

is the nature of this trade? Is it that carrying trade which sends abroad the flour, tobacco, cotton, beef, pork, fish, and lumber of this country, and brings back in return foreign articles necessary for our existence or comfort?

No, sir; 'tis a trade carried on, the Lord knows where or by whom: now doubling Cape Horn, now the Cape of Good Hope. I do not say that there is no profit in it — for it would not then be pursued — but 'tis a trade that tends to assimilate our manners and government to those of the most corrupt countries of Europe. Yes, sir; and when a question of great national magnitude presents itself to you, causes those who now prate about national honor and spirit to pocket any insult, to consider it as a mere matter of debit and credit, a business of profit and loss, and nothing else.

The first thing that struck my mind when this resolution was laid on the table was, "*unde derivatur?*" a question always put to us at school — whence comes it? Is this only the putative father of the bantling he is taxed to maintain, or indeed the actual parent, the real progenitor of the child? or is it the production of the cabinet? But I knew you had no cabinet; no system. I had seen despatches relating to vital measures laid before you, the day after your final decision on those measures, four weeks after they were received; not only their contents, but their very existence, all that time, unsuspected and unknown to men, whom the people fondly believe assist, with their wisdom and experience, at every important deliberation.

Do you believe that this system, or rather this no system, will do? I am free to answer it will not. It cannot last. I am not so afraid of the fair, open, constitutional, responsible influence of government; but I shrink intuitively from this left-handed, invisible, irresponsible influence which defies the

touch but pervades and decides everything. Let the executive come forward to the legislature; let us see whilst we feel it. If we cannot rely on its wisdom, is it any disparagement to the gentleman from Pennsylvania to say that I cannot rely upon him?

No, sir, he has mistaken his talent. He is not the Palinurus on whose skill the nation, at this trying moment, can repose their confidence. I will have nothing to do with this paper; much less will I indorse it and make myself responsible for its goodness. I will not put my name to it. I assert that there is no cabinet, no system, no plan. That which I believe in one place I shall never hesitate to say in another. This is no time, no place, for mincing our steps. The people have a right to know — they shall know — the state of their affairs, at least as far as I am at liberty to communicate them. I speak from personal knowledge. Ten days ago there had been no consultation; there existed no opinion in your executive department; at least, none that was avowed. On the contrary there was an express disavowal of any opinion whatsoever on the great subject before you; and I have good reason for saying that none has been formed since. Some time ago a book was laid on our tables, which like some other bantlings, did not bear the name of its father. Here I was taught to expect a solution of all doubts; an end to all our difficulties. If, sir, I were the foe, as I trust I am the friend, to this nation, I would exclaim, "Oh! that mine enemy would write a book."

At the very outset, in the very first page, I believe, there is a complete abandonment of the principle in dispute. Has any gentleman got the work? [It was handed by one of the members.] The first position taken is the broad principle of the unlimited freedom of trade between nations at peace,

which the writer endeavors to extend to the trade between a neutral and a belligerent power; accompanied, however, by this acknowledgment:

“But, inasmuch as the trade of a neutral with a belligerent nation might, in certain special cases, affect the safety of its antagonist, usage, founded on the principle of necessity, has admitted a few exceptions to the general rule.”

Whence comes the doctrine of contraband, blockade, and enemy's property? Now, sir, for what does that celebrated pamphlet, “War in Disguise,” which is said to have been written under the eye of the British prime minister, contend, but this “principle of necessity.” And this is abandoned by this pamphleteer at the very threshold of the discussion. But as if this were not enough he goes on to assign as a reason for not referring to the authority of the ancients, that “the great change which has taken place in the state of manners, in the maxims of war, and in the course of commerce, make it pretty certain”—(what degree of certainty is this?)—“that either nothing will be found relating to the question, or nothing sufficiently applicable to deserve attention in deciding it.”

Here, sir, is an apology of the writer for not disclosing the whole extent of his learning (which might have overwhelmed the reader), in the admission that a change of circumstances (“in the course of commerce”) has made, and therefore will now justify, a total change of the law of nations. What more could the most inveterate advocate of English usurpation demand? What else can they require to establish all and even more than they contend for? Sir, there is a class of men (we know them very well) who, if you only permit them to lay the foundation, will build you up, step by step, and brick by brick—very neat and showy if not tenable arguments. To detect them, 'tis only necessary to watch their premises,

where you will often find the point at issue totally surrendered, as in this case it is. Again: is the “*mare liberum*” anywhere asserted in this book — that free ships make free goods?

No, sir; the right of search is acknowledged; that enemy's property is lawful prize, is sealed and delivered. And after abandoning these principles, what becomes of the doctrine that a mere shifting of the goods from one ship to another, the touching at another port, changes the property? Sir, give up this principle, and there is an end to the question. You lie at the mercy of the conscience of a court of admiralty.

Is Spanish sugar or French coffee made American property by the mere change of the cargo, or even by the landing and payment of the duties? Does this operation effect a change of property? And when those duties are drawn back, and the sugars and coffee re-exported, are they not, as enemy's property, liable to seizure upon the principles of the “examination of the British doctrine,” etc. And is there not the best reason to believe that this operation is performed in many if not in most cases, to give a neutral aspect and color to the merchandise?

I am prepared, sir, to be represented as willing to surrender important rights of this nation to a foreign government. I have been told that this sentiment is already whispered in the dark by time-servers and sycophants; but if your clerk dared to print them I would appeal to your journals!—I would call for the reading of them; but that I know they are not for profane eyes to look upon. I confess that I am more ready to surrender to a naval power a square league of ocean than to a territorial one a square inch of land within our limits; and I am ready to meet the friends of the resolution on this ground at any time.

