

the time the next war came, might see it abandoned by the very parties, who fought for it, or we ourselves might abandon it among the rest. One may as well be fighting for the shape of a cloud, or for the course of the wind ; for neither of these is more variable than some of these pretended principles, as to neutrals, in time of war.

In the course of our recent controversies with Britain, the character of our administration and its influence on the temper of the country, has been distinctly marked by the manner in which both have been affected by the Berlin Decree and the retaliating orders ; the first interdicting all our commerce with the British Isles and the second with the European ports under the power of France.

For a considerable time after the promulgation of the former, it was uncertain how the French government would interpret its own decree, which seemed to have been composed with a *studied* ambiguity ;—the impatience of the Emperour, however, disclosed in September last, his determination to subject Neutrals to all the rigours which the terms of the decree imported. There was from that time no reasonable doubt that our ships would be liable to the penalties of disfranchisement and forfeiture for violating a blockade, *which could exist only by a Proclamation*.—Under these circumstances, the British government issued their orders of Council to retaliate on their enemy the measures he had adopted against them, and thus the commerce of neutrals, with each of those powers, is proscribed by the other.

It is important here to remark the singular complacency we have manifested under the Berlin decree, as if we had reserved all our indignation for the British orders ;—but these opposite sentiments, so plainly misplaced, are not more extraordinary than the reasons by which they are sometimes vindicated.

It is urged as an apology for the French, that they cannot perpetrate on the sea, all the violence they threaten, while the British orders may be executed in a manner that leaves little or no room for escape. It is stated, that against capture by French cruisers, of our vessels bound to or from an English port, insurance