

vour to oppress them; where it is necessary to use force and violence to extort that which cannot be obtained by gentle means; and to commit the cause of the injured to the event of a Battle. In such cases a vigorous war is the only expedient to restore a firm and lasting peace: for good motives alone make a war just or unjust; but the passions and ambition of Princes often blind their judgment, and represent the most violent and injurious actions in the fairest light. It is a remedy, however, that should not be applied, whilst any other is left: and it ought always to be well considered, whether it is the effect of pride, or the result of cool reason and necessity.

Defensive wars are certainly the most justifiable; but there are others occasioned by disputable titles, in which princes are necessitated to assert their rights, sword in hand, and to determine their respective pretensions by force.—A due precaution and regard to self-preservation, sometimes likewise engage a Prince in war; and though indeed such a war may, strictly speaking, be called an offensive one, it is nevertheless just. When some enormous over-swelled power seems ready to burst, and threatens the world with havock and destruction, it is but common prudence to throw up ditches and banks to restrain the course of the torrent, and prevent an inundation, whilst it is yet in one's power. When the clouds begin to gather together, when thunder and lightning proclaim the approach of a storm, the Prince, who is more immediately threatened with the danger, and cannot withstand it alone, ought to enter into alliance with others, the circumstances of whose affairs may likewise make it necessary for them to join him for their own safety. If the kings of Egypt, Syria, and Macedonia had confederated against the Romans, the latter could never have conquered those nations: a firm alliance amongst them would have frustrated those ambitious designs, the accomplishment of which enslaved the Universe. As it is a point of prudence to chuse the less of two evils, when one of them is unavoidable, and to prefer a certain advantage to one that is uncertain, it is better for a Prince to enter into an offensive war, whilst he is at liberty to make choice, either of the olive or the laurel branch, as he pleases, than to stay till his circumstances are become desperate, and a declaration of war would only serve to defer his ruin a little while. It is a certain maxim that it is better to anticipate, than to be anticipated, and wise men have always availed themselves of it [b]. Many Princes enter into Treaties with their allies,

[b] As his Majesty himself did at the beginning of the present war.—The first Edition here adds what follows, which is struck out in the second, “en faisant usage de leurs forces avant que leurs ennemis ayent pris des arrangemens capables de leur lier les mains, & de detruire leur pouvoir.”