

fructed to communicate at once an explicit and detailed proposal and plan of peace, reduced into the shape of a regular treaty, just and moderate in its principles, embracing all the interests concerned, and extending to every subject connected with the restoration of public tranquillity. The communication of this paper, delivered in the very first conference, was accompanied by such explanations as fully stated and detailed the utmost extent of his Majesty's views, and at the same time gave ample room for the examination of every disputed point, for mutual arrangement and concession, and for reciprocal facilities arising out of the progress of fair discussion.

To this proceeding, open and liberal beyond example, the conduct of his Majesty's enemies opposes the most striking contrast. From them no counter project has ever yet been obtained: No statement of the extent or nature of the conditions on which they would conclude any peace with these kingdoms. Their pretensions have always been brought forward either as detached or as preliminary points, distinct from the main object of negotiation, and accompanied, in every instance, with an express reserve of farther and unexplained demands.

The points which, in pursuance of this system, the plenipotentiaries of the enemy proposed for separate discussion in their first conferences with his Majesty's Minister, were at once frivolous and offensive; none of them productive of any solid advantage to France, but all calculated to raise new obstacles in the way of peace. And to these demands was soon after added another, in its form unprecedented, in its substance extravagant, and such as could originate only in the most determined and inveterate hostility. The principle of mutual compensation, before expressly admitted by common consent as the just and equitable basis of negotiation, was now disclaimed; every idea of moderation or reason, every appearance of justice, was disregarded; and a concession was required from his Majesty's Plenipotentiary, as a preliminary and indispensable condition of negotiation, which must at once have superseded all the objects, and precluded all the means of treating. France, after incorporating with her own dominions so large a portion of her conquests, and affecting to have deprived herself, by her own internal regulations, of the power of alienating these valuable additions of territory, did not scruple to demand from his Majesty the absolute and unconditional surrender of all that the energy of his people, and the valour of his fleets and armies have conquered in the present war, either from France, or from her allies. She required that the power of Great Britain should be confined within its former limits, at the very moment when her own dominion was extended to a degree almost unparalleled in History. She insisted, that in proportion to the increase of danger, the means of resistance should be diminished; and that his Majesty should give up, without compensation, and into the hands of his enemies, the necessary defences of his possessions, and the future safeguards of his Empire. Nor was even this demand brought forward as constituting the terms of peace, but the price of negotiation; as the condition on which alone his Majesty was to be allowed to learn what further unexplained demands were still reserved, and to what greater sa-

crifices these unprecedented concessions of honour and safety were to lead.

Whatever were the impressions which such a proceeding created, they did not induce the King abruptly to preclude the means of negotiation. In rejecting without a moment's hesitation a demand, which could have been for no other reason than because it was inadmissible, His Majesty, from the fixed resolution to avail himself of every chance of bringing the negotiation to a favourable issue, directed that an opening should still be left for treating on reasonable and equal grounds, such as might become the dignity of his Crown, and the rank and station in Europe in which it has pleased the Divine Providence to place the British nation.

This temperate and conciliatory conduct was strongly expressive of the benevolence of his Majesty's intentions; and it appeared for some time to have prepared the way for that result which has been the uniform object of all his measures. Two months elapsed after his Majesty had unequivocally and definitively refused to comply with the unreasonable & extravagant preliminary which had been demanded by his enemies. During all that time the negotiation was continued open, the conferences were regularly held, and the demand thus explicitly rejected by one party was never once renewed by the other. It was not only abandoned; it was openly disclaimed; assurances were given in direct contradiction to it. Promises were continually repeated, that his Majesty's explicit and detailed proposals should at length be answered by that which could alone evince a real disposition to negotiate with sincerity, by the delivery of a counter-project, of a nature tending to facilitate the conclusion of peace; and the long delays of the French Government in executing these promises were excused and accounted for by an unequivocal declaration, that France was concerting with her allies for those sacrifices on their part, which might afford the means of proceeding in the negotiation. Week after week passed over in the repetition of these solemn engagements on the part of his Majesty's enemies. His desire for peace induced him to wait for their completion, with an anxiety proportioned to the importance of the object; nor was it much to expect that his Minister should at length be informed what was the extent and nature of the conditions on which his enemies were disposed to terminate the war.

It was in this stage of the business that, on the 11th of September, the appointment of new Plenipotentiaries was announced on the part of France, under a formal promise that their arrival should facilitate and expedite the work of peace.

To renew, in a shape still more offensive than before, the inadmissible demand so long before brought forward, and so long abandoned, was the first act of these new Messengers of Peace. And such was now the undisguised impatience of the King's enemies to terminate all treaty, and to exclude all prospect of accommodation, that even the continuance of the King's Plenipotentiary at the appointed place of Negotiation was made by them to depend on his immediate compliance with a condition which his Court had, two months before, explicitly refused, and concerning which no farther discussion had since occurred. His re-