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people; to what purpose we have a national government; I cannot bring myself to believe that there exists in this country a disposition, (and I am sorry to see this very resolution, because it seems to imply that there does exist such a disposition) to violate the laws and sap the foundation of the union. I shall not act on the presumption, but wait until a case shall occur, and when it does occur I would apply the only corrective—the knife and the actual cautery. But on that account I do not the less deprecate the effects of the embargo; I look upon it as a measure ruinous in a great degree to our country. At the same time there is an aspect in which I cannot but behold it with pleasure. It is a test of the patriotism and virtue of this people. The submission of those who think even worse of it than I do—I will say their quiet submission, for their opposition has extended only to argument—is a test of the virtue of our people, of their willingness to support the government in any sacrifice for the public good—to support it even where that government has obviously mistaken and misunderstood their best interests. Compare, if you please for a moment, the pressure of the embargo and the degree of suffering which it excites, the sacrifices which it calls for, with the degree of pressure arising from the celebrated excise law. Put the two things in the balance, and weigh them. In the one case there was insurrection, open rebellion; you see the father of his country obliged to extend his arm to chastise his undutiful children and reclaim them to the path of duty. In the other case you see, (whatever may have been the evasions of the law) ostensible submission to it. The virtue in the one case, which withstood the stronger temptation, is not to be put in competition with that which succumbed to the weaker, in the other.

But in viewing the policy which has been pursued for some time back, and gentlemen seemed determined now to adhere to it; I am irresistibly led to enquire into the causes, which produced our present form of government. I believe they grew out of commerce. The principal difficulty, I believe, among the states was that there was no general power for the regulation of commerce. That commerce was the principal source whence revenue was to be derived; and the want of general and uniform regulations dried up that very source. The first proposition was to vest the old congress with the power of laying an *ad valorem* duty, generally. Certain I am that the meeting at Annapolis, the precursor of the Convention of 1787, was a meeting directed to the promotion of the commercial interests of this country. The United States were governed by this consideration primarily—for surely they were in very little danger of going to war with one another—in forming a government under which this very commerce has arisen to a height to which no man could have anticipated. And are we now, without warning, to break up all our instructions heretofore, and declare for a Chinese policy? Do gentlemen remember, when a discrimination was made between American and foreign ships, the excitement which it created? The gentlemen from the Southern states said you are going to tax us for the benefit of the Eastern navigation. When a proposition was made to lay a heavy duty on the import of foreign manufactures. This is well remembered. But did any man ever dream that these two sections of the country should unite, and the other to cut up commerce by the root? There was indeed formerly a contest between the grower and the carrier, each contending for his separate interest—but that both should unite, the one to prevent the growth and the other to prevent the carriage of produce, is really a solecism I am unable to explain.—The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Quincy) speaks feelingly of the sufferings of the people of Massachusetts. I believe the picture which he drew may be correct. I am even willing to allow, (holding up my hands at the same time against all his calculations) that his constituents may suffer more than mine. But what is the situation of the tobacco country, and I live in the heart of it, whether you draw the line from North to South or from East to West? If we pursue this course of policy, the product of the New-England fisheries may be consumed, the rice of South-Carolina

may be eaten, and the cotton of Georgia may be spun. What is the tobacco planter to do with his two crops of that ridiculous and nauseous luxury? What is he to do with the third crop, for the time is fast approaching when preparation must be made to plant it? And in what situation are we placed? I have no disposition to enter into highly colored pictures of the state of the country. I feel too much the condition of that part from which I come, to say much about it. It is deplorable, that is enough.

