

that their liberation was hopeless ; *because they were worth eighteen or twenty millions of dollars.*

Of the vast property thus plundered, a large portion belongs to citizens of the United States. On the 15th of January last, the emperor's minister Champagny, wrote to our minister, general Armstrong, that their property would remain sequestered until a decision should be had thereon ; and this decision depended *on our associating or refusing to associate ourselves with him and his allied states in their war with Great Britain.* Indeed the emperor was willing to save us the trouble of considering and deciding for ourselves : he declared war for us. " War exists then in fact between England and the United States," are the words of Champagny, in the letter just mentioned ! What measures ought to be kept with such a Power ? While we are yet independent, he undertakes to prescribe the line of conduct we shall observe, on pain of confiscation of all the property of our innocent and unsuspecting merchants within his grasp ! And this monstrous outrage upon our honour and independence, the secretary of state, with very exemplary meekness, says, " had the *air*, at least, of an assumed authority ! " *

Where ! his armies did not thus penetrate and plunder, the French emperor sent to the several powers on the continent, whether emperors, kings, or petty states, requiring (or which from him was equivalent to a command, *inviting*) them to *shut their ports against the commerce of England*: and, Sweden excepted (between whom and the French armies lay a narrow sea guarded by Swedish and British ships) all obeyed. Even the emperor of Austria, though at peace with England, shut against her his two or three little ports at the head of the Adriatic sea.

The prince regent of Portugal, whose country for more than a century had lived in friendship with England, was the last to obey. But though he shut his ports, national faith and gratitude towards his friends, forbade his arresting Englishmen and English merchandise. By shutting his ports, he hoped to appease the emperor, and save his kingdom. But his fate had been determined : although Portugal had for many years been paying a heavy tribute to France, and been, moreover, anxious to observe the duties of a neutral nation. To save himself and family from disgrace and bondage, the prince quitted his kingdom : finding an asylum in his American dominions.

Thus we have : the French emperor not only shutting his own ports and those of his allies, but even those of neutral states, against British commerce ; and seizing and confiscating the merchandise proceeding from England and her colonies, although belonging to neutrals, and on neutral territories ; and that this unexampled scene of devastation commenced within four days after the Berlin decree was issued.

It was after she had witnessed all these atrocities, and seen the deadly weapon aimed at her vitals, that England issued her retaliating orders of November 11th, 1807.

* Mr. Madison's letter of May 2d, 1808, to general Armstrong.