

for a formal disavowal of conditions and pretensions advanced by the French Government, for which the U. States are so far from having made themselves responsible, that, in official explanations, which have been published to the world, and in a correspondence of the American Minister at London with the British Minister for Foreign Affairs, such a responsibility was explicitly and emphatically disclaimed.

It has become indeed sufficiently certain that the commerce of the U. States is to be sacrificed, not as interfering with the belligerent rights of G. Britain, not as supplying the wants of her enemies, which she herself supplies; but as interfering with the monopoly which she covers for her own commerce and navigation. She carries on a war against the lawful commerce of a friend, that she may the better carry on a commerce with an enemy, a commerce polluted by the forgeries and perjuries which are for the most part the only passports by which it can succeed.

Anxious to make every experiment short of the last resort of injured nations, the U. States have withheld from G. Britain, under successive modifications, the benefits of a free intercourse, with their market, the loss of which could not but outweigh the profits accruing from her restrictions of our commerce with other nations. And to entitle these experiments to the more favorable consideration, they were so framed as to enable her to place her adversary under the exclusive operation of them. To these appeals her Government has been equally inflexible, as it willing to make sacrifices of every sort, rather than yield to the claims of justice, or renounce the errors of a false pride. Nay, so far were the attempts carried to overcome the attachment of the British Cabinet to its unjust edicts, that it received every encouragement within the competency of the Executive branch of our Government, to expect that a repeal of them would be followed by a war between the U. States and France, unless the French edicts should also be repealed. Even this communication, although silencing forever the plea of a disposition in the U. States to acquiesce in those edicts, originally the sole plea for them, received no attention.

If no other proof existed a pre-determination of the British Government against a repeal of its orders, it might be found in the correspondence of the Minister Plenipotentiary of the U. States at London, and the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1810, on the question whether the blockade of May, 1806, was considered as in force or as not in force. It had been ascertained that the French Government, which urged this blockade as the ground of its Berlin decrees, was willing, in the event of its removal, to repeal that decree; which being followed by alternate repeals of the other offensive edicts, might abolish the whole system on both sides. This inviting opportunity for accomplishing an object so important to the U. States, and professed so often to be the desire of both the belligerents, was made known to the British Government. As that Government holds that an actual application of an adequate force is

necessary to the existence of legal blockade, and it was notorious, that if such a force had ever been applied, its long discontinuance had annulled the blockade in question, there could be no sufficient objection on the part of G. Britain to a formal revocation of it; and no imaginable objection to a declaration of the fact that the blockade did not exist.

The declaration would have been consistent with her avowed principles of blockade, and would have enabled the U. States to demand from France the pledged repeal of her decrees; either with success in which case the way would have been opened for a general repeal of the belligerent edicts; or without success, in which case the U. States would have been justified in turning their measure exclusively against France. The British Government would, however, neither rescind the blockade nor declare its non-existence; nor permits its non-existence to be inferred and affirmed by the American Plenipotentiary. On the contrary, by representing the blockade to be comprehended in the orders in council, the U. States were compelled so to regard it in their subsequent proceeding.

There was a period when a favorable change in the policy of the British cabinet was justly considered as established. The Minister Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty here proposed an adjustment of the differences more immediately endangering the harmony of the two countries. The proposition was accepted with a promptitude and cordiality corresponding with the invariable professions of this Government. A foundation appeared to be laid for a sincere and lasting reconciliation. The prospect, however, quickly vanished. The whole proceeding was disavowed by the British Government without any explanations which could at that time express the belief, that the disavowal proceeded from a spirit of hostility to the commercial rights and prosperity of the U. States.—And it has since come into proof, that at the very moment, when the public Minister was holding the language of friendship and inspiring confidence in the sincerity of the negotiation with which he was charged, a secret agent of his Government was employed in intrigues, having for their object a subversion of our Government, and a dismemberment of our happy Union.

In reviewing the conduct of G. Britain towards the U. States our attention is necessarily drawn to the warfare just renewed by the savages on one of our extensive frontiers; a warfare which is known to spare neither age nor sex, and to be distinguished by features peculiarly shocking to humanity. It is difficult to account for the activity and combinations which have for some time been developing themselves among tribes in the constant intercourse with British traders and garrisons, without connecting their hostility with that influence: and without recollecting the authenticated examples of such interpositions heretofore furnished by the officers and agents of that Government.

