

seemed to secure the good will of Russia, and even its assistance, in case of necessity.. Little therefore was it expected that it should prove the first of all European potentates in that inimical declaration, the intent of which was to deprive Great Britain of the principal resources that enabled her to stand her ground in the midst of so many difficulties.

The purport of this celebrated declaration was, that the navigation of neutral powers should remain as free and unobstructed in time of war, as in that of peace; and that provided their ships were not laden with contraband goods, they should enjoy the liberty of conveying, free of seizure and restraint, all other articles whatever, though belonging to the subjects of the powers at war.

This declaration, so contradictory to the ideas and practice that had hitherto prevailed, was received with much apparent submission and deference by the Courts of France and Spain, of which it strongly forwarded the views. Great Britain, contrary to her custom and character, was obliged to temporise on this trying occasion. Her answer to this mortifying declaration, though guardedly expressed, was not wanting in terms sufficiently clear to remind Russia how different a part Great Britain had acted to her in the day of need.

In taking a step of so unprecedented a nature, Russia had previously used the precaution of securing the concurrence of all her neighbours. So formidable was the impression of the power and spirit of Britain, notwithstanding the perils that surrounded her, that none of the northern powers durst presume, alone and unsupported by the others, to enter the lists against Britain in so hostile and decisive a manner.

Denmark and Sweden joined accordingly with Russia in this naval confederacy; to which Holland, and even Portugal itself, were invited to accede. So prevalent,