

Sup disc ad

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED JULY THE FOURTH, 1813.

AT THE

REQUEST OF THE SELECTMEN OF BOSTON,

IN

COMMEMORATION

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY EDWARD ST. LOE LIVERMORE, ESQ.

BOSTON :

PRINTED BY CHESTER STEBBINS.

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1813.

VOTE OF THE TOWN.

AT a meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town of BOSTON, duly qualified and legally warned, in publick town-meeting, assembled at FANEUIL HALL, the 5th day of July, A. D. 1813.

Resolved, That the Selectmen be, and hereby are appointed, a committee to wait on the Hon. EDWARD ST. LOE LIVERMORE, Esq. in the name of the town, and thank him for the elegant and spirited oration, this day delivered by him at the request of the town, upon the anniversary of American Independence, in which were considered the feelings, manners, and principles, which produced the great national event; and to request of him a copy for the press.

Attest,

THOMAS CLARK, Town Clerk.

ORATION, &c.

To rejoice amidst sorrow—to celebrate with joy and gladness of heart, national events in the gloom of national calamities, at least, has the appearance of a very difficult task.

If the celebration of the day requires the exhibition of smiling countenances and a joyful appearance I fear the anniversary cannot be celebrated at this time comporting with the laudable institution of the town. Those who feel not for the distressed situation of their country, must be “more than mortal, more than man,”—and to put on the appearance of insensibility—to assume that there is cause for joy and not for mourning—a man (if he does not play the hypocrite) must be destitute of natural feelings, or labour under the effect of mental derangement.

The custom of celebrating the anniversary of the political birth of the nation, seems peculiar to the people of the United States.—For although there have been nations whose political origin have been somewhat similar to our own, yet none have set apart a day to celebrate the event.

The custom, though thus considered novel, may be productive of very beneficial consequences, provided reason and moderation be the guide, and the day may be celebrated at this time with proper attention to its design and institution. If to applaud the actions of great and virtuous statesmen and heroes of our country—if to promote political information—if to excite in the breasts of the rising generation a love of country and genuine patriotism—if to commemorate with due attention to its consequences, so important an event as the severance of our country from the government and control of any

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foreign nation, be the objects pursued, the custom will prove salutary and promotive of the publick good. But if to cherish and keep alive national antipathies and resentment—if an orator is to be selected as Balaam was of old to curse the Israelites—the custom so far from being honourable and useful, must have an injurious and degrading tendency. It is with nations as with individuals; a man by the laws of nature is under an obligation to respect himself and attend to his own concerns, but it is far from being an incumbent duty, to foment and keep up an animosity toward his neighbour; and it is evidence of a contracted mind, to preserve hatred for a past injury when the controversy has been adjusted and settled by mutual consent.

All undue partialities, as well as hatred towards a foreign nation, are equally improper and injurious.—From the latter, the greatest evils which can befall a nation have sprung. The histories of Rome and Carthage, and of France and Great-Britain, afford the most sad examples of the consequences of national hatred and resentment. In the former, the most unrelenting wars were prosecuted for more than one hundred years, which terminated but with the total destruction of Carthage; and for more than seven centuries have the fields of France and Great-Britain been drenched and polluted with the gore of the unhappy people, while the ocean has witnessed its full share of their destructive operations. How long the scene of destruction is to continue cannot be predicted; but as friends to humanity we cannot too much regret the direful contests, which in our time have afflicted the European world—and we should be void of humanity if we did not heave a sigh at the thoughts of the misery of so many thousands of our fellow-mortals now agonizing in consequence of these baneful wars.

The commencement of the animosity between France and Great-Britain, may be dated about the year 1087, when William of Normandy, having seized the sceptre of England, invaded France to seek revenge for a jest uttered by Philip the king. “And here,” says the historian, “we have the rise of the wars between Eng-

land and France; which have continued longer, drawn more noble blood, and been attended with more memorable achievements than any other national quarrel we read of in antient or modern history." And are the republicans of America (for this is a republican war) now commencing a national contest, which from its continuance, achievements, and shedding of blood may rival the history of any past period! This is a consideration worthy the attention of a reflecting mind.

The epoch we celebrate stands recorded among the important events in the history of man. It seems generally to have been acknowledged before the time, that such an event, from the nature and disposition of man, would be at some period inevitable—the minister of Louis the XV. who signed the treaty of peace with England in 1763, is said to have predicted it. But take place when it would, it could not be effected without the expense of much blood and treasure, and without the existence of great cruelty and animosity. How grateful ought we to be! how happy should we esteem our lot, that the event is past, and the work completed.

Being finished, and our independence acknowledged, and all differences accommodated and settled by treaty; it seemed but a rational expectation, that our nations should hold each other (as in the language of the declaration of independence we commemorate,) "in war, enemies, in peace, friends," This was the sentiment of Washington, of Adams, and of all the men of expanded liberal minds, who wrought the revolution, and whose constant wishes and exertions have been for our nation's honour and glory. The words of the great Washington should ever be had in reverence. "Nothing," says he, "is more essential, than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments to others should be excluded; and that in place of them, just and amicable feelings should be cultivated." But our harmony is again disturbed, and affrighted peace is banished from our shores. "The dreadful note of preparation" has taken place of the "busy hum of men," in pleasing commercial pursuits;—and instead of the peaceful citizen occupied

with implements promptive of general wealth and happiness, the horrid machines for the destruction of man are every where presented to our view.

As the mind, when the man is under a severe paroxysm of pain, cannot be diverted from the anguish; so the cause of our present troubles and sufferings will constantly be uppermost in our thoughts. The disastrous state of our national affairs, and the occurrences which have led to our distresses, will naturally be expected to be my theme on this occasion.

We are at war—but why and wherefore, are questions not solvable upon principles of justice, humanity, or reason. That people inhabiting shores more than three thousand miles asunder—professing the same religion—and having the same origin, customs, laws, and manners—speaking the same language, and united by the ties of relationship and consanguinity, and closely connected in friendship and business; should be seeking each other upon the ocean for the purpose of killing or making captive; and of spoiling, burning, or sinking each other's property; excite our wonder and most melancholy thoughts. Why should we be invading the peaceable territory of those who have never injured us, inhabited either by the descendants of the French, who submitted at the conquest, or of our own countrymen and friends, who emigrated, by our permission and sanction?

We are told in an unintelligible jargon “it is for free trade and sailor's rights.” But who denies us a free trade? Not the peaceable inhabitants, whose country we are invading, and whose habitations we are cruelly pillaging and burning, nor even the government, against whom we have declared war.—Was it not for the war, we are now prosecuting, our trade would be uninterrupted, as far as respects Great-Britain, to all quarters of the world; and probably, as lucrative and beneficial at this time, as at any former period. France denies us a free trade to Spain and Portugal, and burns and destroys our vessels with impunity; and Algiers denies us the right of navigating the ocean, except we pay tribute. And who denies our sailors their rights? Great-

Britain does not, but merely insists upon the right to the services of her own subjects; and what nation has ever relinquished it? There is no nation that does not assert the same principle; and the only reason why the United States have not put it in practice is, because our laws do not authorize impressments.

