it had not inspired other powers with confidence, might at least have allayed their jealousies. If the French government had really appeared to be actuated by a due attention to such a system; if their disposition had proved to be essentially pacific, allowances would have been made for the situation in which a new government must be placed after so dreadful and extensive convulsion as that which has been produced by the French revolution. But his majesty has unfortunately had too much reason to observe and to lament that the system of violence, aggression, and aggrandizement which characterized the proceedings of the different governments of France during the war, has been continued with as little disguise since its termination. They have continued to keep a French army in Holland against the will, and in defiance of the remonstrances of the Batavian government, and in repugnance to the letter of three solemn treaties. They have, in a period of peace, invaded the territory, and violated the independence of the Swiss nation, in defiance of the treaty of Luneville, which had stipulated the independence of their territory, and the right of the inhabitants to chuse their own form of government. They have annexed to the dominions of France, Piedmont, Parma, and Placentia, and the island of Elba, without allotting any provision to the king of Sardinia, whom they have despoiled of the most valuable part of his territory, though they were bound, by a most solemn engagement to the emperor of Russia, to attend to his interests, and to provide for his establishment. It may indeed, with truth be asserted, that the period which has elapsed since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, has been marked with one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult on the part of the French government.

In the month of October last, His Majesty was induced, in consequence of the earnest solicitations of the Swiss nation, to make an effort, by a representation to the French government, to avert the evils which were then impending over that country. This representation was couched in the most temperate terms; and measures were taken by his Majesty for ascertaining, under the circumstances which then existed, the real situation and wishes of the Swiss Cantons, as well as the sentiments of the other Cabinets of Europe. His Majesty learned, however, with the utmost regret, that no disposition to counteract these repeated infractions of treaties and acts of violence was manifested by any of the Powers most immediately interested in preventing them; and his Majesty therefore felt that, with respect to these objects, his single efforts could not be expected to produce any considerable advantage to those in whose favour they might be exerted.

It was about this time that the French government first distinctly advanced the principle, that his Majesty had no right to complain of the conduct, or to interfere with the proceedings of France, on any point which did not form a part of the stipulations of the Treaty of Amiens.—That Treaty was unquestionably founded upon the same principles as every other antecedent treaty or convention, on the assumption of the state of possession and of engagements subsisting at the time of its conclusion; and if that state of possession or of engagements is materially affected by the voluntary act of any of the parties, so as to prejudice the condition on which the other party has entered into the contract, the change, so made, may be considered as operating virtually as a breach of the Treaty itself, and as giving the party aggrieved a right to demand satisfaction or compensation for any substantial difference which such acts may have effected in their relative situations; but whatever may be the principle on which the treaty is to be considered as founded, there is indisputably a *general law of nations*, which, though liable to be limited, explained, or restrained by *convention law*, is antecedent to it, and is that rule of conduct to which all sovereigns and states had been accustomed to appeal, where convention law is admitted to have been silent.—The treaty of Amiens, and every other treaty, in providing for the objects to which it is particularly directed, does not therefore assume or imply an indifference to all other objects which are not specified in its stipulations, much less does it adjudge them to be of a nature to be left to the will and caprice of the violent and the powerful. The justice of the cause is alone a sufficient ground to warrant the interposition of any of the powers of Europe in the differences which may arise between other states, and the application and extent of that just interposition is to be determined solely by considerations of prudence. These principles can admit of no dispute; but if the new and extraordinary pretension advanced by the French government, to exclude his Majesty from any right to interfere with respect to the concerns of other powers, unless they made a specific part of the stipulations of the treaty of Amiens, was that which it was possible to maintain, those powers would have a right, at least, to claim the benefit of this principle, in every case of difference between the two countries. The indignation of all Europe must surely then be excited by the declarations of the French government, that in the event of hostilities these very powers who were no parties to the treaty of Amiens, and who were not allowed to derive any advantage from the remonstrances of his majesty in their behalf, are nevertheless to be made the victims of a war which is alledged to arise out of the same treaty, and are to be sacrificed in a contest which they not only have not occasioned, but which they have had no means whatever of preventing.

His Majesty judged it most expedient, under the circumstances which then affected Europe, to abstain from a recurrence to hostilities on account of the views of ambition and acts of aggression manifested by France on the continent; yet an experience of the character and dispositions of the French government could not fail to impress his Majesty with a sense of the necessity of increased vigilance in guarding the rights and dignity of his crown, and in protecting the interests of his people.

