

Desperate Conflict.

Civita Vecchio, June 20.—The beginning of the month a most terrible battle was fought about twelve leagues from the point of Messina, between an Algerine cruiser of 80 guns, full of men, and a ship of 25 nine and 12 pounders, belonging to the King of the two Sicilies, the conflict began at seven in the morning, and lasted till near three in the afternoon. The Algerine received the first broadside, which carried away the star-board main chains, and much damaged the standing rigging; the salute was immediately returned, and the fight commenced with the utmost resolution; each party seemed determined to conquer or die; the pirate hoisted the bloody flag, and ran along side the frigate, in a situation ready for boarding, and had nearly grappled her, but she kept up such a constant and well directed fire into the rover, that entirely frustrated their intention, and killed a vast number of their men, yet this success did not prevent the barbarian making another attempt which also failed with great loss; this obliged them to sheer off for a short time, but they soon renewed the combat, when a most tremendous cannonade began on both sides, which lasted upwards of two hours without intermission; unfortunately the frigate's fore mast was carried away close by the board, and fell upon the deck, which did a considerable damage, besides killing and wounding a number of men.

Notwithstanding this unfortunate circumstance, the brave Christians, whose courage was not in the least damped, kept fighting on, fully determined to sink the robbers. During this time a sloop of war of 16 guns, and a cutter of 12, who had parted company from the above ship two days before, luckily came up, and played their parts so well, that in a short time the pirate was all in flames, but by the exertions of the crew the fire was got under.

Notwithstanding the crippled state and dangerous situation the pirate was in, yet those ruffians fought with such an uncommon degree of desperation, that was astonishing, and almost beyond description; at this juncture the frigate was so much shattered both in hull and rigging, that she could be hardly kept above water and was obliged to be towed out of the action.

In the mean time the sloop and cutter kept up such an incessant and well directed fire into the rover, till she was totally disabled, her masts, yards and rigging utterly destroyed, her guns dismounted, and her port-holes knocked three and four into one; nevertheless, this desperate crew distained to strike, and kept a constant fire with small arms, from which many of the balls were chewed; at last, when they found they could not resist the King's force any longer, they set fire to the magazine and blew themselves up, together with a number of Christian captives they had on board, who all perished with the infidels.

P. S. The pirate was commanded by Sidi Beder, a fellow of invincible courage, very bold and daring; this man was a great terror to the Spaniards in their late war with Spain; he has not only sunk and captured several ships which were fitted out on purpose to take him, but would often land upon their coast in open day with his crew, in spite of all resistance, carry off the inhabitants, and ravage whole villages.

FRANCE.

COUNCIL OF FIVE HUNDRED.

Sitting of August 10.

[The following debate took place after reading the Message of the Executive Directory, relative to the march of the Troops.]

After it was read, Bailly moved that it be printed, referred to a special committee, consisting of seven members, and that it should be communicated by a message to the council of elders.

Lamarque opposed this—"The only complaint he said, which your commission of inspectors is empowered to examine, is the fact which was denounced to you relative to the violation of the boundary of 12 leagues. You have acknowledged that this boundary had not been geometrically measured; thus the grievance which the echoes of faction have so very complacently repeated, is done a war. This, indeed, is proved by the report of your committee. Why then has it occupied itself with the movements of the troops beyond the limits of the constitutional boundary? It was necessary to examine many questions which have not even been touched upon. The first was to

know, if the 116th article of the constitution did not empower the directory to direct the movements of the army beyond the constitutional boundary? The second, whether the existing circumstances would permit us to deviate in any degree from the principles, in order to take into consideration pretended alarms? I contend that all these combined attacks, tend only to place the different authorities at variance to provoke the civil war, to renew the reign of circumstances and that of government committees. Has it not been proclaimed from this tribune, that an alarming division existed between the members of the Directory? As if the majority of the directory did not possess the power given to it by the constitution. Have not these Journals who are in the pay of the King's friends, given to this majority the appellation Triumvirate? And yet this unprecedented audacity remains unpunished; no notice, indeed, has ever been taken of it. Have not some orators spoken of attempts against the national representation? Has not the council permitted that article of the constitution, which says, that the heads of an accusation shall be specifically stated to have been violated? Instead of pursuing the salutary forms of the constitution we hear men speak of indulgence and generosity towards the directory, as if the directory were subordinate to the council."—[Murmurs.]