Let them take off the injunction of secrecy. They dare not. They are ashamed and afraid to do it. They may give winks and nods and pretend to be wise, but they dare not come out and tell the nation what they have done.

Gentlemen may take notes if they please; but I will never, from any motives short of self-defence, enter upon war. I will never be instrumental to the ambitious schemes of Bonaparte, nor put into his hands what will enable him to wield the world; and on the very principle that I wished success to the French arms in 1793. And wherefore? Because the case is changed. Great Britain can never again see the year 1760. Her Continental influence is gone forever. Let who will be uppermost on the continent of Europe, she must find more than a counterpoise for her strength. Her race is run. She can only be formidable as a maritime power; and even as such perhaps not long. Are you going to justify the acts of the last administration, for which they have been deprived of the government, at our instance? Are you going back to the ground of 1798-9?

I ask of any man who now advocates a rupture with England to assign a single reason for his opinion, that would not have justified a French war in 1798. If injury and insult abroad would have justified it, we had them in abundance then. But what did the republicans say at that day? That under the cover of a war with France the executive would be armed with a patronage and power which might enable it to master our liberties. They deprecated foreign war and navies, and standing armies, and loans, and taxes. The delirium passed away, the good sense of the people triumphed, and our differences were accommodated without a war. And what is there in the situation of England that invites to war with her? 'Tis true she does not deal so largely in perfecti-

bility, but she supplies you with a much more useful commodity — with coarse woollens. With less professions indeed she occupies the place of France in 1793. She is the sole bulwark of the human race against universal dominion. No thanks to her for it. In protecting her own existence she ensures theirs. I care not who stands in this situation, whether England or Bonaparte; I practise the doctrines now that I professed in 1798.

Gentlemen may hunt up the journals if they please — I voted against all such projects under the administration of John Adams, and I will continue to do so under that of Thomas Jefferson. Are you not contented with being free and happy at home? Or will you surrender these blessings, that your merchants may tread on Turkish and Persian carpets and burn the perfumes of the East in their vaulted rooms?

Gentlemen say, 'tis but an annual million lost, and even if it were five times that amount what is it compared with your neutral rights? Sir, let me tell them a hundred millions will be but a drop in the bucket if once they launch without rudder or compass into this ocean of foreign warfare. Whom do they want to attack — England? They hope it is a popular thing, and talk about Bunker's Hill and the gallant feats of our revolution. But is Bunker's Hill to be the theatre of war? No, sir, you have selected the ocean; and the object of attack is that very navy which prevented the combined fleets of France and Spain from levying contributions upon you in your own seas; that very navy which in the famous war of 1798 stood between you and danger.

Whilst the fleets of the enemy were pent up in Toulon or pinioned in Brest we performed wonders, to be sure; but, sir, if England had drawn off, France would have told you quite a

different tale. You would have struck no medals. This is not the sort of conflict that you are to count upon if you go to war with Great Britain.

"*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*"¹ And are you mad enough to take up the cudgels that have been struck from the nerveless hands of the three great maritime powers of Europe? Shall the planter mortgage his little crop and jeopardize the constitution in support of commercial monopoly, in the vain hope of satisfying the insatiable greediness of trade? Administer the constitution upon principles for the general welfare, and not for the benefit of any particular class of men. Do you meditate war for the possession of Baton Rouge or Mobile, places which your own laws declare to be within your limits? Is it even for the fair trade that exchanges your surplus products for such foreign articles as you require? No, sir, 'tis for a circuitous traffic — an *ignis fatuus*.

And against whom? A nation from whom you have anything to fear? I speak as to our liberties. No, sir, with a nation from whom you have nothing, or next to nothing, to fear — to the aggrandizement of one against which you have everything to dread. I look to their ability and interest, not to their disposition. When you rely on that, the case is desperate. Is it to be inferred from all this that I would yield to Great Britain? No; I would act towards her now as I was disposed to do towards France in 1798-9 — treat with her; and for the same reason, on the same principles. Do I say treat with her? At this moment you have a negotiation pending with her government. With her you have not tried negotiation and failed, totally failed, as you have done with Spain, or rather France. And wherefore, under such cir-

¹ Whom God wishes to destroy he first makes mad.

cumstances, this hostile spirit to the one, and this — I won't say what — to the other?

But a great deal is said about the laws of nations. What is national law but national power guided by national interest? You yourselves acknowledge and practise upon this principle where you can, or where you dare,—with the Indian tribes, for instance. I might give another and more forcible illustration. Will the learned lumber of your libraries add a ship to your fleet or a shilling to your revenue? Will it pay or maintain a single soldier? And will you preach and prate of violations of your neutral rights when you tamely and meanly submit to the violation of your territory? Will you collar the stealer of your sheep, and let him escape that has invaded the repose of your fireside; has insulted your wife and children under your own roof?

This is the heroism of truck and traffic — the public spirit of sordid avarice. Great Britain violates your flag on the high seas. What is her situation? Contending, not for the dismantling of Dunkirk, for Quebec, or Pondicherry, but for London and Westminster—for life. Her enemy violating at will the territories of other nations — acquiring thereby a colossal power that threatens the very existence of her rival. But she has one vulnerable point to the arms of her adversary which she covers with the ensigns of neutrality. She draws the neutral flag over the heel of Achilles. And can you ask that adversary to respect it at the expense of her existence? And in favor of whom? — an enemy that respects no neutral territory of Europe, and not even your own? I repeat that the insults of Spain towards this nation have been at the instigation of France; that there is no longer any Spain. Well, sir, because the French government do not put this into the "Moniteur," you choose to shut your eyes to it. None so blind