

which they reposed in the justice and friendship of the British nation. At this period the unexpected blow was given. Many of our vessels were seized, carried into port and condemned by a tribunal, which, while it professes to respect the law of nations, obeys the mandate of its own government in opposition to all law. Hundreds of other vessels were driven from the ocean, and the trade itself in a great measure suppressed.

The effect produced by this attack on the lawful commerce of the United States, was such as might have been expected from a virtuous, independent, and highly injured people. But one sentiment pervaded the whole American nation. No local interests were regarded, no sordid motives felt. Without looking to the parts which suffered most, the invasion of our rights was considered a common cause, and from one extremity of our union to the other was heard the voice of an united people, calling on their government to avenge their wrongs, and vindicate the rights and honor of the country.

From this period the British government has gone on in a continued encroachment on the rights and interests of the U. States, disregarding in its course, in many instances, obligations which have heretofore been held sacred by civilized nations.

In May, 1806, the whole coast of the continent from the Elbe to Brest, inclusive, was declared to be in a state of blockade. By this act, the well established principles of the law of nations, principles which have served for ages as guides, and fixed the boundary between the rights of belligerents and neutrals, were violated. By the law of nations, as recognized by G. Britain herself, no blockade is lawful unless it be sustained by the application of an adequate force; and that an adequate force was applied to this blockade, in its full extent, ought not to be pretended. Whether G. Britain was able to maintain legally, so extensive a blockade, considering the war in which