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DECLARATION.

THE Declaration issued at St Petersburg, by His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, has excited in His Majesty's Mind the strongest Sensations of Astonishment and Regret.

His Majesty was not unaware of the Nature of those secret Engagements which had been imposed upon Russia in the Conferences of Tilsit. But His Majesty had entertained the Hope, that a Review of the Transactions of that unfortunate Negotiation, and a just Estimate of its Effects upon the Glory of the Russian Name, and upon the Interests of the Russian Empire, would have induced His Imperial Majesty to extricate Himself from the Embarrassment of those new Counsels and Connections which He had adopted in a Moment of Despondency and Alarm, and to return to a Policy more congenial to the Principles which He has so invariably professed, and more conducive to the Honour of His Crown, and to the Prosperity of His Dominions.

This Hope has dictated to His Majesty the utmost Forbearance and Moderation in all His diplomatick Intercourse with the Court of St. Petersburg since the Peace of Tilsit.

His Majesty had much Cause for Suspicion, and just Ground of Complaint. But He abstained from the Language of Reproach. His Majesty deemed it necessary to require specifick Explanation with respect to those Arrangements with France, the Concealment of which from His Majesty could not but confirm the Impression already received of their Character and Tendency. But His Majesty, nevertheless, directed the Demand of that Explanation to be made, not only without Asperity or the Indication of any hostile Disposition, but with that considerate Regard to the Feelings and Situation of the Emperor of Russia, which resulted from the Recollection of former Friendship, and from Confidence interrupted but not destroyed.

The Declaration of the Emperor of Russia proves that the Object of His Majesty's Forbearance and Moderation has not been attained. It proves, unhappily, that the Influence of that Power, which is

equally and essentially the Enemy both of Great Britain and of Russia, has acquired a decided Ascendency in the Counsels of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg; and has been able to excite a causeless Enmity between Two Nations, whose long-established Connection, and whose mutual Interests prescribed the most intimate Union and Co-operation.

His Majesty deeply laments the Extension of the Calamities of War. But called upon as He is, to defend Himself against an Act of unprovoked Hostility, His Majesty is anxious to refute in the Face of the World the Pretexts by which that Act is attempted to be justified.

The Declaration asserts that His Majesty the Emperor of Russia has twice taken up Arms in a Cause in which the Interest of Great Britain was more direct than His own; and founds upon this Assertion the Charge against Great Britain of having neglected to second and support the Military Operations of Russia.

His Majesty willingly does Justice to the Motives which originally engaged Russia in the great Struggle against France. His Majesty avows with equal Readiness the Interest which Great Britain has uniformly taken in the Fates and Fortunes of the Powers of the Continent. But it would surely be difficult to prove that Great Britain, who was Herself in a State of Hostility with Prussia when the War broke out between Prussia and France, had an Interest and a Duty more direct in espousing the Prussian Quarrel than the Emperor of Russia, the Ally of His Prussian Majesty, the Protector of the North of Europe, and the Guarantee of the Germanick Constitution.

It is not in a publick Declaration that His Majesty can discuss the Policy of having at any particular Period of the War effected, or omitted to effect, Disembarkations of Troops on the Coasts of Naples. But the Instance of the War with the Porte is still more singularly chosen to illustrate the Charge against Great Britain of Indifference to the Interests of Her Ally: a War undertaken by Great Britain at the Indigation of Russia, and solely for the Purpose of

maintaining Russian Interests against the Influence of France.

If, however, the Peace of Tilsit is indeed to be considered as the Consequence and the Punishment of the imputed Inactivity of Great Britain, His Majesty cannot but regret that the Emperor of Russia should have resorted to so precipitate and fatal a Measure, at the Moment when He had received distinct Assurances that His Majesty was making the most strenuous Exertions to fulfil the Wishes and Expectations of His Ally (Assurances which His Imperial Majesty received and acknowledged with apparent Confidence and Satisfaction); and when His Majesty was, in Fact, prepared to employ for the Advancement of the common Objects of the War, those Forces which, after the Peace of Tilsit, He was under the Necessity of employing to disconcert a Combination directed against His own immediate Interests and Security.