How long this unjust and impolitick war is to be continued, or what is to be the final issue, are questions to which a satisfactory answer cannot be given. A war, commenced without discretion, may be continued contrary to every rational calculation, and it is not easier to predict the time of its termination now, than it was in less than two months after the declaration. Its deteriorating effects are more easily to be imagined, though no one can pretend to estimate their full extent. The destruction of our commerce (the first and natural tendency of the war) was fully foreseen by all intelligent men—the evidence is now ample and complete. The deserted stores, the unfrequented wharves, the vessels in our harbours, which exhibit the appearance of forest trees killed by fire, the dejected countenances of our friends; all join in the melancholy proof that, commerce is annihilated. I do not pretend to calculate or portray the embarrassments and distresses that must result from this unfortunate state of affairs; but I would ask, who is the man among us, that does not very sensibly feel, that he has suffered a most grievous injury? And what man, possessing the feelings of humanity, can without emotion, contemplate the condition of a people wholly deprived of their usual and necessary business or employment? And could not those who have plunged us into this calamitous state, have imagined a situation of this nature? We cannot well conceive them to have been so extremely ignorant; what then can we believe of their humanity and justice. To deprive a man of his business is like robbing him of his inheritance; and a government may as well take from a man his farm, his goods, or his money, as to destroy the lawful business in which he trusts for the support of himself and family. And upon every principle of justice it must require as cogent a reason for one case as the other.

This war is doubly unjust. Unjust as it respects the nation against whom it is declared; and unjust as it respects our own citizens, some of whom are ruined, others most grievously injured in their property and lawful rights.

I would not be understood as entertaining an idea, that the people of New England fear war, on account of the apprehension of personal injury or danger—they will be the last, reduced to this state of degradation.—Like their ancestors, the parent stock from whom they are all descended, whenever called upon to maintain a just and necessary war, they have shewn as great bravery, fortitude and patriotism, as any people since the creation of man. And in whatever situation we may be drawn, by the permission of Divine Providence, I trust, our firmness, courage and enterprize, will never forsake us. And when we have been accused of entertaining a horror for war, our words and actions respond, it is an unjust war we abhor, and not through fear of personal danger, or dread of meeting our foe face to face, on the ocean or in the field of battle—and without boasting, we may say, that on this point, we do not yield to those who have so kindly made war for us. It is with very different considerations we view our unhappy situation.—If we were prosecuting a war, necessary and just—if it was for a legitimate cause, and the means of preserving peace by negotiation had been exhausted—and there was any prospect of bettering our condition—if we were engaged with a foe that would listen to no reasonable terms of pacification, but appeared resolved on our conquest or destruction, we should unite like the Spartan band, and fight like those heroes at Thermopolæ. But knowing the facts to be in the reverse; when a man contemplates his situation, that as yesterday he was in an honourable and lucrative employment, or business which afforded a competency for himself, and maintenance of those, whom it is his duty and delight to cherish and support, but that now he is deprived of the means—and when he views his well earned property torn from him, and through no default of his own, but from the improper conduct of those placed over him to administer for his safety and pro-

tection—his property once so valuable and productive, now rendered useless or of little benefit—reduced from affluence, as it were to penury—his burthens increasing—his means diminishing;—when a man of this description considers the cause of his misfortunes, and the source from whence they flow; his feelings are far from being of the most grateful and placid nature. To require of this man to submit with resignation to his fate, and as the test of patriotism, to aid and support those whose misguided councils have produced this state of embarrassment, is cruelty and insult in the abstract—and “insult added to an injury,” says the sententious Sterne, “makes every man a party.”

It is not improper—it is our duty, to inquire into the right—the constitutional authority, of those who have produced such calamities.

The constitution has vested in Congress the power of declaring war—that is the power of making war is taken from the individual states or their legislatures, and vested (not in the president, for it was thought too dangerous a power for him to possess) but in congress. For if one or more states could make war without the consent of congress, the country might be involved in a destructive contest, to gratify the whim or resentment of a particular state, as would probably have been our lot several years ago. As this stipulation was mutual on the part of all the states it was consequently agreed, that all should be protected, and not destroyed by the doings of the majority—and assuredly it could not have been the intention that congress should have the power of sacrificing the property or happiness of the people of one portion of the country, by declaring war that would produce this catastrophe, at the same time hold that portion to a fulfilment of the contract on their part. If allegiance and protection are reciprocal obligations, it seems to follow, that when protection ceases, allegiance also should cease. But in our case, protection is not only withdrawn, but our property and essential rights are offered up a sacrifice to the Moloch of their perverted inclinations.

What love can a man bear to a government, that will so wantonly expose his best interests to destruction ? or what confidence can be placed in those who appear so destitute of information or even common discretion ? To impute to them wicked and corrupt motives, is what we would wish to avoid ; but it must be confessed, that so strange has been the conduct in this suicide war, that it is extremely difficult to divest ourselves of the idea which intrudes upon the minds of the injured people, and impute that wholly to the want of information and judgment, which would otherwise appear to be the result of determined corruption.

The idea which has been suggested in apology for the executive, that the war was forced upon the government by the violence of their friends in the south and west, has very little force in extenuation. For, if those people were blinded to the true interest of their country, it must have been through deception or want of proper information being given to them by those whose duty it was to enlighten their understandings. That those people have for many years past mistaken our interest and their own, is a fact well understood ; and it cannot be presumed that they were either incapable of learning, or possessed, from natural causes, that hostility to the commercial interest, as to lead them to the approbation of measures so destructive to commerce.

It is very probable—indeed it would be strange if it were otherwise, that the labours of the ruling party, and the means they have used to pervert the minds of the people, have brought the government into inextricable difficulties. In some places, particularly large cities, the people have appeared to be inflamed against Great-Britain to a degree of phrensy, which the government could not withstand. A senator who has had his full share in perverting the publick mind, is said to have voted for war, contrary to his declared conviction of its impropriety and destructive tendency ; because he was afraid of the mob, should he return without giving his vote ; and anonymous letters were sent him, threatening violence.

This is truly a melancholy situation, and what can the reflection of such men be, upon their past misconduct ?

How cruel ! how destitute of honourable sentiments are those, whose study it is to pervert the minds of the people, and how dangerous to themselves is the experiment ! Little did those, who let loose the mobs of France, dream, that the fury might burst upon their own devoted heads ! and as little have our demagogues imagined, that they should stir up the people to that phrensy, that they must follow and not lead !

But the want of wisdom and discernment in the friends of the administration as well as virtuous motives in this kind of conduct is very apparent. Every aggression and unfortunate occurrence on the part of the British, even when explained, settled, and atoned for, have been the constant themes of complaint, that from reading the publications and speeches of members of congress, a stranger would suppose that the name of Britain was synonymous for all that was cruel, oppressive, tyrannical, dishonest, and perfidious.

And in justice to our own native citizens it should be observed, that the honourable instruments or conductors of the vehicles for spreading these misrepresentations have principally been subjects of that country, who have received the hospitality of our laws, and are willing to requite us by undertaking the direction of our affairs. It is a consolation to our feelings, that so few of our own countrymen could be induced to execute so ignominious an office.

While striving to render the name of Britain odious, all the enormities of France have been glanced over ; and if, to save appearance, they have sometimes complained of their injustice, it has been done with such adroitness in the art of deception, as to wipe away the offence and leave the minds of men hardly bordering on resentment.