While his majesty was actuated by these sentiments, he was called upon by the French government to evacuate the island of Malta. His majesty had manifested, from the moment of the signature of the definitive treaty, an anxious disposition to carry into full effect the stipulations of the treaty of Amiens relative to that island. As soon as he was informed that an election of a Grand Master had taken place, under the auspices of the Emperor of Russia, and that it had been agreed by the different Priories assembled at St. Petersburgh to acknowledge the person whom the court of Rome should select out of those who had been named by them to be Grand Master of the Order of St. John, his Majesty proposed to the French government, for the purpose of avoiding any difficulties which might arise in the execution of the arrangement, to acknowledge that election to be valid; and when in the month of August the French government applied to his majesty to permit the Neapolitan troops to be sent to the island of Malta, as a preliminary measure for preventing any unnecessary delay, his majesty consented without hesitation to this proposal, and gave directions for the admission of the Neapolitan troops into the island. His majesty had thus shewn his disposition not only to throw no obstacles in the way of the execution of the treaty, but, on the contrary, to facilitate the execution of it by every means in his power. His majesty cannot, however, admit that at any period since the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens the French government have had a right to call upon him, in conformity to the stipulations of that treaty, to withdraw his forces from the island of Malta. At the time when this demand was made by the French government, several of the most important stipulations of the arrangement respecting Malta remained unexecuted: the election of a Grand Master had not been carried into effect. The 10th article had stipulated that the independence of the island should be placed under the guarantee and protection of G. Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Spain, and Prussia. The Emperor of Germany had acceded to the guarantee, but only on condition of a like accession on the part of the other powers specified in the article. The Emperor of Russia had refused his accession, except on the condition that the Maltese langue should be abrogated; and the king of Prussia had given no answer whatever to the application which had been made to him to accede to the arrangement. But the fundamental principle upon the existence of which depended the execution of the other parts of the article, had been defeated by the changes which had taken place in the constitution of the Order since the conclusion of the treaty of peace. It was to the order of St. John of Jerusalem that his majesty was, by the first stipulation of the 10th article, bound to restore the island of Malta.—The order is defined to consist of those langues which were in existence at the time of the conclusion of the treaty.—The three French langues having been abolished, and a Maltese langue added to the institution: The order consisted, therefore, at that time of the following langues, viz. the langue of Arragon, Castile, Germany, Bavaria, and Russia. Since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, the langues of Arragon and Castile have been separated from the order by Spain, a part of the Italian langue has been abolished by the annexation of Piedmont and Parma to France. There is strong reason to believe that it has been in contemplation to sequestrate the property of the Batavian langue, and the intention has been avowed of keeping the Russian langues within the dominions of the Emperor.

Under these circumstances the order of St. John cannot now be considered as that body to which, according to the stipulations of the treaty, the Island was to be restored; and the funds indispensably necessary for its support, and for the maintenance of the independence of the island, have been nearly, if not wholly sequestered. Even if this had arisen from circumstances which it was not in the power of any of the contracting parties to the treaty to control, his Majesty would nevertheless have had a right to defer the evacuation of the island by his forces, until such time as an equivalent arrangement had been concluded for the preservation of the independence of the Order and of the island. But if these changes have taken place in consequence of any acts of the other parties to the treaty; if the French government, shall appear to have proceeded upon a system of rendering the order, whose independence they have stipulated, incapable of maintaining that independence, his Majesty's right to continue in the occupation of the island, under such circumstances, will hardly be contested. It is indisputable that the revenue of the two Spanish Langues have been withdrawn from the Order by his Catholic Majesty; a part of the Italian Langue has in fact been abolished by France, through the unjust annexation of Piedmont and Parma, and Placentia, to the French territory. The Elector of Bavaria has been instigated by the French government to sequestrate the property of the Order within his territories; and it is certain that they have not only sanctioned but encouraged the idea of the propriety of separating the Russian Langues from the remainder of the Order.

As the conduct of the Governments of France and Spain have therefore, in some instances, directly, and in others indirectly, contributed to the changes which have taken place in the Order, and thus destroyed its means of supporting its independence, it is to those governments, and not to his Majesty, that the non-execution of the Tenth Article of the Treaty of Amiens must be ascribed.

Such would be the just conclusion if the 10th article of that treaty were considered as an arrangement by itself. It must be observed, however, that this article forms and the stipulations, of which must, upon a principle common to all treaties, be construed as having a reference to each other.

