *s. s. e.*
9,	*s.* to *s. w.* to *w. n. w.*
10,	variable.
11,	*n. w.* to *w.*
12,	*n. w.* and var.
13,	*n. w.* to *n.* by *e.* to *w. n. w.*
14,	*n.* to *n. e.* to *n. w.*
15,	*n.* to *w. n. w.*
16,	*w. n. w.* to *n.*
17,	*n.* by *e.* to *n. w.* to *n.*
18,	*n.* to *n. w.*
19,	*n. w.* to *w. n. w.*
20,	*n. w.* to *s. w.*
21,	*s. w.* to *n. w.*
22,	*n. w.* to *w.*
23,	*s.* to *w. n. w.*
24,	*w. n. w.* to *w. s. w.*
25,	*w. n. w.* to *s. w.* by *s.* to *w. s. w.*
26,	*w. n. w.* to *s. s. w.* to *w. s. w.*
27,	*w. n. w.* to *n. n. w.*
28,	*n.* to *s. e.* to *e. s. e.*
29,	variable.
30,	var. north.
31,	*n. n. e.* to *n. e.*

Year 1802.

January.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	*n. e.* to *n. w.*
2,	*n. w.* to *n. e.* to *n. w.*
3,	*n.* to *n. w.*
4,	*n. e.* to *e.*
5,	*n. e.* to *e.*
6,	*n.* to *w.* to *s. w.*
7,	*n.* to *s. e.*
8,	*e. s. e.* to *e. n. e.*
9,	easterly.
10,	variable.
11,	*n. e.*
12,	calm, easterly.
13,	*n. e.*
14,	*n.* easterly.
15,	ditto.
16,	northerly.
17,	*s. w.*
18,	*s. w.*
19,	*s. w.* to *w.* by *s.*
20,	*w.* to *n. w.*
21,	*w. n. w.* to *s. w.* to *n. w.*
22,	*n. w.* to *n.*
23,	*n.* to *s. w.*
24,	*s. w.*
25,	*s. w.*
26,	*s. w.*
27,	*w. s. w.*
28,	*s. w.*
29,	*s. s. w.* to *w. s. w.*
30,	*w. n. w.* to *s. w.*
31,	*s. w.*

February.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	*s. w.* to *w. s. w.*
2,	*w. s. w.*
3,	*s. s. w.* to *w. s. w.*
4,	*w.* to *s.* to *w. n. w.*
5,	*s.* to *w. n. w.* to *s. w.*
6,	*s. w.* to *n.*
7,	north.
8,	*n.* to *s. w.*
9,	*s. w.* to *n. w.*
10,	*w. n. w.* to *n. w.*
11,	north.
12,	*n. e.*
13,	*n. e.*
14,	*n. e.*
15,	variable.
16,	*w. s. w.* to *n. w.*
17,	*n. w.* to *s. s. w.* to *n. w.*
18,	*n. w.* to *n.* to *n. w.*
19,	*n.* to *s.* to *s. w.*
20,	*w.* to *n. w.* to *w. n. w.*
21,	*w. n. w.*
22,	*w. n. w.* to *n. w.*
23,	*n. w.* to *n. w.* by *w.*
24,	*n. w.* to *w. n. w.*
25,	*n. w.* to *n, n. e.*
26,	northerly.
27,	variable.
28,	do. and calm.

Year 1802.

March.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	var. with calms.
2,	*n.* to *s. w.*
3,	*s. w.* to *n. w.*
4,	*n.* to *n. n. e.*
5,	*n. e.*
6,	*n. e.* to *e.*
7,	easterly.
8,	*e.* to *n.*
9,	north.
10,	northerly.
11,	ditto.
12,	variable.
13,	north.
14,	*n. e.*
15,	east.
16,	*n. e.*
17,	*n.* easterly.
18,	*e.* to *s. w.*
19,	*s. w.*
20,	*w.* to *n. w.*
21,	*s. w.* to *w. n. w.*
22,	*s. w.* to *w. n. w.*
23,	variable.
24,	*w. n. w.* to *n. n. w.*
25,	*w.* to *s. s. w.*
26,	variable.
27,	ditto.
28,	*s.* to *n. w.*
29,	north.
30,	*n. e.*
31,	easterly.