The Vexation of Russian Commerce by Great Britain is, in Truth, little more than an imaginary Grievance. Upon a diligent Examination, made by His Majesty's Command, of the Records of the British Court of Admiralty, there has been discovered only a solitary Instance in the Course of the present War, of the Condemnation of a Vessel really Russian: a Vessel which had carried Naval Stores to a Port of the Common Enemy. There are but few Instances of Russian Vessels detained: and none in which Justice has been refused to a Party regularly complaining of such Detention. It is therefore Matter of Surprise as well as of Concern to His Majesty, that the Emperor of Russia should have condescended to bring forward a Complaint which, as it cannot be seriously felt by those in whose Behalf it is urged, might appear to be intended to countenance those exaggerated Declarations, by which France perseveringly endeavours to inflame the Jealousy of other Countries, and to justify Her own inveterate Animosity against Great Britain.

The Peace of Tilsit was followed by an Offer of Mediation on the Part of the Emperor of Russia, for the Conclusion of a Peace between Great Britain and France; which it is asserted that His Majesty refused.

His Majesty did not refuse the Mediation of the Emperor of Russia; although the Offer of it was accompanied by Circumstances of Concealment, which might well have justified his Refusal. The Articles of the Treaty of Tilsit were not communicated to His Majesty; and specifically that Article of the Treaty in virtue of which the Mediation was proposed, and which prescribed a limited Time for the Return of His Majesty's Answer to that Proposal. And His Majesty was thus led into an apparent Compliance with a Limitation so offensive to the Dignity of an Independent Sovereign. But the Answer, so returned by His Majesty was not a Refusal. It was a conditional Acceptance. The Conditions required by His Majesty were,—a Statement of the Basis upon which the Enemy was disposed to treat; and a Communication of the Articles of the Peace of Tilsit. The first of these Conditions was precisely the same which the Emperor of Russia had himself annexed not Four Months before to His own Acceptance of the proffered Mediation of the Emperor of Austria. The Second was one which His Majesty would have had a Right to require, even as the Ally of His Impe-

rial Majesty; but which it would have been highly improvident to omit, when He was invited to confide to His Imperial Majesty the Care of His Honour and of His Interests.

But even if these Conditions (neither of which has been fulfilled, although the Fulfilment of them has been repeatedly required by His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg,) had not been in themselves perfectly natural and necessary: there were not wanting Considerations which might have warranted His Majesty in endeavouring, with more than ordinary Anxiety, to ascertain the Views and Intentions of the Emperor of Russia, and the precise Nature and Effect of the new Relations which His Imperial Majesty had contracted.

The complete Abandonment of the Interests of the King of Prussia, (who had twice rejected Proposals of separate Peace, from a strict Adherence to His Engagements with His Imperial Ally,) and the Character of those Provisions which the Emperor of Russia was contented to make for His own Interests in the Negotiations of Tilsit, presented no encouraging Prospect of the Result of any Exertions which His Imperial Majesty might be disposed to employ in Favour of Great Britain.

It is not, while a French Army still occupies and lays waste the remaining Dominions of the King of Prussia, in spite of the Stipulations of the Prussian Treaty of Tilsit; while Contributions are arbitrarily exacted by France from that Remnant of the Prussian Monarchy, such as, in its entire and most flourishing State, the Prussian Monarchy would have been unable to discharge; while the Surrender is demanded, in Time of Peace, of Prussian Fortresses, which had not been reduced during the War; and while the Power of France is exercised over Prussia with such shameless Tyranny, as to designate and demand for instant Death, Individuals, Subjects of His Prussian Majesty, and resident in His Dominions, upon a Charge of Disrespect towards the French Government;—it is not while all these Things are done and suffered, under the Eyes of the Emperor of Russia, and without His Interference on Behalf of His Ally, that His Majesty can feel Himself called upon to account to Europe, for having hesitated to repose an unconditional Confidence in the Efficacy of His Imperial Majesty's Mediation.

Nor, even if that Mediation had taken full Effect, if a Peace had been concluded under it, and that Peace guaranteed by His Imperial Majesty, could His Majesty have placed implicit Reliance on the Stability of any such Arrangement, after having seen the Emperor of Russia openly transfer to France the Sovereignty of the Ionian Republic, the Independence of which His Imperial Majesty had recently and solemnly guaranteed.

But while the alleged Rejection of the Emperor of Russia's Mediation, between Great Britain and France, is stated as a just Ground of His Imperial Majesty's Resentment; His Majesty's Request of that Mediation, for the Re-establishment of Peace between Great Britain and Denmark, is represented as an Insult which it was beyond the Bounds of His Imperial Majesty's Moderation to endure.