The ostensible, or pretended object of this war, was the vindication of our commercial rights as a neutral nation, and to compel Great-Britain, who had infringed upon our neutrality, to do us justice.

It is an old maxim, that he who comes forward to demand justice, should do it with clean hands.—If you demand equity, you must do equity, says the court of conscience :—If we complain of an infringement upon our neutral rights, it is most certainly requisite our conduct should have been strictly neutral—so far from preserving the appearance of neutrality, our conduct has been such as (with some) to induce a belief, that we were the allies of France, and that there was a secret treaty between the governments.

The great cause of complaint, and pretended immediate cause of the war, was the orders in council of November, 1807—but modified by those of April, 1809, confining the blockade to France and her immediate dependencies. These orders were intended by the British government as retaliatory against France, and though the principle of blockade, by them established, cannot be justified by the law of nations, yet before it can be made a cause of war, it is to be considered, what is incumbent on the nation complaining to do before demanding reparation for the injury.

The laws of nations have so clearly defined what shall be considered as a lawful blockade, that the case cannot be misunderstood. The capture, therefore, of a vessel entering a port only blockaded upon paper, cannot be justified, but to entitle ourselves to demand justice for the injury, we should take care that our conduct has been impartial and just towards the party against whom we make our complaint.

Although I have formed an opinion as to the policy of the British orders in council, yet that makes no part of the inquiry upon the subject of right.

The first inquiry is—has our government so conducted, taking into view all the circumstances attending the business, as to entitle them to make demand of reparation for an injury sustained, and upon refusal, to justify war?

The second inquiry will be, which perhaps may be considered as involved in the first—has not our government before the declaration of war, and perhaps more than once had it in their power, upon the principles upon which they first set out, to have had a revocation of the orders in council?

The evidence, as relates to this business, if not wholly is principally to be gathered from documents published by our government, and open to the inspection of all, therefore cannot be mistaken.

The well known decree of Bonaparte was issued at Berlin on the 21st of November, 1806, which declared Great-Britain and all her dependencies in a state of blockade, and subjected all vessels going to or from their ports and harbours, as well as the produce and manufactures of Great-Britain and her dependencies, to capture and condemnation.

There never was before a greater outrage than this committed against neutral nations—it was like a declaration of war against the whole maritime world.—

It was injurious to Great-Britain, her enemy, because every interruption of her commerce with other nations was injurious, and on this account she had a right to counteract or retaliate for the injury, if she could do so without injustice towards neutral nations; but it was more particularly injurious to all such nations, and as the United States had infinitely the greatest commerce with her, it was more particularly injurious to them. The first official information given to our government of the Berlin decree, seems to have come through the British minister. The present secretary of state and attorney general had been appointed envoys to the court of

London, “to settle all matters of difference between the united kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland relative to wrongs committed between the parties on the high seas, or other waters, and for establishing the principles of navigation and commerce between the parties”—and in consequence had concluded a very advantageous treaty which was signed at London the 31st of December, 1807—this treaty was supposed by them to be acceptable to our government, and it is believed that we never shall obtain a better.

Previous to the execution by the British commissioners, they notified our envoys of the Berlin decree, and that the government should reserve the right of retaliating in case the decree should not be resisted by the American government, and a note to that effect was annexed to the treaty, lest the execution of it should be construed into an acquiescence and relinquishment of the right.

The treaty was received by our government, in February, 1807, and for causes best known to the president was not communicated to the senate, but returned to the envoys at London, with so many marks of disapprobation, that if the objections had been well founded, the envoys must either be considered as corrupt, or exceedingly overreached in making so bad a treaty.

The treaty having been made under the Fox administration, who were considered very friendly to the United States, and agreed to by commissioners, believed very competent to the undertaking—and their approbation of it, and belief that it would be acceptable to our government, together with all the frivolous reasons for rejecting it in so abrupt and extraordinary a manner, warrant the supposition, that very different reasons from the ostensible, weighed with the president. The opinion, that Great-Britain would fall, in the ardent struggle in which she was engaged, seemed to be no secret.

The informal arrangement (as it was called) placed the subject of impressment upon a very favourable footing, in the opinion of the envoys—and if congress should take measures for checking desertions from the British service, and the treaty should be ratified, perfect good understanding would be produced by it between the two countries.—But neither was the treaty ratified, nor did congress take measures to prevent desertion—nor did the government resist the Berlin decree.—At least it might have been expected by the British government, that they should have been notified of the intention of our government respecting this decree; but no information appears to have been given, and so the matter rested until November following.

When all these circumstances are considered, can it be said with candour, that our government (if they did not perfectly acquiesce in the Berlin decree) did intend to oppose or resist it? If they “submitted to a violation of their neutral rights by France, in the manner contemplated by that decree,” how could they reasonably suppose Great-Britain would respect them? especially as Great-Britain viewed the decree so injurious to her? And under such circumstances, it is inconsistent with the principles of natural justice, to say, if Great-Britain retaliated upon France in her own coin, it would be a just cause of war on the part of the United States. The Berlin decree affected to be retaliatory upon Great-Britain for her orders of blockade, and has lately been pretended to be viewed by our government in the same light; but this pretence, so far from being well founded, will place them in a very unfavourable point of view. There had been several orders of blockade by the British government which had been complained against by ours, and by the remonstrance of our minister, the present secretary of state, had all been done away or merged in the order of May 16th, 1806. And in his letters of 17th and 20th of May, in communicating the order to our government, expresses his approbation of it, and says, “it seems clearly to put an end to further seizures on the principle which has been heretofore in contestation.”—As no objection was made

(as in fact none could be made) to this order, either at that time, or at the time of rejecting the treaty, by our government; it is but fair reasoning to say, that they perfectly acquiesced in it. And from all the contests with Great-Britain, from that period until the government set up an unheard of principle about blockade, there never was any complaint against the orders of May 16, 1806.

It would be a mispence of time to enumerate all the evidence of this fact, which must be so well known; but I feel justified in saying, that the only cause, as held out to view by our government, which prevented a return of amicable relations between the countries, were the retaliatory orders of Great-Britain, known by the emphatick name of the orders in council.

The arrangement with Mr. Erskine, seemed to promise a cessation of war upon our commerce, both on the part of Great-Britain and our own government, and it is ever to be regretted, that it should have been frustrated. The unfortunate interpolation, by the president, in a letter to Mr. Erskine, according to the account given by the late secretary of state, seems to have been the cause; and whether intentionally so, or not, in point of diplomacy, was certainly unnecessary and very uncivil; and I think I may say very improper.

But in this arrangement, the president's opinion of the real subjects of complaint and matters in controversy was explicitly given. Not a word about impressment—not a word about the orders of May, 1806.

What then must be our astonishment, when we afterwards find him setting up a new principle, and recommending war because he could not carry it into effect!

And this brings us to the second inquiry, whether the government, before the declaration of war, might not have obtained a revocation of the orders in council, if they had not blended new and extraordinary matters with their demands?

The words of the nonintercourse act, "that Great-Britain should so revoke or modify her edicts, as that they shall cease to violate the neutral commerce of the United States," had been fairly construed by the president, in the arrangement with Mr. Erskine; and this construction had been expressly recognized and sanctioned by congress, in the act of June, 1809.

