

## CHAPTER VIII.

## BLOCKADE.

Definition of  
blockade.

§ 203. Blockade is the interception by sea of the coasts or ports of an enemy for the purpose of cutting off all communications. Its object is not merely to interrupt the importation of supplies, but to prevent export as well as import.<sup>1</sup>

Blockade, being a legitimate act of war, neutrals are under an obligation not to interfere with its regular operation, and they subject themselves to the risk of having their property confiscated if they violate, or attempt to violate, a lawfully instituted blockade.

General  
conditions  
governing the  
institution of  
a blockade.  
Effectiveness  
of blockades.

§ 204. It is only by a belligerent Power that a blockade can be established,<sup>2</sup> and its institution is governed by well-defined rules.

In the first place, a blockade must be real. "Paper blockades," namely, the notification of a blockade without the intention or the means of maintaining it effectively, are illegal. In this sense the declaration of the German Government in February, 1915, purporting to establish a blockade of the British Isles was unlawful owing to its ineffectiveness as maintained by submarines.

It is interesting in this connection to observe that the first serious basis to the right of blockade

<sup>1</sup> *The Frederick Molke* (1798), 1 C. Rob. 86, 87; *The Adelaide* (1799), 2 *ibid.*, 111, note.

<sup>2</sup> A Government *de facto* (though not *de jure*), which has been recognised as a belligerent, may establish a blockade.