His Majesty feels Himself under no Obligation to offer any Atonement or Apology to the Emperor of Russia for the Expedition against Copenhagen. It is not for those who were Parties to the

secret Arrangements of Tilsit, to demand Satisfaction for a Measure to which those Arrangements gave rise, and by which one of the Objects of them has been happily defeated.

His Majesty's Justification of the Expedition against Copenhagen is before the World. The Declaration of the Emperor of Russia would supply whatever was wanting in it, if any Thing could be wanting to convince the most incredulous of the Urgency of that Necessity under which His Majesty acted.

But until the Russian Declaration was published, His Majesty had no Reason to suspect that any Opinions which the Emperor of Russia might entertain of the Transactions at Copenhagen could be such as to preclude His Imperial Majesty from undertaking, at the Request of Great Britain, that same Office of Mediator, which He had assumed with so much Alacrity on the Behalf of France. Nor can His Majesty forget that the first Symptoms of reviving Confidence, since the Peace of Tilsit, the only Prospect of Success in the Endeavours of His Majesty's Ambassador to restore the ancient good Understanding between Great Britain and Russia, appeared when the Intelligence of the Siege of Copenhagen had been recently received at St. Peterburgh.

The Inviolability of the Baltick Sea, and the reciprocal Guaranties of the Powers that border upon it, Guaranties said to have been contracted with the Knowledge of the British Government, are stated as Aggravations of His Majesty's Proceedings in the Baltick. It cannot be intended to represent His Majesty as having at any Time acquiesced in the Principles upon which the Inviolability of the Baltick is maintained; however His Majesty may, at particular Periods, have forborne, for special Reasons, influencing His Conduct at the Time to act in Contradiction to them. Such Forbearance never could have applied but to a State of Peace and real Neutrality in the North; and His Majesty most assuredly could not be expected to recur to it, after France has been suffered to establish Herself in undisputed Sovereignty along the whole Coast of the Baltick Sea, from Dantzic to Lubeck.

But the higher the Value which the Emperor of Russia places on the Engagements respecting the Tranquillity of the Baltick, which He describes Himself as inheriting from His immediate Predecessors, the Empress Catherine and the Emperor Paul, the less justly can His Imperial Majesty resent the Appeal made to Him by His Majesty as the Guarantee of the Peace to be concluded between Great Britain and Denmark. In making that Appeal, with the utmost Confidence and Sincerity, His Majesty neither intended, nor can He imagine that He offered, any Insult to the Emperor of Russia. Nor can His Majesty conceive that, in proposing to the Prince Royal Terms of Peace, such as the most successful War on the Part of Denmark could hardly have been expected to extort from Great Britain, His Majesty rendered himself liable to the Imputation, either of exasperating the Resentment, or of outraging the Dignity, of Denmark.

His Majesty has thus replied to all the different Accusations by which the Russian Government labours to justify the Rupture of a Connection which has subsisted for Ages, with reciprocal Advantage to Great Britain and Russia; and attempts to disguise

the Operation of that external Influence by which Russia is driven into unjust Hostilities for Interests not her own.

The Russian Declaration proceeds to announce the several Conditions on which alone these Hostilities can be terminated, and the Intercourse of the Two Countries renewed.

His Majesty has already had Occasion to assert, that Justice has in no Instance been denied to the Claims of His Imperial Majesty's Subjects.

The Termination of the War with Denmark has been so anxiously sought by His Majesty, that it cannot be necessary for His Majesty to renew any Professions upon that Subject. But His Majesty is at a Loss to reconcile the Emperor of Russia's present Anxiety for the Completion of such an Arrangement, with His Imperial Majesty's recent Refusal to contribute His good Offices for effecting it.

The Requisition of His Imperial Majesty for the immediate Conclusion, by His Majesty, of a Peace with France, is as extraordinary in the Substance, as it is offensive in the Manner. His Majesty has at no Time declined to treat with France, when France has professed a Willingness to treat on an admissible Basis. And the Emperor of Russia cannot fail to remember that the last Negotiation between Great Britain and France was broken off, upon Points immediately affecting, not His Majesty's own Interests, but those of His Imperial Ally. But His Majesty neither understands, nor will He admit, the Pretension of the Emperor of Russia to dictate the Time, or the Mode, of His Majesty's pacifick Negotiations with other Powers. It never will be endured by His Majesty that any Government shall indemnify Itself for the Humiliation of Subserviency to France, by the Adoption of an insulting and peremptory Tone towards Great Britain.

