

Berlin and Milan Decrees of France.—With respect to the two first of these provocations—the impressment occasionally of some of our sailors, and an instance or two of outrage in our harbours—it has never been pretended that either of these was authorised by the British government. In every instance, they were the irregular, unwarranted acts of individuals, subordinate officers, whose rashness and folly no government can at all times and every where restrain. The redress of these grievances however, and compensation for such injuries, after proof of them has been fairly and fully exhibited, have never been refused. Our great and almost only controversy with England, respects her Orders in Council restricting our trade with France, because France had first prohibited our trade with England by her Berlin and Milan Decrees. As the British Orders were professedly occasioned by the French Decrees, it was expected that they would be revoked on the repeal of those Decrees. Our government, having proclaimed that repeal, demanded the revocation of the British Orders. England replied that we were mistaken in our assertion of the repeal of the French Decrees, and, in proof of our mistake, produced official documents of the French government explicitly contradicting our proclamation, and affirming that those decrees, so far from being repealed, were the fundamental laws of the French empire, and therefore were not and never could be repealed. She urged further, that ourselves knew that they were not repealed, by the almost daily loss of our ships and cargoes in consequence of their continued execution; as since the period of their pre-