Such is the spectacle of injuries and indignities which have been heaped on our country; and such the crisis which its unexampled forbearance and conciliatory efforts

have not been able to avert. It might at least have been expected, that an enlightened nation, if less urged by moral obligations or invited by friendly dispositions on the part of the U. States would have found, in its true interest alone, a sufficient motive to respect their rights and their tranquillity on the high seas; that an enlarged policy would have favored that free and general circulation of commerce, in which the British nation is at all times interested, and which in times of war is the best alleviation of its calamities to herself as well as the other belligerents; and more especially, that the British Cabinet, would not, for the sake of a precarious and surreptitious intercourse with hostile markets, have persevered in a course of measures which necessarily put at hazard the invaluable market of a great and growing country, disposed to cultivate the mutual advantages of an active commerce.

Other councils have prevailed. Our moderation and conciliation have no other effect than to encourage perseverance, and to enlarge pretensions. We behold our seafaring citizens still the daily victims of lawless violence committed on the great common and highway of nations, even within sight of the country which owes them protection. We behold our vessels, freighted with the products of our soil and industry, or returning with the honest proceeds of them, wrested from their lawful destinations, confiscated by prize courts, no longer the organs of arbitrary edicts; and their unfortunate crews dispersed and lost, or inveigled, in British ports, into British fleets; whilst arguments are employed in support of these aggressions, which have no foundation but in a principle equally supporting a claim to regulate our external commerce in all cases whatsoever.

We behold, in fact, on the side of G. Britain, a state of war against the U. States; and on the side of the U. States a state of peace towards G. Britain.

Whether the U. States shall continue passive under these progressive usurpations, and these accumulating wrongs; or, opposing force to force in defence of their natural rights, shall commit a just cause into the hands of the Almighty Disposer of Events, avoiding all connexions which might entangle it in the contests or views of other powers, and preserving a constant readiness to concur in an honorable re-establishment of peace and friendship, is a solemn question, which the constitution wisely confides to the Legislative Department of the Government, in recommending it to their early deliberations, I am happy in the assurance, that the decision will be worthy, the enlightened and patriotic councils of a virtuous, a free and powerful nation.

Having presented this view of the relations of the U. States with G. Britain, and of the solemn alternative growing out of them, I proceed to remark, that the communications last made to Congress on the subject of our relations with France, will have shown that since the revocation of her decrees as they violated the neutral rights of the U. States, her Government has authorized illegal captures, by its privateers and public ships, and

that other outrages have been practised on our vessels and our citizens. It will have been seen also, that no indemnity had been provided, or satisfactorily pledged for the extensive spoliations committed under the violent and retrospective orders of the French Government against the property of our citizens seized within the jurisdiction of France. I abstain at this time from recommending to the consideration of Congress definitive measures with respect to that nation, in the expectation that the result of unclosed discussions between our Minister Plenipotentiary at Paris and the French Government will speedily enable Congress to decide, with greater advantage, on the course due to the rights, the interests, and the honor of our country.

JAMES MADISON.

Washington, June 1, 1812.

The War at Sea.

The first fruits of war will probably be on the ocean. The British have on the Halifax, Newfoundland and West-India stations, 3 sail of the line, 21 frigates, 10 floops of war, and 18 smaller vessels—making a total of 61 armed vessels. The greater part of these will receive the Declaration of War just made in a few days, and will be in immediate readiness to carry it into execution. To meet this force, and to check its depredations on American commerce, we have the following remains of as gallant a little navy as ever floated on the ocean:—The President, 44 guns, Commodore Rogers; U. States, 44, Commodore Decatur; Congress, 36, Capt. Smith; Essex, 32, Capt. Porter; Hornet 16, Capt. Lawrence; and Argus, 16, Capt. Sinclair—all these vessels, excepting the Essex, sailed from N. York the 21st inst. on a cruise, having received their orders from Washington by express. The Constitution, 44 guns, Capt. Hull, was at the last dates at Annapolis, bound round to New-York.—The Chesapeake, 36, is now repairing in this port, and the Constellation, of the same force, in Washington. The John Adams, Capt. Ludlow, of 24 guns, and the Nautilus brig of 12, Capt. Crane, are now in this port ready for sea. Beside these, the Siren of 16 guns, Capt. Bainbridge, the Enterprize, of 12, Capt. Blakeley, and the Vixen, of 12, Capt. Gaddien, are also in readiness. On the exertions of this naval force to give to our menaced commerce all the protection in its power, we have the most perfect confidence, and lament it is not infinitely greater.

BOSTON, July 8.

Letter from France.—Capt. Henderson, who arrived at Newport from Nantz, has brought advice to the first of June.

Mr. Barlow continued promised in Paris. No arrangement had been made for our plundered Millions, and none like to be. Napoleon and his Ministers had set off for the Vistula, where he was to review his Grand Army, estimated at 400,000 men—and daily augmenting. He met his Father-in-Law at Dresden, as he passed along. The Paris papers make no complaint against Russia—and are silent on the subject of war with her.—But the Emperor of Russia was with his army on the frontiers