But perhaps it may be said that whatever objection be taken to the two first resolutions, there can be no doubt of the perfect propriety of the final one. What is it? "Resolved that measures ought to be immediately taken, to place the country in a more complete state of defence."—This is a twin brother of the first. Will you refer it to a committee to draft a bill in pursuance of it? Are you going to refer the first resolution to a committee, that a bill may be placed on the statute book, to perpetuate the fact that the U. States are insulted and have not resisted? For as far as the report goes, of what does it speak? Of keeping within ourselves, and of preparing for—defence. If a man be insulted beyond the power of human endurance to bear, how does he resist? By retiring to his house and adding another bolt to his street door—another supplement to the embargo system? Is this the way in which we will resist? And yet the same committee say that they will not submit, and bring nothing before you but a vague proposition that the U. States be put in a better state of defence. Shall we raise more troops? Gentlemen will hardly venture upon that. Will you arm the militia? That plan, to use the slang of the day, has been the go-by given it. You are told that the militia can only be armed in such small portions that the good to result from the measure will amount to little or nothing. Nothing remains then, but to build more gun-boats. The president of the U. States says that it has not been deemed expedient to build those already authorized. What new measures of defence are then contemplated? We have tried every chord and none of them will vibrate. What will be the next resort? In fact, I am extremely sorry to be obliged to speak in this free manner of this report; but it appears to me that this house have asked of the committee of exterior relations, bread, and they have received a stone. They have received "naked resolutions." Really, to use the words of one of the gentlemen (Mr. G. W. Campbell) who advocates them, they appear to be all the nakedness of infantile imbecility. Naked they came into the house, and naked they must go out of it. They are not to be clothed with measures; or at least it is generally avowed that no measure is to be taken in consequence of the one under discussion.

I do not know how far I may or may not have been in order in the observations which I have hastily thrown out: I say hastily, because it may be supposed that I have risen to redeem that pledge which the public papers of the morning have given for me to address the House, when nothing was further from my mind. But before I sit down I will ask the gentlemen who brought in the report to reconcile some things which do not appear to me altogether intelligible, as they now stand.

"The Milan decree of 1807, [17th December] can still less rest for its defence on the supposed acquiescence of the U. States in the British orders of the preceding month, since those orders, which have not certainly been acquiesced in, were not even known in America at the date of the decree."

The decree of Milan then was dated on the 17th December;—the orders were not known in America at the date of the decree; and the embargo was laid on the 22d. In another part of the report we find the following:

"This was received on the 10th of December; and a copy of the decision in the case of the *Horizon*, having at the same time reached the government, the President, aware of the consequences which would follow that new state of

things, communicated immediately to Congress the alteration of the French decrees, and recommended the embargo, which was accordingly laid on the 22d of December, 1807; at which time it was well understood in this country, that the British orders of council of November preceding had issued, although they were not officially communicated to our government."

This is an anachronism which I cannot reconcile; though I do not say that it is irreconcilable.

It is very far from being my wish, if the U. S. are determined not to submit to the orders and decrees of the belligerents—nothing would be farther from my mind than to destroy the unanimity of that resistance; but I confess that I wish to see in what that resistance is to consist. I am as firmly of opinion as I am certain that I am now addressing you, that the difficulties in which the U. S. now are, take date from the year 1805—6—a date at which some gentlemen have, in the discussion, commenced the series of foreign wrongs inflicted on us. Much has been said of the spirit of '76. 'Twas in the year 1805 that this spirit slept. We then knew that our territory was trod by hostile steps, and we would not take steps to assert its character. From that time its character has been on the decline in Europe, and we must re-establish it by something better than this report—by something of a very different nature—unless indeed the first resolution is meant to contain a declaration of war against both belligerents, and the second to devise the best mode of carrying it on against one of them, leaving at the same time all resistance to the other out of the question. I wish to confine myself to that part which goes to excluding imports; that part which excludes all foreign armed ships has my hearty concurrence. It has so happened that from the time to which I have referred, the difficulties of this country have been thickening, and the character of the country declining abroad. This is a fact no man will or can deny. Then it must be by a different policy from that pursued from the time which I have mentioned, that the character of the country is to be recovered. The old policy has been tried; it will not answer. What have we done? We have been trampled upon unresistingly by Spain. When the minister of our country was at the court of that government, and when I have every reason to believe, as far as the papers laid before the House enable me to judge, that he had taken an imposing attitude, what was the result? The negotiation was paralyzed by the news that a special mission, of Mr. Bowdoin, a respectable man, (if there must be a special mission, as good a man as any for the purpose) was to interfere with that negotiation. We had already two ministers at the court of Spain. When our negotiation was pending with the British government too, there seems to have been a fear lest a minister of our country should come into collision with foreign governments, and a special minister is sent after him to keep the discussion forever hung up in a sort of diplomatic court of chancery. We passed a non-importation law; and neither the House or the nation have forgotten the auspices under which that law passed. When it was said that it would lead to the destruction of commerce, was not the idea scouted by many; and amongst others by a member of great influence who is now snatched from us by the hand of death, and who was the representative of the commercial town of Salem? He ridiculed the idea of our commerce being circumscribed. Were we not told that we could sweep the commerce of Britain from the ocean? And what has been the consequence? We have swept our own commerce from the ocean, and I fear we shall sweep our agriculture from the land. One false step leads on to another. For want of due resistance to the weaker power of Spain, we have been trampled on by the stronger. No, sir, this temporising, this hesitating, this extraordinary mission policy will not do. After things were brought to their late and present disastrous condition, we laid an embargo, that was to be the penance to re-act on the enemy—it was to be the sword and the shield; the war in disguise; it was to bring Europe in general, and Great Britain in particular to your feet. We have calculated long enough on the weakness our adversary. We have waited with upcast eyes watching her downfall till our own begins to approach. It is time to calculate less upon her weakness and more on our strength. I am amused sometimes at the argu-

