

APPENDIX B.—*Correspondence relating to Bonaparte's secret overture to Britain in December, 1800.*

I.—Letter from Grenville to Auckland, 26 Dec., 1800, London, P. R. O., *France*, vol. 612 (Draft.)

Private.

CLEVELAND ROW, Dec. 26th, 1800.

MY DEAR LORD,—I am much obliged to you for your communication. We agree in regretting that the real views of this government are so little understood at Paris, where they do not seem to be aware that the publication of the late papers (of which I understand they principally complain) was unavoidable under our constitution unless there had been a nearer prospect of peace.

It was a great error, if it was really believed there, that the effect of our intervention in the Austrian negotiation would have been to retard its conclusion, on any reasonable terms. We judged on the other hand that the object they had in view was to separate England entirely from the continent; and it cannot be wondered at that our opposition to this should be steady and determined.

It often happens that war is thus prolonged by mutual distrust, long after the parties are both sincerely desirous of peace. The best way to avoid this in the present instance would be by direct and confidential communication. If through some channel sufficiently authentic to be relied on (but not such as to commit the two governments by official steps, which, if unsuccessful, we are always obliged to make public) we could be apprized of the ideas entertained at Paris, as to the terms of peace, it would enable us to judge whether negotiation can at this moment be successfully pursued. And if those ideas, so stated to us, were not inconsistent with our good faith to our allies, nor with our naval interests, to which the continental aggrandizement of France obliges us to look with increased attention, we should be ready (could sufficient confidence be placed in us for the purpose) to discuss these ideas at Vienna, and to endeavour to bring the whole to such a point that the nomination of ministers to a congress, whether it afterward took place or not, would be a mere formality.

I think we are not unreasonable in desiring to receive this confidential overture, instead of our beginning to make it; because we could not take such a step without committing ourselves, both with the country here and with our allies—while no such difficulty exists at Paris. And I am very certain that, although this may not be the only road to peace, it is the surest and the most expeditious.

G.

RIGHT HON. LORD AUCKLAND.

II.—Letter from Auckland to Grenville, 5th January, 1801, London, P. R. O., *France*, vol. 614. (Original.)

Private.

PALACE YARD, January 5th, 1801.

MY DEAR LORD,— . . . Second—Mr. Nettement (a friend of Perre-
gaux's) came to me on Saturday. He did not appear to have any suspicion of