His Majesty proclaims anew those Principles of Maritime Law, against which the Armed Neutrality, under the Auspices of the Empress Catherine, was originally directed; and against which the present Hostilities of Russia are denounced. Those Principles have been recognized and acted upon in the best Periods of the History of Europe; and acted upon by no Power with more Strictness and Severity than by Russia Herself in the Reign of the Empress Catherine.

Those Principles it is the Right and the Duty of His Majesty to maintain: And against every Confederacy His Majesty is determined, under the Blessing of Divine Providence, to maintain them. They have at all Times contributed essentially to the Support of the Maritime Power of Great Britain; but they are become incalculably more valuable and important at a Period when the Maritime Power of Great Britain constitutes the sole remaining Bulwark against the overwhelming Usurpations of France; the only Refuge to which other Nations may yet resort, in happier Times, for Assistance and Protection.

When the Opportunity for Peace between Great Britain and Russia shall arrive, His Majesty will embrace it with Eagerness. The Arrangements of such a Negotiation will not be difficult or complicated. His Majesty, as He has nothing to concede, so He has nothing to require: Satisfied, if Russia shall manifest a Disposition to return to Her ancient Feelings of Friendship towards Great Britain; to a

just Consideration of Her own true Interests; and to a Sense of Her own Dignity as an Independent Nation.

Westminster, December 18, 1807.

AT the Court at *Windfor*, the 18th of *December* 1807,

P R E S E N T,

The KING's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

HIS Majesty having taken into Consideration the injurious and hostile Proceedings of the Emperor of all the Russias, as set forth in the Declaration of this Date, issued by His Majesty's Command; and being determined to take such Measures as are necessary for vindicating the Honour of His Crown, and procuring Reparation and Satisfaction, His Majesty therefore is pleased, by and with the Advice of His Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that General Reprizals be granted against the Ships, Goods, and Subjects of the Emperor of all the Russias, (save and except any Vessels to which His Majesty's Licence has been granted, or which have been directed to be released from the Embargo, and have not since arrived at any Foreign Port,) so that as well His Majesty's Fleets and Ships, as also all other Ships and Vessels that shall be commissioned by Letters of Marque or General Reprizals, or otherwise, by His Majesty's Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, shall and may lawfully seize all Ships, Vessels, and Goods belonging to the Emperor of all the Russias, or his Subjects, or others inhabiting within the Territories of the Emperor of all the Russias, and bring the same to Judgment in any of the Courts of Admiralty within His Majesty's Dominions; and, to that End, His Majesty's Advocate-General, with the Advocate of the Admiralty, are forthwith to prepare the Draft of a Commission, and present the same to His Majesty at this Board, authorizing the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral, or any Person or Persons by them empowered and appointed, to issue forth and grant Letters of Marque and Reprizals to any of His Majesty's Sub-

jects, or others whom the said Commissioners shall deem fitly qualified in that Behalf, for the apprehending, seizing, and taking the Ships, Vessels, and Goods belonging to Russia, and the Vassals and Subjects of the Emperor of all the Russias, or any inhabiting within his Countries, Territories, or Dominions, (except as aforesaid;) and that such Powers and Clauses be inserted in the said Commission as have been usual, and are according to former Precedents; and His Majesty's Advocate-General, with the Advocate of the Admiralty, are also forthwith to prepare the Draft of a Commission, and present the same to His Majesty at this Board, authorizing the said Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral, to will and require the High Court of Admiralty of Great Britain, and the Lieutenant and Judge of the said Court, his Surrogate or Surrogates, as also the several Courts of Admiralty within His Majesty's Dominions, to take Cognizance of, and judicially proceed upon, all and all Manner of Captures, Seizures, Prizes, and Reprizals of all Ships and Goods that are or shall be taken, and to hear and determine the same, and, according to the Course of Admiralty, and the Laws of Nations, to adjudge and condemn all such Ships, Vessels, and Goods as shall belong to Russia, or the Vassals and Subjects of the Emperor of all the Russias, or to any others inhabiting within any of his Countries, Territories, and Dominions, (except as aforesaid;) and that such Powers and Clauses be inserted in the said Commission as have been usual, and are according to former Precedents; and they are likewise to prepare, and lay before His Majesty at this Board, a Draft of such Instructions as may be proper to be sent to the Courts of Admiralty in His Majesty's Foreign Governments and Plantations, for their Guidance herein; as also another Draft of Instructions for such Ships as shall be commissioned for the Purpose abovementioned.

Camden, P.

Westmorland, C. P. S.

Hackesbury.

Mulgrave.

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Sp. Perceval.

George Canning.

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