

without vanity, boast, *that we have the best admirals, the best officers, and the best seamen in the world*.*

The ancient and present state of the Venetian and English Navies.

* In the 14th century, the Venetians made a much more considerable figure at sea than the English, or any other state, and was at the time the league at Cambray was signed in 1509 justly, esteemed the greatest maritime power in Europe.

This league will be memorable as long as time lasts, it is no extraordinary thing to see several states combine against one that is more powerful than any, or all of them, either to set bounds to her greatness, or to bring down her exorbitant power, but it very rarely happens, that several sovereigns should confederate together, with design to destroy it, which was the purport of this famous league concluded between the emperor, the pope, and the kings of France and Spain, when the Venetians thought themselves from any danger; but what followed ought to teach all states and kingdoms, not to be absolutely secure, but to fear even where the greatest human prudence tells them no change can happen.

That illustrious and renowned *republic* had never been in so flourishing a condition as at the time of forming that league; the fleets that the republic then maintained was strong, and well supported, and made, as it were, one continent, of the several parts of her dominions. The *arsenal* from whence they were fitted out, might justly have been reckoned among the wonders of the world.

The carpenters, in building of those ships, had a peculiar art that other nations were ignorant of, (which