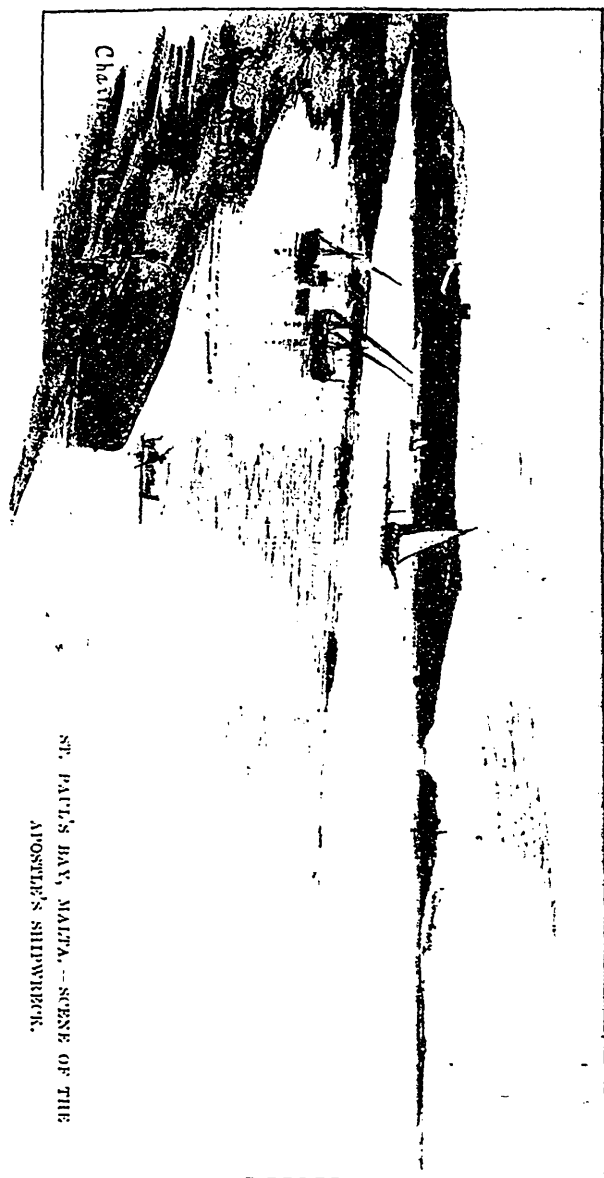


Britain was not disposed to acquiesce in an arrangement which threatened her supremacy in the Mediterranean and her communication with India. A powerful fleet was despatched to drive the French out of their coveted stronghold. As its fortifications were of immense strength, the British commanders refrained from expending the blood of their soldiers in hopeless attempts to carry them by assault, and resolved to reduce the garrison by blockade. The fortifications were therefore closely invested; and after a siege of upwards of two years' duration, by sea and land, the French hauled down their flag. Thus this grand fortress, enclosing the finest harbour in the world within its impregnable walls, and once honoured as the bulwark of Christendom against Islam, was permanently annexed to the British Empire.

Within the last twenty years important additions have been made to the fortifications at Malta. New docks and magazines have been constructed. The works have been

mounted with guns of the heaviest calibre; vast stores of material have



ST. PAUL'S BAY, MALTA. -- SCENE OF THE
AVOSTER'S SHIPWRECK.

been accumulated. Here is a graving dock capable of receiving the largest man-of-war. There