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overwhelms England, now that her name has become detestable to all! America can place her confidence in foreign succors. What could be objected to a resolution so generous? Consanguinity? But have not the English hitherto treated the colonists more as vassals, than as brothers? Gratitude? But have not the English strangled it, under the pretensions of that mercantile and avaricious spirit which animates them?

The general state of Europe was eminently favorable to the secret designs of France. It is certain, that at this epoch, all the powers concurred in considering the enormous increase of the strength of the British nation, both upon land and sea, as imminently menacing to the repose and liberty of Europe; excessive prosperity but too rarely permitting men to know where to limit their enterprises. Supported with one hand upon her colonies of America, and with the other upon her possessions of the East Indies, England seemed to press the two extremities of the globe, and to aspire at the entire dominion of the ocean. From the day in which was concluded the peace of 1763, England was viewed with the same jealousy which France had inspired under Lewis XIV. She was the object of the same umbrage, of the same distrusts. All desired to see her power reduced; and the more she had shown herself formidable in the preceding war, the more ardently was it wished to take advantage of the present peace, to humble and reduce her. These wishes were much the most fervent with the maritime states, and especially in Holland, to whom England, in these late times, had caused immense losses. The English squadrons had often interrupted, and sometimes by the most outrageous proceedings, the commerce, in the munitions of war, which the Dutch carried on with France; and, on occasions, the officers of the British navy made use of the opportunity to detain ships, laden with articles that could not really be considered as munitions of war.

The kingdoms of the north reluctantly supported the prepotence of England, and openly complained that she had presumed to harass the commerce of neutrals, in time of war. It was evident they were prepared to seize the first occasion to give her a check. But France, more than any other power, being of a martial spirit, was inflamed with a desire to avenge her defeats, to repair her losses, and reconquer her glory, eclipsed by recent discomfiture; she was incessantly occupied with calculations which might lead to this object of all her wishes; and no means more efficacious could be offered her for attaining it, than to lacerate the bosom of her adversary, by separating from England the American colonies, so important a part of her power and resources.