Bailly—"This is an insulting error to the legislative body—President, call the speaker to order."

Lamarque—"I observe to my colleagues—[a voice, I am not your colleague] I remind those who are my colleagues—[Murmurs]. I move that the president call to order those who are not my colleagues. [Great noise.]

Talot—"President tell the representatives to silence their cries. We cannot hear."

A number of voices insist that Talot (by name) should be called to order—a violent altercation ensues between Talot and the members near him—Great agitation prevails but tranquility is at length restored.

Lamarque—"Explain the phrase here employed—He said that the legislative body would neither be generous nor indulgent, it could neither wrest the law against, nor in favor of the directory."

Lamarque continued—"In a report of the 12th Messidor, has not the reporter of your commission of auditors to the treasury accused the general of the army of Italy of ordering and regulating payments himself and of opposing the destination of the funds regulated by the commissary of the treasury. Why should the laurels of that army which has by its conquests obtained the supplies of which it stood in need, be thus tarnished? The same reporter also accused the general of the Sambre and Meuse of having levied a contribution of three millions and a half;—which sum, he said, was placed in the hands of the etat major, and in the caisses of the receivers, out of which sum general Hoche had paid many different accounts." Lamarque then moved the previous question, relative to the motion for referring the message to a committee.

Vaublane—"I should not have presented myself to reply without preparations to a written speech, were I not persuaded that I should be received with indulgence by my colleagues; and were I not addressing men, convinced as I am, that the opinions to which we ought to listen with the greatest attention, are precisely those from which we dissent. I proceed to the examination of the different propositions, laid down in the speech of Lamarque. He considered unconstitutional, the attention which you had bestowed upon the events which have lately taken place, and particularly upon the march of the troops. It would be difficult more completely to confound two objects very distinct. The directory, doubtless, possesses the right to put the troops in motion, and to determine the mode in which they shall be employed. But does it follow that their destination must never occupy your attention, especially when it is traced to a point which the troops cannot pass without your authority?—The constitution gives the legislative body the right to require information from the directory. This information is intended to enlighten your committees entrusted with the prepa-

ration of the laws. Upon what object more important could you require information, than upon the march of the troops, and upon the extraordinary events which have for some time taken place? Nay more, the directory had shared your solicitude, and had solemnly promised to examine into the author of the order, the name of whom you had demanded. So far then there is a perfect agreement between the two powers. Both united to investigate the cause of the extraordinary movements which occasioned general anxiety. How then does it happen that to day a representative of the people ventures to assert, that you have violated the constitution, if you had not viewed with the most serious attention the movements organized around you. No—by this conduct you did not trench upon the power of the directory; and this opinion, in which you all agreed, naturally leads me to point out the system which has been assiduously pursued to counteract the legislative power, by extending uniformly, and under every pretext, the limits of the executive authority. You are now accused of encroaching upon its privileges. In the same manner were you told, that you had not the right to shut up the popular societies, to publish a proclamation in order to demonstrate to the French people the purity of your intentions; to seek information now becomes necessary, to hear reports; require that positive answers should be substituted to communications completely evasive. To trust the partisans of such a system, the legislative body would soon be reduced to the impotence of only enacting laws. (Some members laughed; several voices, "It should be so." Allow me to finish. Two essential attributes characterize your power, you enact laws, but you retain the right of superintending their execution. In order to exercise this superintendence, you must investigate: you must hear reports upon the results of which you form your opinions and prepare the laws, which it is your business to introduce. Neither was I less astonished to hear it said that this tribune had resounded with accusations against some of our generals. I call upon the whole council to bear witness to the truth of what I am about to assert. Never has any speaker omitted an opportunity of bellowing within those walls, a just tribute of praise upon our generous defenders, and upon their glorious chiefs. Recollect that memorable day, when the preliminaries of peace were announced. With what sensibility did he, who presided upon that occasion, declare that the French armies crowned with victory and with peace, had deserved well of humanity. Tears streamed from your eyes. The delicate touches of the orator went to your hearts, it is true, my colleagues—(a general cry "Yes, yes.") Who has not pronounced with sentiments of affection the illustrious name of the pacificator of La Vendee? Has that of the hero of Italy ever been mentioned without exciting enthusiasm? Never within these walls did we omit to pay homage to his great qualities; his humanity, even his moderation obtained just apologists. Was it not here that the first tribute of thanks for his generous conduct towards the ministers of religion, exiled from France, was voted? I know that abuses which had crept into the account of certain funds, which appear to have been diverted, were mentioned. But can it be imagined that it ever entered into our minds to accuse our generals of these dilapidations, to require from the man who levelled the Austrian power, and disconcerted their military plans, a mechanical attention to the dryness of financial calculations? No.