ments which I hear on this floor. The Grenville administration get into power—you negotiate with them and make a treaty; it is rejected—scouted. Be it so. Meanwhile the Grenvilles go out and the Portlands and Canninges come in; and, as if destitute of arguments of our own, the doctrines of these very men in opposition—Lord Grenville, Aucland and Holland, (from them nothing better than the rejected treaty could be obtained) with the Barings and Broughams in their train, are hailed with joy and resorted to as the text book whence we quote, to prove—what? To shew that the sentiment of the people of G. Britain is in favor of us. And yet when we come to negotiate with these very advocates of ours, we cannot agree. At the same time the declaration on this floor are resorted to there as arguments in their favor. In fact it is high time for us to give over counting on the insurrections of the Manchester weavers, and for them to give over counting on the revolutionary spirit of the Green Mountain Boys. We calculate with as much correctness on the effects of our non-importation and embargo system, as they do of the disaffection of any part of this country. We know them to be mistaken, and why may we not be? In fact we know ourselves to be mistaken. The result of those measures proves it. Indeed, with that description of people who calculate that the navy of Britain will sink her, or that the army of Napoleon will ruin him, there is no arguing. They are out of the sphere of reasoning. For those there should be a new dictionary, and a new system of logic. After all then we pass the embargo. This was the real genuine penance. What has been its effect? After speaking of it in this House as a measure which would coerce your enemies to submission, and talking of it in Europe as a municipal regulation, in offering to withdraw it we have been by one power insulted, by the other laughed at. The report says, from one of them no answer has been received—from France—Sir, we have an answer from France which satisfies every one who has seen it; and there does not exist a man in this country base enough to comply with the wishes of the one party or the mandates of the other. We have gone to Europe, and said of this embargo, which was laid unquestionably, even by the report of the committee, before the British orders in council were received—because as they tell you, it was before the Milan decree was known—we have told the belligerents that this consequence shall be withdrawn if they will withdraw their provocations. In fact, like Jack in the Tale of a Tub, we have hanged ourselves for spite, in hopes that one or the other of our enemies will come and cut us down. Both have refused; and it remains for us to say whether we will longer dangle in our garters. I for one have no such disposition.

On the subject of the embargo, as it has been dragged into this controversy, I will say that the view taken of its origin has been much more erroneous than the predictions as to its effects. It is well known to have originated in the determination of France to act on the Berlin decree in the broadest sense of the letter of it, and in the proclamation of G. Britain inviting home her native subjects. It is as well known to me that it did not originate in the orders of council, as that it did not originate in events which took place long since it was enacted. For altho' the orders in council were unquestionably issued before the embargo was laid, as unquestionably they were not known to us, and were not once mentioned in my hearing as a cause for the passage of that law.

Sir, I have occupied your time to very little purpose; I am as sensible of it as any man who hears me. It was not my intention to have taken some of the positions which I have advanced since I got up. I have been irresistibly led to open some questions which may lead to unpleasant discussion; but I could not omit the temptation to self-justification.

I know, sir, that I have had no part in bringing you into this disastrous situation, and that reflection is worth to me every thing which in a political point of view, this world has to afford.

WILMINGTON, N. C.

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