His majesty was induced by the treaty of peace to consent to abandon, and to restore to the order of St John the island of Malta, on condition of its independence and neutrality. But a further condition which must necessarily be supposed to have had considerable influence with his majesty in inducing him to make so important a concession was the acquiescence of the French government in an arrangment for the security of the Levant, by the eighth and ninth articles in the treaty stipulating the integrity of the Turkish Empire, and the independence of the Ionian islands. His majesty has, however, since learnt, that the French government have entertained views hostile to both these objects; and that they have even suggested the idea of a partition of the Turkish empire. These views must now be manifest to all the world, from the official publication of the report of colonel Sebastiani; from the conduct of that officer, and of the other French agents in Egypt, Syria, and the Ionian islands, and from the distinct admission of the First Consul himself, in his communication with lord Whitworth. His majesty was therefore, warranted in considering it to be the determination of the French government to violate those articles of the treaty of peace, which stipulated for the integrity and independence of the Turkish empire, and of the Ionian islands, and consequently he would not have been justified in evacuating the island of Malta without receiving other security, which might equally provide for these important objects. His majesty accordingly feels that he has an incontestible claim, in consequence of the conduct of France since the treaty of peace, and with reference to the objects which made part of the stipulations of that treaty, to refuse, under the present circumstances, to relinquish the possession of the island of Malta.

Yet notwithstanding this right so clear and so unquestionable, the alternative presented by the French government to his majesty, in language the most peremptory and menacing, was the evacuation of Malta, or the renewal of war.

If the views of ambition and aggrandizement, which have thus been manifested by the French government since the conclusion of the treaty of peace, have in so very particular a manner attracted the attention of his majesty, it has been equally impossible for him not to feel, and not to notice, the repeated indignities which have been offered by that government to his crown, and to his people.

The report of Col. Sebastiani contains the most unwarrantable insinuations and charges against His Majesty's Government, against the officers who commanded his forces in Egypt, and against the British Army in that quarter. This paper cannot be considered as the publication of a private individual; it has been avowed, and indeed bears evidence upon the face of it that it is the official Report of an accredited Agent, published by the authority of the Government to which it was addressed, which thereby have given it their express sanction.

This Report had been published a very short time, when another indignity was offered to this Country by the communication of the First Consul of France to the Legislative Body. In this communication he presumes to affirm, in the character of Chief Magistrate of that Country, "*That Great Britain cannot singly contend against the power of France*;" an assertion as unfounded as it is indecent, disproved by the events of many wars, by none more than by those of the war which has been recently concluded.—Such an assertion, advanced in the most solemn official Act of a Government, and thereby meant to be avowed to all the Powers of Europe, can be considered in no other light than as a defiance publicly offered to His Majesty, and to a brave and powerful people, who are both willing and able to defend his just rights, and those of their country, against every insult and aggression.

The conduct of the First Consul to His Majesty's Ambassador at his Audience, in presence of the Ministers of most of the Sovereigns and States of Europe, furnishes another instance of provocation on the part of the French Government which it would be improper not to notice on the present occasion, and the subsequent explanation of this transaction may be considered as having the effect of aggravating instead of palliating the affront.

At the very time when His Majesty was demanding satisfaction and explanation on some of the points above mentioned, the French Minister at Hamburgh endeavoured to obtain the insertion in a Hamburgh paper of a most gross and opprobrious libel against his Majesty, and when difficulties were made respecting the insertion of it, he availed himself of his *official character of Minister of the French Republic* to require the publication of it by order of his Government in the Gazette of the Senate of that town. With this requisition so made, the Senate of Hamburg were induced to comply; and thus has the independence of that town been violated, and a free State made the instrument by the menace of the French Government, of propagating throughout Europe, upon their authority, the most offensive and unfounded calumnies against His Majesty and his government. His Majesty might add to this list of indignities, the requisition which the French Government have repeatedly urged, that the laws and constitution of his country should be changed relative to the liberty of the Press. His Majesty might likewise add the call which the French Government have on several occasions made upon him to violate the laws of hospitality with respect to persons who had found an asylum within his dominions, and against whose conduct no charge whatever has at any time been substantiated. It is impossible to reflect on the different proceedings, and the course which the French Government have thought proper to adopt respecting them, without the thorough conviction that they are not the effect of accident; but that they form a part of a system which has been adopted for the purpose of degrading, villifying, and insulting His Majesty and his Government.