There could be no mistake or misunderstanding about the true construction. No person, who had attended to the controversy, could have any misapprehension upon the subject, and that the orders in council were exclusively meant and intended.

On the first of May, 1810, congress after an incessant war of words for five months, passed an act, to interdict the armed vessels of both France and Great-Britain, from our ports and harbours, and with a clause to this effect, that in case either France or Great-Britain, on or before the first of March, revoked or modified their edicts, (using the precise words of the nonintercourse act) the president should declare the fact by proclamation, and if the other did not do the same in three months, the nonintercourse should be revived against the defaulter.

This last act having expired, no law of our government remained in force to interrupt our commerce, and it again began to flourish:—but the wiles of the Frenchman, and unfortunate intermeddling of the president, would not suffer a long continuance of this happy state. It might have been considered good policy if Great-Britain had immediately embraced the terms of the law of May, 1810.

The French government, (a) probably intending to draw our wary rulers into a snare, pretended to repeal her decrees, when in fact it amounted only to a conditional promise to repeal; and as neither Great-Britain or our government complied with the condition, the Frenchman always insisted, that the decrees were not

repealed, and had become the fundamental laws of the empire.

But the president, by his proclamation of the second of November, 1810, declared they were repealed, and called upon Great-Britain to repeal her orders in council, or the nonintercourse would be revived against her on the second of February. (b) And as if apprehensive that Great-Britain would comply; or in subserviency to the French government, a new demand appears to be set up—that the orders of May 16, 1806, must also be expressly repealed, though the British government had informed them they were merged in the orders in council.

I say it was a new demand, (c) and therefore was not within the intention of the law—as neither congress, in passing the act, nor the president, at the time, could have thought of it, as he had previously put a construction upon the same words.

Our minister, at the court of London, was instructed to inform the British government of all these facts; and on the 29th of December, the Marquis of Wellesley thus writes to him, in answer to his letters upon the subject, “By your explanation, it appears, that the American government understands the letter of the French minister, as announcing an absolute repeal of the French decrees of Berlin and Milan, which repeal, however, is not to continue, unless the British government within a reasonable time after the first of November, 1810, shall fulfil the two conditions, distinctly stated in the letter of the minister—under this explanation, if nothing more had been required from Great-Britain, for the purpose of securing the continuance of the repeal of the French decrees than the repeal of the orders in council, I should not have hesitated to declare the perfect readiness to fulfil that condition.”

But the Marquis of Wellesley further observes, “that the American government combining with that of the

French minister, a renunciation of these principles of blockade which Great-Britain has asserted to be ancient, and which the laws of nations have established, that government cannot agree to the requirement.”

By this correspondence, these facts are proved with certainty ; that the British government, although they had no confidence in the pretence of our government, that the Berlin and Milan decrees were repealed, yet, inasmuch as our government were satisfied, they were perfectly willing to revoke their orders in council ; but as the demand of the revocation of the orders of May 16, 1806, was intended as a virtual renunciation of the right of blockade as established by the laws of nations, and an implied admission of the correctness of the new blockade set up by Bonaparte, the British government would not agree to repeal this order ; and for not doing so, in compliance with the requisitions of Bonaparte, war, horrid war is declared.

The pretence for not accepting an armistice when offered, seems to afford demonstrative proof that peace was not desired.

The antiquated complaint against impressment of seamen, it is true, had been mentioned in the war manifesto ; but ever since the nonintercourse act of March, 1809, had been little noticed as a subject of grievance, and, certainly, had never been pretended to be a sufficient cause for war. But now an armistice could not be accepted, unless the British government would, at least during the time of negotiation, renounce the right of impressment of their own seamen on board our merchant vessels.

The very terms of negotiation proposed by our government being, that the British government should relinquish a right, which the whole nation seem with one voice to have declared they cannot, without jeopardizing their existence as a nation, and will never relinquish (all which the president must have understood) affords pretty conclusive evidence that the war originat-

ed from very different motives, and must be prosecuted at all hazards.

It is not uncharitable to suppose, that even if Great-Britain had yielded this point, ingenuity would have been put upon the rack, for some new pretence for continuing the war. And when men appear to deviate from the path of rectitude—from that “magnanimous policy” (in the words of the great Washington) which ought to characterize the rulers of a nation, and to descend into such meanders and labyrinth—it is their fault—at least their misfortune, if we should happen to misconstrue their actions. And if we misjudge their intentions and erroneously impute to them improper motives, they must attribute it to their own obliquity of conduct.

From this examination we are led irresistibly to draw this conclusion—that granting the continuance of the orders in council was a just cause of war, yet the government were under no necessity of making war upon this principle, as they might have had a repeal of the orders in council, if they had not intentionally combined with the French government a demand of relinquishment of a principle, which they knew they had no right to demand, and would not be given up.

What then must be our surprise! when we find it publicly and officially announced “that the contest in which the United States are engaged appeals for its support to every motive that can animate an uncorrupted and enlightened people.”—Does the contest appeal to religion for its support? to moral rectitude—to a desire to preserve the lives of the people and security of their property—to equal and exact justice to all men and nations—to an unprejudiced and impartial decision between nations—to a magnanimous policy—to a desire to avoid the horrors of war and preserve the blessings of peace? all these are “motive which animate an uncorrupted and enlightened people;” but to say that the contest appeals to these for support, will be thought by some both prevarication and impious.

As prudent men we must look for other motives, to which this contest appeals for support ; and the words and actions of politicians being not infrequently at variance, we should examine for the hidden causes and secret springs.

It may not be an unprofitable labour to endeavour to trace to their true source and origin the causes of this unhappy war. By probing the wound, it is possible we may discover a gangrene which, defying all surgical skill, will eventuate in the destruction of the body politic, or we may discover a wound which only requires attention, and a proper remedy, to be healed without difficulty.

It has been supposed by many people, that a love for France and hatred for Great-Britain, are the sources from which all our national troubles flow. The relative conduct of our government between these nations has afforded too much foundation for a belief of the fact. From the deceptive practices which I have considered, there seems no cause for doubting that this supposition is correct, as respects a very large proportion of the American people. But when we examine further we find that the conduct of France and Great-Britain towards the government has been such as to warrant a supposition directly opposite as respects them, upon every principle which influences the feelings of man.

We can conceive, that men residing in France may be pleased with the civil conduct and easy manners of the people ; and that the new philosophy, which slackens the rough cords of the old moral school, may be gratifying to the senses of some ; when on the contrary, the austere manners and forbidding deportment of men of conscious rectitude mixed with the pride of self known or imagined superiority, may be too repellant to produce affection. But when we consider, that Great-Britain although obstinately contending for principles which in all cases have not met with full support from reason and justice ; yet have been maintained with respectful sincerity and decency towards our govern-

ment ; while France, not content with violating every principle of justice towards us, has appeared in many instances to show a studied design to insult the feelings of those who seemed with overweening fondness to solicit their embraces—like an overhearing coxcomb trifling with the love pangs of a doting enamorata ; we are forcibly led to a very different conclusion.

To illustrate my position—When the successor of Mr. Adams had drained to the very dregs the cup of humiliation, to conciliate the French government, how vilely were these hyper-friendly advances requited ! The Spaniards, then under the control of France, were set to work to plunder our citizens, invade our territory, and deny us rights guaranteed by treaty. When this conduct was resented, the president (to use the language of a member of congress) “was bearded in his capital”—and was tauntingly told by the publick agent of Spain, when ordered to quit the territory of Columbia, “I will not leave this splendid city of four miles square.”

