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FROM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, to FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1808.

DECLARATION.

The overtures made to his Majesty by the governments of Russia and France have not led to negociation: and the intercourse to which those overtures gave rise being terminated, his Majesty thinks it right thus promptly and publicly to make known its termination.

The continued appearance of a negociation, when peace has been found to be utterly unattainable, could be advantageous only to the enemy.

It might enable France to sow distrust and jealousy in the councils of those who are combined to resist her oppressions: and if, among the nations which groan under the tyranny of French alliance, or among those which maintain against France a doubtful and precarious independence, there should be any which even now are balancing between the certain ruin of a prolonged inactivity, and the contingent dangers of an effort to save themselves from that ruin; to nations so situated, the delusive prospect of a peace between Great Britain and France could not fail to be peculiarly injurious. Their preparations might be relaxed by the vain hope of returning tranquillity; or their purpose shaken by the apprehension of being left to contend alone.

That such was, in fact, the main object of France, in the proposals transmitted to his Majesty from Erfurth, his Majesty entertained a strong persuasion.

But at a moment when results, so awful from their importance, and so tremendous from their uncertainty, might be depending upon the decision of peace or war, the King felt it due to himself to ascertain, beyond the possibility of doubt, the views and intentions of his enemies.

It was difficult for his Majesty to believe, that the Emperor of Russia had devoted himself so blindly and fatally to the violence and

ambition of the power with which his Imperial Majesty had unfortunately become allied, as to be prepared openly to abet the usurpation of the Spanish monarchy; and to acknowledge and maintain the right, assumed by France, to depose and imprison friendly Sovereigns, and forcibly to transfer to herself the allegiance of independent nations.

When, therefore, it was proposed to his Majesty to enter into negociation for a general peace, in concert with his Majesty's allies, and to treat either on the basis of the *uti possidetis*, (heretofore the subject of so much controversy), or on any other basis, consistent with justice, honour, and equality, his Majesty determined to meet this seeming fairness and moderation, with fairness and moderation, on his Majesty's part real and sincere.

The King professed his readiness to enter into such negociation, in concurrence with his allies; and undertook forthwith to communicate to them the proposals which his Majesty had received. But as his Majesty was not connected with Spain by a formal treaty of alliance, his Majesty thought it necessary to declare, that the engagements which he had contracted, in the face of the world, with that nation, were considered by his Majesty as no less sacred, and no less binding upon his Majesty, than the most solemn treaties; and to express his Majesty's just confidence, that the government of Spain, acting in the name of his Catholic Majesty Ferdinand VII, was understood to be a party to the negociation.

The reply returned by France to this proposition of his Majesty, casts off at once the thin disguise which had been assumed for a momentary purpose; and displays, with less than ordinary reserve, the arrogance and injustice of that government. The universal Spanish nation is described by the degrading appellation

of "the Spanish Insurgents;" and the demand for the admission of the government of Spain as a party to any negociation, is rejected as inadmissible and insulting.

With astonishment, as well as with grief, his Majesty has received from the Emperor of Russia a reply, similar in effect, although less indelicate in tone and manner. The Emperor of Russia also stigmatises, as "insurrection," the glorious efforts of the Spanish people, in behalf of their legitimate Sovereign, and in defence of the independence of their country; thus giving the sanction of his Imperial Majesty's authority to an usurpation which has no parallel in the history of the world.

The King would readily have embraced an opportunity of negociation which might have afforded any hope or prospect of a peace, compatible with justice and with honour. His Majesty deeply laments an issue, by which the sufferings of Europe are aggravated and prolonged. But neither the honour of his Majesty, nor the generosity of the British nation, would admit of his Majesty's consenting to commence a negociation, by the abandonment of a brave and loyal people, who are contending for the preservation of all that is dear to man; and whose exertion in a cause so unquestionably just, his Majesty has solemnly pledged himself to sustain.

Westminster, December 15, 1808.

At the Court at the Queen's Palace, the 14th of December 1808,

PRESENT,

The KING's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

It is this day ordered by his Majesty in Council, that the Parliament, which was to meet on Monday the 16th day of January next, be further prorogued to Thursday the 19th day of

Price Sixpence.