Under all these insults and provocations his majesty, not without a due sense of his dignity, has proceeded with every degree of temper and moderation to obtain satisfaction and redress, while he has neglected no means consistent with his honour and the safety of his dominions, to induce the government of France to concede to him, what is, in his judgment, absolutely necessary for the future tranquility of Europe. His efforts in this respect have proved abortive and he has therefore judged it necessary to order his ambassador to leave Paris. In having recourse to this proceeding, it has been his majesty's object to put an end to the fruitless discussions which have too long subsisted between the two governments, and to close a period of suspence peculiarly injurious to the subjects of his majesty.

But though the provocations which his majesty has received might entitle him to larger claims than those which he has advanced, yet anxious to prevent calamities which might thus be extended to every part of Europe, he is still willing, as far as is consistent with his own honour, and the interests of his people, to afford every facility to any just and honourable arrangement, by which such evils may be averted. He has, therefore, no difficulty in declaring to all Europe, that notwithstanding all the changes which have taken place since the treaty of peace, notwithstanding the extension of the power of France, in repugnance to that treaty, and to the spirit of peace itself, his majesty will not avail himself of these circumstances, to demand in compensation all that he is entitled to require, but will be ready to concur, even now, in an arrangement by which satisfaction shall be given to him, for the indignities which have been offered to his crown and to his people and substantial security afforded against *further* encouragements on the part of France.

His majesty has thus distinctly and unreservedly stated the reasons of those proceedings to which he has found himself compelled to resort. He is actuated by no disposition to interfere in the internal concerns of any other state; by no project of conquest and aggrandizement, but solely by a sense of what is due to the honor of his Crown, and the interests of his people, and by an anxious desire to obstruct the further progress of a system, which if not resisted, may prove fatal to every part of the civilized world.

AT THE COURT OF THE QUEEN'S PALACE.

16th of May, 1803.

PRESENT

THE KING's most excellent Majesty in Council.

Whereas, in consequence of the repeated insults and provocations which his Majesty has experienced from the government of France, his Majesty finds himself compelled to take such measures as are necessary for vindicating the honor of his Crown, and the just rights of his subjects; his Majesty, therefore, is pleased by and with the advice of his Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that general reprisals be granted against the ships, goods, and subjects of the French Republic, so that as well as his Majesty's fleets and ships, as also, all other ships and vessels that shall be commissioned, by letters of Marque, or general reprisals 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 French Republic, or inhabiting within any of the territories of the French Republic, and bring the same to judgement in such courts of admiralty within his Majesty's dominions, as shall be duly commissioned to take cognizance thereof:—

And, to that end, his Majesty's Advocate General, with the Advocate of the Admiralty, are forthwith to prepare the draft of commission, and present the same to his Majesty at this board, authorizing the commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral, or any persons by them empowered and appointed, to issue forth and grant letters of Marque and reprisals to any of H. M. subjects, or others whom the commissioners shall deem fitly qualified in that behalf, for the apprehending, seizing and taking the ships, vessels and goods belonging to the French Republic, or to any persons being subjects to the French Republic, or inhabiting within any of the territories of the French Republic; and that such powers and clauses be inserted in the said commission, as have been usual, and are according to former precedent.

His majesty's said advocate general, with the advocate of the admiralty, are also forthwith to prepare a draft of a commission, and present the same to his majesty at this board, authorising 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 dominion which shall be duly commissioned to take cognizance of, and judicially proceed upon all and all manner of captures, seizures, prizes and reprisals of all ships and goods that are or shall be made, 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 the French Republic, or to any persons being subjects to the French Republic, or inhabiting within any of the territories of the French Republic—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 instruction as may be proper to be sent to the said several 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 purposes above mentioned.

From the court of the Queen's Palace, the sixteenth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and three.

[Signed by all the privy council.]

IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND.

HOUSE OF LORDS, MAY 16.

WAR

The House, which was very numerously attended, waited for a considerable time without proceeding to any business, in expectation of a Message from his Majesty; at length

Lord Pelham entered, and presented a Message from the King, for which see the House of Commons.

The Message being read by the Lord Chancellor, and afterwards by the Clerk at the table.

Lord Pelham rose and said, that his Majesty had given directions that the papers referred to in the Message should be laid before the House as speedily as possible and, that measures were taken accordingly; but it would be quite impossible to have his Majesty's wish fulfilled before Wednesday, as the papers could not be prepared sooner. In order, therefore, that their Lordships should have full time to examine the details of this important subject, he