Were the American banners unfurled, and war, horrid war, proclaimed for these insults and outrages ? No—only two millions of dollars were granted to enable the president effectually to negotiate, being more congenial (as a member of congress from this state said in debate) to the president’s views and feelings—and because “France wants money and must have it.”

What became of the money is not so clear—of the negotiation we know, that a respectable gentleman had been sent as plenipotentiary to Spain ; but being ordered to take France in his route, arrived at Paris, and was suffered no further to proceed, but after fruitless attempts to accomplish the object of his mission, was suffered to return—“bootless home, and weather beaten back.”—

The purchase of Louisiana, for fifteen millions of dollars, seemed to be considered as a full settlement of a previous controversy for French spoliations. But the

treaty which had been concluded with Bonaparte the 13th of Sept. 1800, then styled the first consul, was openly violated by his Berlin decree, which has been mentioned. The government of France was called upon, by our minister at Paris, for an explanation, and to know whether it was the intention that this decree should operate in derogation of the treaty with the United States? who at length received for answer, with true French *sang froid*, that, "as there was no exception of the United States in the terms of the decree, so there was no reason for excepting them from their operation." Accordingly his decrees have been most rigorously enforced against us ever since.

To these perfidious acts and injuries to property, were added the most provoking personal insults—and so subservient did Bonaparte consider our government, that he undertook to declare war for them against G. Britain. "War exists then in fact between England and the United States, and his majesty considers it as declared," says Champagny, in a letter to our minister. And in another of the 17th of Feb. 1810, are these expressions—"His majesty could place no reliance on the proceedings of the United States"—and "they ought either to tear to pieces the act of their independence and to become again, as before the revolution, the subjects of England,"—"Were men without just political views, without honour, without energy."

The people, after suffering under the embargo nearly twenty-two months, would no longer endure it, and the government substituted the nonintercourse. This was a favourite measure of the administration, and was notified to the French government on the 29th of April, 1809, in terms rather more than civil, after so great outrages as the Berlin and Milan decrees; "that our government assures his majesty, that nothing had given more disquietude to the United States, than the necessity which impelled the adoption of this measure," and adding, "that any interpretation of the decrees of the 21st of November, 1806, and 17th of December, 1807, which shall have the effect of leaving unimpaired

the maritime rights of the union, will be instantly followed by a revocation of the act."—But to these plaintive strains, no attention was paid by the despot, and he remained in surly silence until the 23d of March, 1810, when he issued his Rambouillet decree, which confiscated all our property in France, expressly to retaliate for the nonintercourse. Although this act was to operate equally against Great-Britain and France, yet the vile government of Britain passed no act or decree to retaliate.

The duke of Cadore, (*d*) in a letter to our minister of the 5th of August, 1810, says, "the emperor had applauded the general embargo, and regrets that all our acts had not been seasonably notified to him."—This unblushing prevarication was instantly replied to by our minister, and they were reminded, that he had notified them on the 29th of April, 1809, of the nonintercourse, almost a year before the Rambouillet decree.—It is astonishing with what christian patience and forbearance, our philosophick government, submitted to all their insults and atrocities. Some were called municipal regulations, consequently were not subjects of national complaint.—All their ingenuity (in the language of revolutionary France) seems to have been put in requisition, to palliate the enormities of our friends the republican French.

Though our minister in France appeared at times to lose all patience, and from the correspondence published, exposed the infamous conduct of France, yet scarce a murmur of disapprobation has been heard from our government—and certainly these indignities have never been resented.

On the 30th of August, 1808, our minister at Paris, writes thus to the secretary of state,—“I hope that unless France should do us justice, we shall raise the embargo, and make in its stead an armed commerce—should she adhere to her wicked and foolish measures, we ought not to content ourselves with doing this—there is much, very much beside we can do and ought

not to omit doing all we can, because it is believed here that we cannot do much, and that we will not do what we have the power of doing." The Frenchmen understood our government better than our minister.

And in another letter of the 29th of February, 1809,—after enumerating many insults of Bonaparte towards our government, such as "that his decrees should suffer no change," and, "that the Americans should take the positive character of either allies or enemies," and informing the secretary, that the captured property amounted to one hundred millions of franks, "a sum," says he, "whose magnitude alone renders hopeless all attempts of saving it,"—concludes thus, "If I am right in supposing the emperor has definitively taken his ground, I cannot be wrong in concluding that you will immediately take yours."

One other instance of insult may be mentioned as the grand climacterick. The infamous lie, that the antedated decree for repealing the Berlin and Milan decrees, was communicated to our government at the time it bears date.

It is to me astonishing how any man, publick or private, could for a moment submit to such an indignity. To admit the truth of a falsehood, or to suffer it to have currency, in point of morality, is nearly equivalent to the first publication.

Where was that delicate sense of honour, in those who "felt a stain as a wound?" that quick discernment, and prompt resentment, "to avenge even a look that threatened with insult," as blazed forth in the dismissal of the British minister, for an alleged insult in his correspondence with the secretary of state?—although scarce any two men could put their finger upon the same spot? Alas! we are ready to exclaim, like Zanga, over his master's corse, "Is this Lorenzo, where's the haughty mien?"

As I can neither attribute the war to a love on the part of our government for France, nor hatred to Great-

Britain, nor to any of the causes which have been assigned by the government; I must search further for the cause which has produced our disastrous state.

If it should appear, that the lust for power, office, and emolument, of ambitious men, has caused all our troubles and vexation, and has produced this unjust, calamitous war; and that the origin appears almost coeval with the adoption of the federal constitution; the corrective lies with the people, and they are the physicians.

The government, under the constitution, was organized in 1789. The novelty of the occasion, and peculiar situation of the country, drew together the best and wisest men from every quarter. The voice of the people (in the language of inspiration,) seemed to say, "to the north give up, and to the south keep not back,"—bring your sons of wisdom from afar, and of virtue and patriotism from the utmost limits of your borders.—And a more virtuous, more honourable, patriotick, wise body of men, never assembled upon any occasion, than those drawn together at this time to administer our national affairs. It was a constellation of virtue and patriotism, and Washington the pole star,—it was a galaxy of wisdom and talents.

These were halcyon days—this was the reign of Astræa!—They drew order out of chaos—system out of confusion, and strength out of imbecility. They established a revenue—created confidence and publick credit—gave new life to our drooping and almost withered commerce—and from a contempt in which our country was held by foreign nations, caused our name to be respected, and our friendship to be courted.

The time would fail me, if I should attempt to do justice to the first, and several congresses under the new constitution. But all present, if they have not known, have felt the good effects of their wise administration.

The well earned fame of those men, raises them as far above their calumniators, as from the bright regions—the seat of justice, honour and wisdom, to the depths of the dark abodes of deceit, falsehood, and low cunning.

Their wisdom and patriotism, and the great benefits they conferred upon their country, seemed to establish for themselves a reputation and confidence with their fellow-citizens, that would defy the shafts of calumny:—but alas! this is not the condition of man.

