

CHAPTER XV

BLOCKADE

I

REGULAR BLOCKADES

Sec. 451. Importance of Blockade During the World War.

In consequence of the fact that all the important maritime States were participants in the late war, blockade, like the measures for the interception of contraband, played an important rôle. It is somewhat singular, however, that Great Britain and France, the two principal belligerents on the one side, did not have recourse to blockade measures against Germany, the principal belligerent on the other side, until after the war had been in progress for some seven months. Until then they contented themselves, in the main, with the employment of their power to prevent contraband goods from going to their chief adversary. Since the category of contraband was extended to embrace nearly all commodities which were capable of serving either the civil or military necessities of the enemy the measures adopted to intercept the transportation of such commodities to enemy country accomplished in large measure the same object for which recourse to blockade is had.

Sec. 452. Departures from the Existing Rules and Practice. When recourse to blockade came to be adopted it took two forms: First, the regular form customarily followed by belligerents in the past and, in the main, applied in accordance with the established rules of international law governing the exercise of the right of blockade; and, second, blockade applied as a measure of reprisal and under a form not in accord with the law or practice of the past. The blockade of Greece, at the time a neutral power, by Great Britain and France for the purposes of coercion may be mentioned as a third exceptional form.

At the outset, all the belligerent powers manifested a disposition to exercise the right of blockade in accordance with the