

If we had failed to prevent the establishment of the French domination on the continent of Western Europe, France had failed quite as signally in her attempts to demolish our commercial and maritime supremacy. During the heat of the war we had grasped the control of Southern India, by putting down Bonaparte's ally, Tippoo Sultan of Mysore (1799); the "Great Proconsul" Wellesley was, at the very moment of the Treaty of Amiens, watching his opportunity to lay the foundations of British power in the central and northern regions of Hindostan by interfering in the affairs of the Mahratta states, a project which he was to take in hand before the year 1802 had expired.

Yet, even when all these facts are taken into consideration, there can be no doubt that Addington and his cabinet were fully justified in concluding peace with France. War is such a fearful burden, and its chances are so incalculable, that no government which is offered an honourable and not unprofitable peace should hesitate to accept it, merely because there is some prospect of obtaining yet better terms at some future date. The one mistake made was in thinking that Bonaparte was sincerely anxious for an equitable pacification, and wished to dwell beside us as a quiet neighbour. But the statesmen of 1801 could not know his character as we know it after a study of his whole career; they were quite excusable if they were deceived by his plausible verbiage, and allowed him some credit for the magnificent and praiseworthy sentiments which he professed.