

But when it was found that the spirit and exertions of Britain were such, as afforded little hope that even this mighty confederacy would succeed in compassing this long desired object, a determination was taken by all the remaining powers to form a naval combination in order to effect it.

Pretences for a measure of this kind were not wanting. The activity and number of British privateers, had rendered them universal objects of terror, not only to the commercial shipping of their enemies, but to the many vessels belonging to other powers, that were employed in furnishing them with such articles as were not consistent with a strict and fair neutrality. Goods coming under this description in the plainest and most uncontrovertible manner, were often made, nevertheless, a subject of litigation, and the letter of treaties was wrested, in order to put a wrong interpretation upon them, in evident contradiction of the spirit by which they were dictated.

As the British ministry insisted, on the other hand, upon the propriety and lawfulness of seizing articles of this nature, contentions arose between Great Britain and the various powers to which the vessels laden with such articles belonged. The right of preventing supplies from being carried to the enemy was so manifest, that nothing but an inclination to make use of any opportunity to quarrel with this nation, could have prompted that eagerness with which all Europe seemed to conspire in refusing to admit the validity of the arguments upon which the conduct of the British government was founded.

The principles alledged in its defence were derived from ancient and long received practice.— They had for ages constituted that part of the law of nations which relates to the usages established in civilized countries in times of war. They formed  
so