April.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	easterly.
2,	ditto.
3,	variable.
4,	ditto.
5,	ditto.
6,	*s. w.* to *n.*
7,	northerly.
8,	*n.* to *w.*
9,	*w. s. w.* to *n. w.*
10,	*w. n. w.* to *w.*
11,	*w.* to *n. w.*
12,	*n. w.* to *n. n. w.*
13,	*n. w.* to *n. n. w.*
14,	*n.* to *w. s. w.*
15,	*s. w.*
16,	*s. w.* to *n. n. w.* to *n. w.*
17,	variable.
18,	northerly.
19,	ditto.
20,	ditto.
21,	ditto.
22,	*n.* to *w.*
23,	*n.* to *n. e.*
24,	variable.
25,	*w. n. w.* to *w.*
26,	*w. s. w.*
27,	*w. s. w.* to *n. n w.*
28,	north.
29,	*n. e.*
30,	*s. e.*

May.	
Day.	Winds.
1,	easterly.
2,	*e.* to *s. w.*
3,	*s. w.* variable.

Where *to* is mentioned twice in one day, it means the wind veered from the first point to the second, and from the second to the third. Thus, on the 13th of Dec. 1801, it stands *n. w.* to *n.* by *e.* to *w. n. w.*; that is, the wind veered from *n. w.* to *n.* by *e.* and then from *n.* by *e.* to *w. n. w.* during the twenty-four hours, and so of any other.

During the present winter, 1811, the winds have blown more from the western quarters than the two winters noticed in the log.

Perhaps there are few years more favourable for easterly winds; yet it will be perceived what advantages the nation will be likely to derive from south-east winds, which she may not want once in a century, while her wants require every month a passage into the Atlantic Ocean. Let common sense then decide where the situation is, from which she is most likely to effect this, taking all chances of winds. Without this be done, all calculations and representations must prove mere nugacity.

FINIS.

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ADDENDA.

WHEN the writer made his observations on the intended embankment in Plymouth Sound, his information respecting the execution was not perfectly correct; he therefore used breakwaters and mounds instead of breakwater and mound; but this affects not the argument.

When it was mentioned in the House of Commons how many ships of the line, *it was hoped*, would be secured by the intended breakwater, it ought at the same time to have been noticed, that those who are well acquainted with the anchorage affirm there is not clear ground for above *ten* sail of the line, at the most, to lie at their anchors, and if only twenty were to venture into it during a strong southerly gale, how the half of them were to be secured before they could take in the bridles of the moorings, and what would prevent their cables being cut and stranded, before this could be effected, by the rocks, amongst which they must let go their anchors. But if only fifteen sail of the line were to run in towards the close of a boisterous winter day, who can say what the *event* might be? Opinions founded on erroneous pre-

mises could render the country no recompence for any loss she might sustain. What the consequences might be, she has yet to learn; and no doubt she will learn, and then shrink from the place with fear and abhorrence.

Of all the undertakings that have been projected in naval matters, perhaps none was ever so hazardous as this.

It was judiciously observed by Sir Home Popham in the House of Commons, that the number of ships of the line the anchorage could contain in safety, would be far short of the number mentioned; perhaps not more than Falmouth harbour will now contain. But if only £750,000 were laid out on its improvement, half the sum it is supposed the proposed embarkment in the Sound will cost, it would then be seen what real advantages the country would derive from the execution, without being exposed to the least risk, without having her mind agitated by the dread of alarming evils that might ensue.

At present the writer refrains from any further observations.

April 24th, 1812.

The following ERRATA have occurred in consequence of the Author's residence, at a distance in the country, having prevented his correcting the Press.

Page 14, line 12, for "than it is," *read* "that it is."
44, 2, from bottom, for "the river breakwaters," *read* "the breakwaters."
48, 5, for "on commission," *read* "in commission."
52, 3, from bottom, for "their stores," *read* "her stores."
Same page, last line, for "her docks," *read* "her decks."
71, line 10, for "may have felt," *read* "may feel."
77, 11, from bottom, omit in reading, "equal to the distance."
86, 3, for "three mounds," *read* "the mound."
94, 5, from bottom, for "We know," *read* "He knew."
101, 10, from bottom, for "at the ebb," *read* "on the ebb."
102, 1, for "an," *read* "and."
103, 12, for "ledges, and bays," *read* "ledges, and reefs."
106, 11, for "twenty-eight," *read* "twenty-six."
131, line 2, for "utmo," *read* "utmost."
133, 13, from bottom, for "establishment at," *read* "establishment on."

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