

ing to the west bank of the Beresina. Gen. Berthier, with the 4th Cuirassiers, distinguished himself by a handsome charge, the enemy only saved themselves by burning the bridge, which was more than 300 toises long.

Nevertheless the enemy occupied all the passages of the Beresina, this river is 40 toises broad, and was filled with floating ice, but its borders are covered with marshes 300 toises long and which renders it a difficult obstacle to overcome. The enemy's general had placed his 4 divisions in different passes, where he supposed the French army would attempt a passage. The 26th at day break the emperor after having deceived the enemy by divers movements made on the 25th, marched against the village of Studzianka and caused likewise two bridges to be thrown over the river, notwithstanding a division of the enemy were opposed. The duke of Reggio passed, attacked the enemy and kept them engaged two hours. The enemy retired to the head of the bridge of Borisow, General Legrand an officer of the first merit was severely but not dangerously wounded, the army passed on the 26th and 27th. The duke of Bellune commanding the 9th corps had received orders to follow the movement of the duke of Reggio, to compose the rear guard and to detain the Russian army of the Dwina which followed him. The division of Paronaux composed the rear guard of this corps. The 27th at noon the duke of Bellune arrived with the two divisions at the bridge of Studzianka. The division of Paronaux left Borisow at night, one brigade of this division which formed the rear guard, and which was ordered to burn the bridges, set off at 7 in the evening, it arrived between 10 and 11 o'clock, endeavored to find its first brigade, and the general of division, who set out two hours before. The search was fruitless—they then became uneasy. All that we have been able to hear since is that this first brigade set out at 5 o'clock, missed their way at 6, took the right instead of the left and went two or three leagues in that direction, that in the night and chilled with cold, it was roused by the fire of the enemy which they took for the French army, thus surrounded, they must have surrendered. This cruel mistake has lost us 2000 infantry, 300 horses and 3 pieces of artillery, it is rumored that the general of the division was not with his column, but had marched on a head. All the army having passed on the morning of the 28th, the duke of Bellune guarded the head of the bridge on the left bank, the duke of Reggio with all the army were on the right bank.

Borisow having been evacuated, the armies of Dwina and Volynie communicated, they concerted an attack; the 28th at day break the duke of Reggio caused the emperor to be informed that he was attacked: an hour afterwards the duke of Bellune knew it on the left bank, the army was under arms. The duke of Elchingen went to the assistance of the duke of Reggio and the duke of Treviso followed him. The fight became brisk, the enemy wished to break our right, general Doumerc commanding the 5th division of Cuirassiers, and composing part of the two corps who remained on the Dwina, ordered a charge of the cavalry, by the 4th and 5th of the Cuirassiers, at the moment when the legion of the Visuda was engaged in the woods to pierce the centre of the enemy, which was beaten and put to rout. These brave cuirassiers surrounded successively six battalions of infantry set out to rout the enemy's cavalry which came to the assistance of its infantry; 6000 prisoners, two colors and six pieces of cannon fell into our hands.

The Duke de Bellune caused the enemy to be vigorously charged, made 5 to 6000 prisoners, and drove them out of the reach of the cannon of the bridge. Gen. Fourcier made a handsome charge of cavalry. In the battle of Beresina the army of Volynie suffered much; the Duke de Reggio was wounded, but not dangerously, by a ball, which he received in his side. The morning of the 29th we remained upon the field of battle. We had 2 routs to chase; that of Minsk and that of Wilna. The road to Minsk is through a forest and uninhabitable marshes, and it would have been impossible for the army to subsist. The road to Wilna on the contrary is through a very fine country. The army without cavalry, with but little ammunition, very much fatigued with 30 days march, bringing after it the sick and wounded of so many battles, required rest. The 30th, the head quarters were at Plochutsk—the 1st of December at Slaidi, and the 3rd at Moledeiskino, where the army received the first convoys from Wilna. All the wounded officers and soldiers, and every thing that incumbered us, such as baggage, &c were sent to Wilna. The result of the exposition just made is, that it is necessary for the army to recruit itself, to provide artillery, and obtain provisions. Its greatest want is rest. The provisions and horses have arrived.

General Bourcier has already more than 20,000 horses on the different depots. The artillery has repaired its loss. The generals, the officers, and soldiers, have suffered much with fatigue and want. Many have lost their baggage in consequence of the loss of their horses—some by the ambuscades of the Cossacks. The Cossacks have taken many stragglers and engineers employed in making drafts, and wounded officers, who marched without precaution preferring to run risks, than to march with the convoys. The reports of the general officers will show those officers and soldiers who have most distinguished themselves, in the details of these memorable events. In all his movements the Emperor has marched in the middle of his guards, the cavalry commanded by marshal duc de Istria, and the infantry commanded by the duc of Dantzick. His majesty is satisfied with the good conduct that his guard have shown—they have always been ready to go wherever circumstances required—but circumstances have always been such, that his simple presence has sufficed to inspire confidence and ensure success.

