

DECLARATION.

THE Government of France having by an official report, communicated by its Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Conservative Senate on the 10th day of March last, removed all doubts as to the perseverance of that Government in the assestion of principles, and in the maintenance of a system, not more hostile to the maritime rights and commercial interests of the British Empire, than inconsistent with the rights and independence of Neutral Nations—and having thereby plainly developed the inordinate pretensions which that system, as promulgated in the Decrees of Berlin and Milan, was from the first designed to enforce; His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, Acting in the name and on the behalf of His Majesty, deems it proper, upon this formal and authentic republication of the principles of those Decrees, thus publicly to declare His Royal Highness's determination still firmly to resist the introduction and establishment of this arbitrary code, which the Government of France openly avows its purpose to impose by force upon the World—as the Law of Nations.

From the time that the progressive injustice and violence of the French Government made it impossible for His Majesty any longer to restrain the exercise of the rights of war within their ordinary limits, without submitting to consequences not less ruinous to the commerce of his dominions, than derogatory to the rights of his Crown, His Majesty has endeavoured, by a restricted and moderate use of those rights of Retaliation, which the Berlin and Milan Decrees necessarily called into action, to reconcile Neutral States to those measures, which the conduct of the enemy had rendered unavoidable; and which His Majesty has at all times pressed his readiness to revoke, so soon as the Decrees of the enemy, which gave occasion to them, should be formally and unconditionally repealed; and the commerce of Neutral Nations be restored to its accustomed course.

At a subsequent period of the war, His Majesty, availing himself of the then situation of Europe, without abandoning the principle and object of the Orders in Council of November 1807, was induced so to limit their operation, as materially to alleviate the restrictions thereby imposed upon neutral commerce.

The Order in Council of April 1809 was substituted in the room of those of November 1807, and the retaliatory system of Great Britain acted no longer on every country, in which the aggressive measures of the enemy were in force; but was confined in its operation to France, and to the countries, upon which the French yoke was most strictly imposed; and which had become virtually a part of the dominions of France.

The United States of America remained nevertheless dissatisfied; and their dissatisfaction has been greatly increased by an artifice too successfully employed on the part of the enemy, who has pretended, that the Decrees of Berlin and Milan were repealed, although the decree effecting such repeal has never been promulgated; although the notification of such pretended repeal distinctly de-

scribed it to be dependent on conditions, in which the enemy knew Great Britain could never acquiesce; and although abundant evidence has since appeared of their subsequent execution.

But the enemy has at length laid aside all dissimulation; he now publicly and solemnly declares, not only that those Decrees still continue in force, but that they shall be rigidly executed, until Great Britain shall comply with additional conditions, equally extravagant: and he further announces the penalties of those Decrees to be in full force against all nations, which shall suffer their flag to be, as it is termed in this new code, "denationalized."

In addition to the disavowal of the blockade of May 1806, and of the principles on which that blockade was established, and in addition to the repeal of the British Orders in Council—he demands an admission of the principles, that the goods of an enemy, carried under a neutral flag, shall be treated as neutral;—that neutral property, under the flag of an enemy, shall be treated as hostile;—that arms and warlike stores alone (to the exclusion of ship-timber and other articles of naval equipment) shall be regarded as contraband of war;—and that no ports shall be considered as lawfully blockaded, except such as are invested and besieged, in the presumption of their being taken, [en prevention d'être pris], and into which a merchant ship cannot enter without danger.

By these and other demands, the Enemy in fact requires, that Great Britain, and all civilized nations, shall renounce, at his arbitrary pleasure, the ordinary and indisputable rights of maritime War; that Great Britain, in particular, shall forego the advantages of her naval superiority, and allow the commercial property, as well as the produce and manufactures of France, and her confederates, to pass the ocean in security; whilst the subjects of Great Britain are to be, in effect, proscribed from all commercial intercourse with other nations; and the produce and manufactures of these realms are to be excluded from every country in the world, to which the arms or the influence of the enemy can extend.

Such are the demands to which the British Government is summoned to submit, to the abandonment of its most ancient, essential, and undoubted maritime Rights. Such is the Code by which France hopes, under the cover of a neutral flag, to render her commerce unassailable by sea; whilst she proceeds to invade or to incorporate with her own dominions all states that hesitate to sacrifice their national interests at her command; and in abdication of their just rights, to adopt a code, by which they are required to exclude, under the Mask of municipal Regulation, whatever is British from their dominions.

The pretext for these extravagant demands is, that some of these Principles were adopted by voluntary compact in the Treaty of Utrecht; as if a Treaty once existing between two particular countries, founded on special and reciprocal considerations, binding only on the Contracting Parties, and which in the last Treaty of peace between the same Powers, had not been revived, were to be regarded as declaratory of the public law of Nations.

It is needless for His Royal Highness to demonstrate the injustice of such pretensions. He might