The French revolution was an event of so extraordinary a nature as to astonish and captivate most minds—at least, all those who had not strength to fathom events, and investigate their sources and springs. “In-furiate man, seeking through blood and slaughter his long lost liberty,” was a fallacious pretence for the most cruel and murderous actions, which have ever disgraced mankind. Under the pretence of seeking liberty and freedom, the most abandoned and determined wretches that ever existed, overturned the government of France, murdered the king, queen, and nobility—plundered and destroyed the wealthy—and, after rioting in the spoils, turned their murderous swords against each other, and in the event, have established a government under a new dynasty, more despotick and systematick than any recorded in history.

These brilliant atrocities were too captivating for the weak nerves of American demagogues. Power and wealth are always allurements for the grasp of unprincipled men. The pretences with which the revolutionists so easily imposed upon the weak and vulgar, held out an example to the restless spirits of our own country, not to be neglected. Under the pretence of love and friendship for the people, and having at heart their interest and happiness; what has not, or may not be perpetrated, by wicked and ambitious men. The thing is not new under the sun, but has existed in all ages and nations since the world began.

But our age was thought too enlightened, and the means of knowledge so diffused, that the people could

not be gulled, and deceived, in the manner we have witnessed. This was the opinion of many honest men, but the artful demagogues had a better understanding of the subject, and the facts we have known put the case beyond controversy.

Though it might have been expected that the excellent characters of the men at the head of our affairs, and the wisdom of their measures, could have set at defiance the machinations of all the demons that were ever suffered to perplex mankind, yet (strange as it may seem) under all the smiles and appearances with which our rising empire was blessed, the demon of mischief was busily employed in sowing the seeds of discord and confusion among the people, which have grown and ripened in our unhappy catastrophe.

The friends and supporters of the new constitution had taken the name of federalists—those who opposed its adoption were called antifederalists; but the latter at length assumed the appellation of republicans, as from the success under the constitution antifederalism had become very unpopular, and the name republican was very captivating among the American people.

Names in themselves are nothing, but are made significant by common use and acceptation;* but when a signification is acquired, how imposing and deceptive is a name, to the minds of all those not accustomed to a very critical examination!

The despot of France, even in his career of destroying the liberties of his country and threatening those of the world, has been called by a republican ruler “the greatest republican on earth;” and under this name has been idolized by republicans as the world’s “last hope.”

* The words “federalist,” and “republican,” or “democrat,” will shortly, in common use and acceptation, signify little more than “friends of peace,” and “war-hawks.”

The federalists opposed the war, which, under the auspices of the French minister, was endeavoured to be produced at the commencement of the French revolution, between this country and Great-Britain; and the republicans were the most strenuous opposers of the treaty, made under the sanction of Washington, to settle all disputes with that government.

Washington, (*c*) apprehensive of the danger to which our country might be exposed to a war with Great-Britain and her allies, by the improper conduct of our own citizens; like a prudent father of his country issued a proclamation of neutrality, which was denounced by the republicans as unconstitutional, because nothing was found in that instrument directing such a proclamation—But those, who wished for an opportunity of spoiling the people of Great-Britain of their goods by privateering, could find an argument to suit their conveniency, in the constitution itself. But war with England was averted by Washington and his friends, the federalists, for which he and they have ever since been stigmatized as tories—British partizans, monarchists, and every opprobrious name they could devise, to render them obnoxious to the American people; and were accused of being enemies to the French, whose cause was that of “oppressed humanity,” and were the lovers of Great-Britain, who were the oppressors of mankind, against whom republican France had declared war.

Many men, who have since been conspicuous leaders in the government, took part against Washington, and the complaint of the French minister against the secretary of state for a “language official and language confidential” had much significancy in it; the editor of a paper, a foreigner, in which Washington and the federal government were most grossly abused—being employed as a translator of languages in the secretary’s office, was supposed to indicate from whence the storm was arising. But so deep rooted were the affections of the people in their federal rulers, that the republicans could not have prevailed, at least, at the

time they did, to oust them from the government, but for the attachment of the ancient dominion to her own sons. At the commencement they had their full share of the great officers of the government. The president, secretary of state, and attorney general, and it was not without extreme jealousy, that the leading men, who had entered the republican ranks, perceived the elevation of a yankee, as they called him, to the presidential chair, and they never ceased their contest until they restored the sceptre to what they determined were the legitimate hands.

The tyger having been let loose in France, spread his devastations over the fairest portion of Europe, and threatened destruction to every kingdom and government.—“The rights of man are a consuming fire beside the thrones of kings,” say the revolutionists of France, in their letter to the turbulent spirits of England; and declared war against Great-Britain, and to draw the United States into the vortex, has ever been the study and aim of France, and to our disgrace they have succeeded.

With what enthusiasm were all the ebullitions of the French revolutionists received and reechoed by our republicans, and what rejoicings were there at all their successes? the civick feasts, the balls and dancing may still be remembered, and the pen of the future historian will record, for the perusal of our wondering descendants, the strange facility of changing of the love and admiration of our American republicans for the chiefs of the French revolution.

The Brissotine or Gerond party were the first objects of their love—these were cut off by Marat, Danton and the bloody Robespierre—who put to death Danton and many of his murderous associates. Robespierre was put to death by Tallien, who was turned out by Barras, who banished Pichegru and his associates, and hired Bonaparte to go to Egypt, who returned, and overturned the remainder of the five headed monster, and established the consular government,

and caused himself to be chosen chief consul for life; which government he afterwards subverted, and declared himself emperor of France, and king of Italy—and established the most arbitrary and abominable despotism that ever existed.

That every trace of freedom should be forever rooted out, he silenced the press; or would suffer nothing to be printed but what was previously approved by himself or his ministers. He declared himself an enemy to all republicks, and abolished those of Italy, Switzerland, and Holland. The latter he created a kingdom, and made his brother king; and the former he annexed to his own despotick sway; and as his brother did not rule the Hollanders with a rod of iron agreeably to his mind, and did not so well enforce his continental system for the destruction of commerce, he deposed him, and annexed the country to his own dominions. He invaded peaceable countries, overturned their governments, established kingdoms, and set up kings, princes, and nobility almost without number, and seemed going on with hasty strides to universal dominion, until at last he has been checked by one of the most virtuous monarchs that ever wore a crown, and who should be styled as the most deserving of princes.—Alexander the magnanimous.

The important consideration to which I wish to draw the attention, and which can never be sufficiently dwelt upon, is, that through all the changes and revolutions in France—from oligarchy to democracy, aristocracy, limited or elective monarchy, and finally, imperial despotism—in all the ephemeral constitutions drawn from the pigeon holes of Abbe Syeves, and imperial edicts of Bonaparte; our republicans have never varied in their apparent love and attachment to the ruling party in that country, and acquiescence in their doings. At one time so rapid were the changes of men and constitutions, it was extremely difficult to keep up with them; and while our republicans were praising one constitution, another was drawn from the pigeon holes, and it has

not unfrequently happened, while a hero of the revolution has been celebrated for his patriotism, in this country, he has been a headless trunk in the *Place de revolution*. But at all events, France must not be given up as a sister republick, by their friends in the United States. And so cruelly have they been treated by their sister France, that while they were following them in all their turnings and changes—as it were, panting and almost broken winded in the pursuit—praising the Frenchmen for their genuine republicanism—the leaders and rulers, of that happy clime, have been proscribing the very word from their vocabulary.—And one of the first acts published by Bonaparte, after his flight from Russia and entry into Paris in the night, was to celebrate and praise monarchy and hereditary government.

