

pled injuries of France. The Berlin decree did operate upon us, in the seizure of innocent property belonging to the citizens of the United States, in the then neutral states of Hamburgh, Bremen, Leghorn, and the papal territory. It was executed wherever the power or influence of France was felt. It was also executed on the high seas ; for Mr. Madison himself, in a letter to General Armstrong of the 22d May, 1807, six months before the issuing of the British orders, declared that the " French cruisers were enforcing the Berlin decree, in a manner that would constitute just claims for redress : " And in the September following, the emperor himself declared, " that the decree had no exception in its terms, and ought to have none in its application." All this, and much more, was known and done before the orders in council issued. Without spending an indignant word upon the justification of such municipal regulations, as violated the most important stipulations of the treaty of 1800, and became another name for sequestration, while they virtually made us, by our acquiescence, accessory to the decree itself, I would merely remark, that the ground assumed by the administration altogether failing them, the question took an entire new form. As the administration, instead of vindicating the neutral rights of the country, became the passive instrument of injury, an unresisting medium through which France could reach her enemy, Great Britain claimed the right of returning the blow. One year before this was done, however, she gave a formal notice, appended to the treaty, that she reserved this right of retaliation, to be put in force only in the event of our submission to the Berlin decree. We did submit, and retaliation followed.