

but of paying an indemnity to the powers at war, if it were to come to a negotiation, that it artfully throws all the conditions of peace into preliminaries, and exacts a previous assent, which would take away all occasion of discussion. This policy, however, at best weak and short-sighted, was desperate even at the time when their armies were triumphant in Germany; experience has doubtless undeceived the cabinet of France, if it ever really imagined that Europe would be frightened out of its liberties, and the Rhine be taken as it had taken Condé and Valenciennes, *by a decree of the Convention*: it must know, that this decree, as long as it exists, can have no effect, operation, or influence upon the conditions of peace, and maintain it only to render peace impossible, which, either from personal danger, or political fears, it considers it as a misfortune to itself, or to France.

The decrees, therefore, are not so much an obstacle to peace, as to negotiation, because, being wholly unfounded and unauthorised by the power, situation, and resources of France, they must necessarily fall at once, and without discussion, whenever that government wishes to have peace. Another obstacle to peace is, the indemnity of Great Britain, which will be less palatable to France, than the surrender of her precarious authority in the low countries. It is fortunate for her,