

INTRODUCTION.

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of neutrals." And in order to prevent the recurrence of the practice of impressment, our minister prepared for signature, a convention, to remain in force during five years, declaring that "no seamen, nor seafaring person, should upon the high seas, and without the jurisdiction of either party, be demanded or taken out of any ship or vessel, belonging to the citizens or subjects of one of the parties, by the public or private armed ships, or men of war, belonging to, or in the service of the other party; and that strict orders should be given for the due observance of the engagement." The British ministers at first agreed to this arrangement, but they soon insisted on a modification of its provisions, and that the narrow seas should be expressly excepted. Mr. King "having supposed from the tenor of his conversations with Lord St. Vincent, that the doctrine of *mare clausum* would not be revived against the United States on this occasion; but that England would be content; with the limited jurisdiction or dominion over the seas, adjacent to her territories, which is assigned by the law of nations to other States, was disappointed, on receiving Lord St. Vincent's communication; and chose rather to abandon the negotiation than to acquiesce in the doctrine it proposed to establish.*

In order to lull the American government and people into a false security, the British Minister at Washington, shortly after the renewal of hostilities in Europe, made a formal declaration to the government of the United States, that "no blockade should be considered as existing, unless in respect of particular ports,

* See Mr. King's letter to the Secretary of State dated London, July, 1803.