

The President affected to feel justified by the British precedents ; but incorrectly. He was not, like the British, content with *demands*. He took *active measures* ; and in this, departed from the British precedents, and lost all the benefit of the plea ; for the British never redressed their own wrongs in whole or in part. He seems not to understand the theory of the cases, in consequence of omitting to distinguish between government and its officers ; and of forgetting the conduct rendered necessary, where the scene of an offence is distant, with respect to either of the two governments concerned. Had he used his Proclamation as a precautionary measure, till the British dispositions on the subject were seen, and had it, when these were found favourable, been recalled, even this would have been hardly correct ; but it would have been less wrong than persisting in the Proclamation, when atonement was promised, and a special messenger sent to give it. The situation of the United States, with an ocean lying between them and the powers of Europe, makes it indispensable, that the true doctrine of the law of nations, in these cases, should be known accurately by those who guide our national affairs. If on a question of the kind in question, we assume a right of self-defence, whether temporary or permanent, so will the European powers. Questions as to wrongs offered, and the remedies, will no longer be left between government and government, but will descend to the hands of individuals, and be decided according to private passions or private interests. The concerns of Turk's Island, Nootka Sound, and Falkland's Islands, mentioned by Mr. Madison, were each transactions consummated abroad in all their parts ; and when the news of them arrived, Britain added to them no new act of her own ; but made a mere demand, that every thing should be put into its former condition ; a demand which was complied with. These were affairs of words, not of acts ; and Great Britain assumed no right, in the first instance, of taking to herself redress, precaution or security, or any thing of the kind. Consequently every case, cited from the British makes against us, and for the British. These, it may be added, appear settled points, in Europe ; and are not so here, because our government is new.