We never conceived such an idea.—But what could be thought of us if the dilapidations of secondary agents, a thousand times denounced by the generals themselves did not engage our attention? Because dilapidations are committed in the army, must we shut our eyes? must we overthrow the constitutional system of accounts, and substitute an arbitrary distribution in the room of the regular administration of the treasury? We have heard here of some strange power or order given to your committee of inspectors. Believe me, representatives, in this respect you have done no more than your duty. If no conspiracies exist, so much the better, my most ar-

dent wishes are accomplished. If they do you have my sincere thanks; you have checked their progress, you have disconcerted their effects by your wisdom and by your firm moderation. It is really necessary then seriously to refuse those who have no other mode of blaming your conduct than by telling you, "Impeach the Directory!" Are these who employ this language ignorant that such a system which they pretend is constitutional, would be subversive of the principles of our representative government. Opposition in your eyes, then must be unconstitutional. Look at our neighbours the English, look at the Americans: are you ignorant, that in their parliament and in their senate, the ministerial powers and the royal authority are attacked, are censured, and that the censures of these authorities would be their most firm supports, if instead of censure it was meant to overthrow? It may be necessary to censure what it would be criminal to subvert. We have heard a great deal also of the industry which calumny exerts to vilify the republican institutions and authorities. No authority, I am persuaded, is more the object of calumny at this moment than your own. But let a few wild demagogues, let a few stupid anarchists misrepresent these opinions and accuse our intentions.—Of what importance is it?—Truth is immovable.—It too is a power. By the light of its torch will the people of France analyze your proceedings, and judge of your conduct. It is said that the priests return. But the just and salutary law by which they are recalled, was passed unanimously by the two councils. Can you then accuse yourselves?—The emigrants returned I hear. I confess I can hardly restrain my indignation; I cannot conceive how the directory speaks of those returned, their language, their audacity. Do not the laws exist?—Is it possible to imagine a power more extensive, more absolute, more monstrous than that of the directory with regard to emigrants? What! We have betrayed our duty. We have violated the constitution in giving the directory the right of life and death over a Frenchman alleged to be an emigrant.—In a word, it may consign him to the scaffold. . . . You shudder with horror, citizens, when I remind you of a legislation so barbarous. Cautious Providence! Is it not sufficient for the directory to be invested with an authority so monstrous, an authority which ought to rouse the soul to freedom? And does the council impede the execution of the law? Does the council arrest the powers of the directory? Has the council suspended this atrocious licence; no, it has not, but it may withdraw an authority which no government should possess; it may annihilate a legislation, which no free government can sanction, which no humanity can endure. . . . (a number of voices, yes, yes, to the vote. . . . The most lively agitation prevails in the council) The purchasers of national property, it is said are insulted, menaced, and assassinated. The last speaker and the message seem to combine to accuse you of not giving sufficient guarantee and protection. I will not remind you, that their guarantee is constitutional, that they are entitled to protection from the government, but I will tell you what you do here every day. Do you not sell the national domains! Do you not supply the treasury with their produce? Would you sell what remains, if you intended to dispose of the original purchasers? Such imputations do not require to be confuted. You may let demagogues in their frenzy pollute with their foul accusations, their poisoned productions; your conduct is a sufficient answer to them all. . . . I am far from reproaching the last speaker with the insinuations contained in his speech, which are nothing less than an impeachment of your conduct."

Lamarque—"I disavow them, they are foreign to my heart."

Vaublane. "I know it citizen,—I am most perfectly convinced of it. I firmly believe, too, that you will be the first to oppose the printing of a speech, which contains an indirect impeachment of the conduct of the two councils. I oppose the printing therefore. Our colleague Bailly has moved, that the message be referred to a committee; I support the proposition.