

The fatal peace of Tilsit, which the generous mind of Alexander was drawn to consent unto, in a moment of irritation, against the wretched policy which the British Cabinet adopted towards him, early in 1807, had been productive of much distress throughout Russia. Day after day the Emperor perceived the sad effects of the mischievous councils to which he had listened, by the decay of his commerce, and the reduction of the resources of his Empire. The enemy also had violated every article of the treaty, in retaining in defiance thereof, the whole of the Prussian fortresses, and keeping a formidable military force in that kingdom, and in the newly erected duchy of Warsaw, which Russia soon perceived could be intended for no good purpose. Unwilling, however, to provoke the hostility of France at that moment, she carefully, on her part, observed the treaty of Tilsit; but while she continued to interdict all connection or communication with Britain, she was forced, by the necessities of her people, to allow of it under a neutral flag, which was one object of the treaty of Tilsit, that the flag* should cover the cargo, to whomsoever the property might belong. This Bonaparte resisted and remonstrated against, but the revolution in Spain having, in the meantime, taken place, and which occupied Bonaparte's attention, in a considerable degree, Russia was the less inclined to submit to have new and more galling conditions imposed upon her. The assistance which Britain lent to Spain and Portugal, provoked Bonaparte to madness, and made him enter into the wildest and most unjustifiable plans to counteract its effects; and, above all, to dry up the sources from whence that assistance flowed. Humbled also in the Peninsula, and smarting under the consequences of his own base conduct in that country, the example of which, he very justly dreaded, would spread into other countries; and, hoping to crush that in its bud, or if the Russians opposed him, to reap laurels in the North,

* Without deviating from the principles adopted by the Emperor of all the Russias for the commerce of his states, and for the admission of neutrals into the ports of his dominions—principles which his Majesty will never renounce, he binds himself, as a proof of his adherence to the alliance formed at Tilsit, not to adopt any change of the prohibitive measures against a direct trade with England."—Kurakin's Letter, April 30th, 1812.