There seems but little necessity for my drawing a conclusion from facts and circumstances so well known and understood. The republicans came into power by praising the French as genuine republicans, the friends and asserters of the liberties of mankind, and their government as a pattern worthy the imitation of all nations; and avowing themselves their admirers, and friends; and as the federalists could not coincide in their doctrines, they were stigmatized as British partizans, monarchists, and friends to arbitrary power, in the manner I have mentioned, and all the party slang that the tongue of malice could utter, or the envenomed pen of the slanderer could write.

France must be conciliated and borne with, let their enormities—their insults and injuries towards us be ever so great, for which the British alone must be blamed. It was considered that war with France would be death to the French party, while a war with Great-Britain might serve to destroy, in the estimation of the people, the federalists, who had always wished for peace. While Great-Britain could be fought with embargo and nonintercourse, and the people would submit to the destruction of their commerce, it was thought inexpedient to resort to open war. But when

the alternative presented itself, either war with France or Great-Britain, and your election cannot otherwise be secured; self-preservation seemed to them the first law of nature.

It will not be supposed, that it is my meaning, that all the republicans were of the cast I have mentioned, many of them, as well as some federalists, had conceived a favourable idea of the French revolution, but witnessing these enormities were convinced of their error; and many of the republicans having been satisfied of the dishonest views and improper conduct of the leaders of the party, have seceded. And it is devoutly to be wished that all honest men (and we desire none other) would view the conduct of those who have plunged us into this unhappy, unjust war, in its true light.—It is immaterial whether we unite under the name of federalists, or the friends of peace—by a union of all honest men, we may still save the republick, and produce peace.

With what anxiety did we view the last presidential election—had the friends of peace succeeded in their endeavours, peace before this time would have been restored to us, and our prospect would again brighten.—But men do not always perceive the path which leads to their true interest and happiness.—Vermont and Pennsylvania, would not coalesce with their friends and natural allies, and they, and we all, must suffer in consequence.

The injustice towards our own citizens, in the wanton exposure of their property to destruction, and the blood to be spilt in the unnecessary contest, while awakening in our minds the most melancholy thoughts, seem not to have been taken into consideration by those who have plunged us into this destructive war. Will they tax their lands and slaves to remunerate those whom they have ruined by their madness and folly? No—our country must be loaded with immense debts, and commerce must be burthened to replace the sums expended for its own destruction.

Who called for the war? not those whose rights they pretended to protect. Under pretence of regarding the rights and interests of the citizens, they have conducted as if with an intention of destroying them.

The argument appears to be this—You, Great Britain, have by proclamation blockaded France, we therefore declare you our enemy, and the property of our citizens is exposed to your depredations. Take it if you can, and we also yield to you the commerce of the ocean. And although the cause is removed, yet inasmuch as you did not know of our declaration of war when you revoked your orders in council, and consequently, we cannot allege in vindication of our honour, that you did so because of our war, we will not make peace with you, or accept your proposal for an armistice, unless you will do something to justify us in the sight of the people; but under pretence of protecting our seamen, we will drive them into banishment to seek a living in foreign service, or expose their lives to destruction. We will exhaust our resources in the vain attempt to conquer Canada, and incur an immense load of debt, and sacrifice the lives of our citizens in the “unprofitable contest,” and will destroy thousands by taking from them the means of their support.

This is our patriotism! this is the work of republicans! these are the objects of the republican war.

We have to deplore the Barbary pirates being let loose upon our defenceless citizens; and in consequence of the doings of our government, without the possibility of resistance on our part. How are we to relieve our citizens groaning in captive chains? Here is misery and suffering without the necessity of crocodile tears to set it off to advantage—yet, not a sigh—not a whimper do we hear in their account. Where real bondage and misery exist, there seems no necessity for tears; but imaginary sufferings require all the aid of artificial sorrow to embellish the scene.

Several of our countrymen have been rescued from chains, through the humanity of those we have declar-

ed our enemies, and there seems no practicable way of affording them any relief, but through the same medium. This is not the only instance of showing how preposterous is the war.

From whatever motives our government may have selected Great-Britain for our enemy ; yet such is the situation of the world and the posture of affairs, that Great-Britain is our natural ally, and France our determined enemy. For, if France succeeds in her designs upon Britain, the United States must be chained to the triumphal car, and follow in the train of vassal nations.

Shall we then, have to deplore like the degraded Swiss, beguiled and cheated of their liberties, that ours are lost forever ! shall we have to lament, with the economical and industrious Hollanders, that we have been heaping up, not knowing who should gather ! are our mild and equitable laws to be superceded by the Napoleon code ! are our legislators, chosen by ourselves—our judges, appointed by our own authority, wielding no sword but the sword of justice and the law—to give way to kings, princes, and prefects, supported by thousands of *gen d'arms*, like leeches sucking the heart's blood of the enslaved people !

To those who have nothing in view, but the gratification of malignant passions, in the destruction of Britain, these suggestions may appear visionary ; but those who rightly comprehend the consequences of the French fraternal embrace, view with extreme anxiety every stride of aggrandizement and increase of power of the Corsican liberticide.

One other cause for deploring the war shall be mentioned, and although the last, appears not the least of our misfortunes ; it is the danger to be apprehended of losing our gallant little navy.—

The navy was the child of the federal administration, and was built under the auspices of the second

president.—The growing commercial interest, required protection from the pirates who infested the ocean, the Barbary corsairs, and French privateers.

How soon was the superior skill and bravery of our countrymen manifest—they triumphed over the French, and drove the barbarians into their skulking places, and brought them to terms.—But the laurels they have gained from the nation, that does not afford them for any other people, is truly flattering to the pride of Americans; and without being accused of vain boasting, which is not a concomitant of true honour and courage, we may in justice to ourselves and enemy say, we are the only people who can on equal terms, contend with Britain on the ocean:

Gallant sons of Neptune! we bestow on you the mead of praise so justly due to your courage and valour! receive the plaudits of the federalists for your noble deeds—you have honoured your country, and may your country delight to honour you.

While thus rendering the tribute so justly due to the surviving, how shall we suitably mention those, whom the chance of war has consigned with glory to their tomb! The brave LAWRENCE! in whose breast dwelt every manly sentiment and heroic virtue, now perforated with balls—as it were, in the agonies of death, manifests his superior love for his country's glory, “cries, don't give up the ship—don't give up the ship.” (g) The blood which flowed in rivers on the decks of the ill-fated Chesapeake, where the brave Proke lay mingling his, with the dearest of our own, cries to heaven, in just accusation against the guilty authors of our calamities!—

NOTES.

(a) *Extract of a letter from the Duke of CADORE to Gen. ARMSTRONG, Sept. 7, 1810.*

"His Majesty has always wished to favour the commerce of the United States. It was not without reluctance that he used reprisals towards the Americans, while he saw that Congress had ordered the confiscation of all French vessels which might arrive in the United States.

"Since the last measures by which that hostile act is repealed, his Majesty hastens to cause it to be made known to you, that he anticipates that which may re-establish harmony with the United States; and that he repeals his decrees of Berlin and Milan, under the conditions pointed out in my letter to you of the 5th of August."

