

decrees, state, if they can, any instance of such a proposition having ever before been made to the accredited ambassador of an independent state.

It was, perhaps, expected, that General Armstrong would sign such a bond, in order to procure the liberation of his countrymen. He was, however, too cautious to fall into the snare. He probably saw, that even if all these ships should arrive in America, and proof could have been furnished, a negative proof, that not one of them had touched at a British port, or at any of the English colonies, yet still the ingenuity of the French government would have invented some pretence for calling upon him for the penalty of his bond. This gentleman declined the proposition, and not one of the American vessels were released from the embargo, except the *Fair American*, which was permitted to sail from Dunkirk last May, with a messenger and dispatches.

This *proposition* approached very nearly to a declaration *de guerre* by the French government against America. But what remonstrance did the American government make against it; nay, what notice have they taken of it at all*?

* I am persuaded that most of the governments who have their ministers in Paris, receive but little information from them as to the real character of the tyrant. The members of the *Corps diplomatique* in that city blend the entertainments of every kind with which it abounds, and the agreeable manners of its inhabitants, with the diplomacy of the Tuilleries. The plea-