

so congenial to His Disposition: He resolved to leave still an Opening for Accommodation, if Spain should be still allowed the Liberty to adopt the Course prescribed by a just Sense of her own Interests and Security. It is here worthy of Remark, that the groundless and ungrateful Imputations thrown out against His Majesty's Conduct in the Spanish Manifesto are built upon the Foundation of this Forbearance alone. Had His Majesty exercised, without Reserve, His just Rights of War, the Representations so falsely asserted, and so infidiously dwelt upon, could not have been even stated under any colourable Pretext: The Indulgence, therefore, which postponed the actual State of War, was not only misrepresented, but transformed into a Ground of Complaint, because the Forbearance extended to the Aggressors was not carried to a dangerous and inadmissible Extreme. In consequence of the Intelligence above stated, Directions were sent to His Majesty's Minister at Madrid to make Representations and Remonstrances to the Spanish Court, to demand Explanations relative to the existing Conventions between Spain and France; and, above all, to insist, that the Naval Armaments in their Ports should be placed on the same Footing as they were previously to the Commencement of Hostilities between Great Britain and France: And he was further directed, explicitly to state to the Spanish Government, that His Majesty felt a Duty imposed upon Him of taking, without Delay, every Measure of Precaution; and, particularly, of giving Orders to His Admiral off the Port of Ferrol to prevent any of the Spanish Ships of War sailing from that Port, or any additional Ships of War from entering it.

No substantial Redress, no satisfactory Explanation, was afforded in consequence of these repeated Representations; whilst, under the Cover of His Majesty's Forbearance, the Enemy had received considerable Remittances of Treasure, together with the Facility of procuring other Supplies.

Every Circumstance of the general Conduct of Spain was peculiarly calculated to excite the vigilant Attention of the British Government—the Removal of Spanish Ships out of their Docks, to make Room for the Accommodation of the Men of War of France—the March of French Troops and Seamen through the Spanish Territory—the Equipment of Naval Armaments at Ferrol—the Consideration that the Junction of this Armament with the French Ships already in that Harbour would create a decided Superiority of Numbers over His Majesty's Squadron cruising off that Port—the additional Naval Exertions, and the consequent Increase of Expence which this Conduct of Spain necessarily imposed upon Great Britain. All these together required those Precautions, both of Representation and Action, to which His Majesty had immediate Recourse. While official Notice was given of His Majesty's Intention to adopt those necessary Measures, the Spanish Government was, at the same Time, assured

that His Majesty still felt an earnest Desire to maintain a good Understanding with Spain; but that the Continuance of such a State of Things must be subject to the Condition of abstaining, on their Part, from all hostile Preparations, and on making, without Hesitation or Reserve, that full and explicit Disclosure of the Nature and Extent of the subsisting Engagements with France, which had hitherto been so frequently and so fruitlessly demanded.

The Precautions adopted by His Majesty were such only as He deemed indispensably necessary to guard against the Augmentation by Spain of her Means of Naval Preparation during the Discussion, and against the possible Consequences of the safe Arrival of the expected American Treasure in the Spanish Ports; an Event which has more than once, in former Times, become the Epoch of the Termination of Discussions, and of the Commencement of Hostility on the Part of Spain.

The Orders issued by His Majesty on this Occasion to the Admirals commanding His Fleets, afford the most striking Example of a scrupulous and indulgent Forbearance; the most strict Limitation was given, as to the Extent and Object of the Measures proposed; and the Execution of those Orders was guarded with the strongest Injunctions to avoid, by every Means consistent with the Attainment of their Object, any Act of Violence or Hostility against the Dominions or Subjects of His Catholic Majesty. The hostile Preparations in the Harbour of Ferrol rendered it necessary, in the first Instance, that a Reinforcement should be added to the Squadron cruising off that Port; and Orders were at the same Time conveyed to the British Admirals, to send Intimation to the Spanish Government of the Instructions they had received, and of their Determination, in consequence, to resist, under the present Circumstances, the sailing either of the French or Spanish Fleets, if any Attempt for that Purpose should be made by either of them.

His Majesty's Pleasure was at the same Time signified, that they were not to detain, in the first Instance, any Ship belonging to His Catholic Majesty, sailing from a Port of Spain; but to require the Commander of such Ship to return directly to the Port from whence she came; and only, in the Event of his refusing to comply with such Requisition, to detain and send her to Gibraltar or to England.

Further Directions were given not to detain any Spanish homeward bound Ships of War, unless they should have Treasure on board, nor Merchant Ships of that Nation, however laden, on any Account whatsoever. That, in the Prosecution of those Measures of Precaution, many valuable Lives should have been sacrificed, is a Subject of much Regret to His Majesty, who laments it as an Event produced alone by an unhappy Concurrence of Circumstances, but which can in no Degree affect the Merits of the Case. The Question of the just Principle and due Exercise of His Majesty's Right rests upon every