It is not a little singular that the President and Congress should so strenuously contend that the Berlin and Milan Decrees were absolutely repealed, when the Frenchmen reiterate that the repeal was but conditional; and never have allowed that the conditions were complied with either by Great-Britain or the United States, until the antedated Decree for repealing the Berlin and Milan Decrees, which of itself affords the best evidence of the opinions and intentions of the French government.

(b) *Extract of a letter from Mr. PINKNEY to the Marquis of WELLESLEY, Sept. 21, 1810.*

"It is my duty in transmitting the enclosed copy of an act of the Congress of the United States, passed on the first of May, 1810, entitled "An act concerning the commercial intercourse between the United States and Great-Britain and France and their dependencies, and for other purposes," to state to your Lordship, that an annulment of the blockade of May, 1806, is considered by the President to be as indispensable in the view of that act as the revocation of the British Orders in Council."

Extracts from Lord WELLESLEY, Dec. 29, 1810.

"It appears not only by the letter of the French minister, but by your explanation, that the repeal of the Orders in Council will not satisfy either the French or the American government. The British government is further required, by the letter of the French minister, to renounce those principles of blockade which the French government alleges to be new. A reference to the terms of the Berlin Decree, will serve to explain the extent of this requisition. The Berlin Decree states that Great-Britain

“ extends the right of blockade to commercial unfortified towns, and to ports, harbours, and mouths of rivers ; which according to the principles and practice of all civilized nations, is *only applicable* to fortified places.”

“ On the part of the American government, I understand you to require that Great-Britain should revoke her order of blockade of May, 1806.

“ Combining your requisition with that of the French minister, I must conclude that America demands the revocation of that order of blockade, as a *practical instance of our renunciation* of those principles of blockade which are condemned by the French government. Those principles of blockade Great-Britain has asserted to be ancient, and established by the laws of maritime war, acknowledged by all nations, and on which depends the most valuable rights and interests of this nation. If the Berlin and Milan Decrees are to be considered as still in force, unless Great-Britain shall renounce these *established foundations of her maritime rights and interests*, the period of time is not yet arrived when the repeal of her Orders in Council can be claimed from her, either with reference to the promise of this government, or to the *safety and honour* of the nation.”

(c) Whether this misconstruction of the act of May 1810, is an offence deserving impeachment, seems a fit subject for the consideration of Congress. It is morally certain that this ~~mis~~construction prevented the repeal of the Orders in Council, which would have prevented war.

(d) *Extracts from the letter of the Duke of Cadore to General*
WINSTON, August 5, 1810.

“ I have laid before his Majesty the Emperor and King, the act of Congress of the 1st May, 1810.” “ His Majesty could have wished that this act and all the other acts of the government of the United States which interests France, had always been officially made known to him. In general he has only had a knowledge of them indirectly, and after a long period of time. There has resulted from this delay serious inconveniences which would not have existed if these acts had been promptly and officially communicated.” “ The Emperor had *applauded the general embargo* laid by the United States.” “ The act of the 1st of March has raised that embargo, and substituted a measure the most injurious to the interests of France.” “ This act, of which the Emperor knew nothing until very lately, interdicted to American vessels the commerce of France, at the time it authorized that to Spain, Naples and Holland ;—that is to say, to the countries under French influence, and denounced confiscation against all French vessels which should enter the ports of America. Reprisal was a right commanded by the dignity of France ; a circumstance on which it was impossible to make a compromise.

The sequestration of all the vessels in France has been the necessary consequence of the measure taken by Congress."

"**NOW CONGRESS RETRACE THEIR STEPS** :—they revoke the act of the 1st of March ; the ports of America are open to French commerce, and France is no longer interdicted to the Americans ; in short, Congress engages to oppose itself to that one of the belligerent powers which shall refuse to acknowledge the rights of neutrals." "In this state of things I am authorized to declare to you that the decrees of Berlin and Milan are *revoked*, and after the first of November they shall cease to have effect ; being understood that, in consequence of this declaration, the English shall revoke their orders in council, and renounce the new principles of blockade they have wished to establish, or that the United States conformably to the act you have just communicated, shall cause their rights to be respected by the English."

(c) In the capital of Virginia, a wretched foreigner was employed, who published a paper, which he entitled the Prospect Before Us, of which the following are extracts.

"The proclamation of neutrality does not deserve that title. It was a proclamation of ignorance and pusillanimity." "By his own account therefore, Mr. Washington was twice a **TRAITOR**. He first renounced the king of England and thereafter the confederation." "The wretched proclamation of neutrality of April 22, 1793." "Adams and Washington have since been shaping ~~the~~ of these paper jobbers into judges and ambassadors. As ~~the~~ whole courage lies in their want of shame, these poltroons, without risking a manly and intelligible defence of their own measures, raise an affected yelp against the French Directory ; as if any corruption could be more venal, more notorious, more execrated than their own. For years together the United States resounded with curses against them, while the grand *lama* of federal adoration, the **IMMACULATE DIVINITY OF MOUNT VERNON**, approved of and subscribed every one of their blackest measures." "This speech has a charm that completely unmask3 the hypocrisy of Washington." "Foremost in whatever is detestable, Mr. Adams feels anxiety to curb the frontier population." "He was a professed aristocrat—he had proved faithful to the British interest."

These are specimens of the torrents of abuse which was heaped upon Washington and Adams and the federal party, by this paper and others in the United States, which induced Congress to pass an act, called the "sedition act." Upon this act the author, or perhaps the mere publisher, was indicted and fined, and the fine paid to the Marshal about the time when Mr. Adams left the Presidency, and was paid back to the culprit by order of his successor.

(d) There is something in the conduct of the government very singular, and perhaps inexplicable.

Bonaparte's repealing decree was notified to the British government four days after our declaration of war; and in consequence, the British government (though astonished at the mysterious manner in which it was done) revoked the orders in council, but said not a word about the orders of May, 1806. The American *charge des affaires* at London was instructed by his government to demand a repeal of the orders as a condition for the restoration of peace and agreeing upon an armistice. The British government having already revoked the orders in council, declined doing it a second time. At first there seemed some difficulty in the court gazette at Washington, whether the orders in council were effectually revoked; but at length it was determined, that nothing but the affair of impressments stood in the way of a restoration of peace. This revocation of the orders in council, is *precisely what the government might have had before February, 1811, if they had chosen to have received it.*

It must also be noted that ever since May 1806, no demand has been made upon the British government to relinquish the right of impressment of their seamen on board our merchant vessels, or to negotiate upon the subject, till after the declaration of war; and then the American *chargé* said he had no powers to negotiate, but demanded a renunciation of the right upon a mere promise that something should be done by Congress to prevent the employment of British seamen on board our vessels. He was told by the British minister, that, as he had no powers to negotiate, he could not enter into a discussion of the question, and not being able to present any plan or project for preventing the employment of their seamen, he could not consent to renounce the right of impressment previous to an armistice.

(g) I should not wish to misjudge the conduct of any man, and if the friends of the administration can give a satisfactory explanation of this subject, and exculpate themselves from the charges brought against them, we should feel very happy to acknowledge our error. At present we can view it in no other light than an unjust, unnecessary war, and that they are chargeable with the blood spilt in the unhappy contest.