

a right to do it ; or that a neutral in taking advantage of the relaxation violated a belligerent right of her enemy. But with Great Britain every thing is lawful. It is only in a trade with her enemies, that the United States can do wrong : with them all trade is unlawful.

In the year 1793 an attack was made by the British government on the same branch of our neutral trade, which had nearly involved the two countries in war. That difference however was amicably accommodated. The pretension was withdrawn and reparation made to the United States for the losses which they had suffered by it. It was fair to infer from that arrangement, that the commerce was deemed by the British government lawful, and that it would not be again disturbed.

Had the British government been resolved to contest this trade with neutrals, it was due to the character of the British nation that the decision should be made known to the government of the United States. The existence of a negotiation which had been invited by our government, for the purpose of preventing differences, by an amicable arrangement of their respective pretensions, gave a strong claim to the notification, while it afforded the fairest opportunity for it. But a very different policy animated the then cabinet of England. Generous sentiments were unknown to it. The liberal confidence and friendly overtures of the United States were taken advantage of to ensnare them. Steady to its purpose and inflexibly hostile to this country, the British government calmly looked forward to the moment when it might give the most deadly wound to our interests. A trade, just in itself, which was secured by so many strong and sacred pledges, was considered safe. Our citizens, with their usual industry and enterprise, had embarked in it a vast proportion of their shipping and of their capital, which were at sea under no other protection than the law of nations, and the confidence

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