The Prince of Neuchatel, the grand marshal, the grand master of the horse, and all the aides-camps and military officers of the household of the Emperor, have always accompanied his majesty. Our cavalry was so dismounted, that we could scarcely find the officers who had horses, to form 4 companies of 150 men each. The generals performed the duties of captains, and the colonels those of sub-officers. This squadron, commanded by Gen. Grouchy, and under the direction of the King of Naples, never lost sight of the Emperor in all his motions. The wish of his majesty was never betrayed.

Falmouth Nov. 16.—The outward bound of A. Carter and Madam's boat, about 100 sails, are

expected to sail early to-morrow. Portsmouth, Nov. 20.—The Victorious, 74, Capt. Tabot will sail to-morrow for the North American station; the Elephant, 74 sailed yesterday. Sir Thomas Hardy is going out in the Ramilles, of 74 guns, to join Sir J. B. Warren's squadron on the Halifax station. Deal, Nov. 27.—The Surprise, a large new frigate commanded by Sir Thomas Cochrane, goes down the first fair breeze; report deems this frigate for the coast of America, for which station, from her size she is admirably fitted. Every vessel sent on that station is to have an additional Lieutenant and 50 men. Plymouth, Nov. 24.—Went into the Sound the Rhin, of 44; she is ordered for America, and is, with all other frigates of her class, to have 40 additional hands; as will the 32 gun frigates have 30 hands in addition; a very wise and proper regulation of the Board of Admiralty.

Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, January 20.

Mr. Mitchell from the select committee, to whom was referred the letter of the secretary of state, relative to the establishment of a fire-ian line, reported a bill authorising the establishment of an astronomical observatory—read twice & referred to a committee of the whole house.

The bill from the senate to carry into effect the report of James Madison, then secretary of state, Albert Gallatin, secretary of the treasury, and Levi Lincoln, attorney general of the U. States, commissioners, &c. in the year 1803 (recommending an equitable compromise with the Yazoo claimants), was read a first time.

Mr. Troup moved to reject the bill. He should not make this motion on any ordinary occasion, but the bill had grown out of the corruption of the representatives of the people—the evidence of this fact was contained in the records of the house—it could be shewn from the report of the commissioners—that the legislature of Georgia, were bought, were bribed to pass the law under which the claimants purchased, was notorious. The danger in passing this bill was in the principle which it would establish—a principle confessedly corrupt and fraudulent.

Mr. Poindexter conjured gentlemen to reflect on the consequences of a hasty rejection of the present bill—they would have to contend with a solemn decision of the supreme court of the United States in favour of the claimants—they must contend with a powerful party at the eastward who carried along with them the influence of that section of the union. The claim as awarded by the bill was perhaps as fair as can ever be made—the situation of the country which he represented also demanded the attention of congress—the Indian titles were not extinguished there, over nearly eighty millions of acres, because of the Yazoo purchase, the quantity awarded by the bill (four or five millions of acres) ought not to stand in the way of the great and solid advantages of encouraging settlements, &c. He thought the rejection of the bill would be a signal act of injustice.

The question for rejecting the bill was then taken and decided as follows:—Ayes 55, Noes, 59.

The bill was then read a second time, and, on motion of Mr. Dusha, referred to the committee on public lands.

A message was received from the President of the United States, which the speaker declared to be of a confidential nature. And the house was accordingly cleared of all strangers, and so remained until 4 o'clock, when it adjourned.

Thursday, January 21.

The house were occupied this morning for about two hours in secret session.

Mr. Jennings from the select committee, to whom was referred the petitions of certain inhabitants of the Indiana Territory, relative to the depredations committed on them by the KENTUCKY VOLUNTEERS—made a report as follows:

The committee to whom were referred the petition of sundry citizens of Knox county, in the Indiana Territory, on the 7th inst. praying remuneration for depredations committed on their property by the mounted Riflemen of Kentucky, lately under the command of Maj. Gen. Hopkins—Report, that upon examination of their petition and the accompanying documents, they find the facts stated in the said petition to be fully supported by the certificate of the commanding General which is herewith reported. That the depredations committed and the damages sustained in consequence thereof, have been examined by men acting under the solemnity of an oath, and appointed for that purpose by the quarter master, pursuant to the orders of the executive of the territory aforesaid. The damage thus estimated, amounts to two thousand four hundred dollars. The committee are aware, that depredations upon private property are generally redressed by the operation of municipal law; but, in cases similar to the present, where an armed force, under the authority of the government, were permitted to remain stationary, contiguous to the property of individuals, and that force unrestrained by the orders of their commander, it is unreasonable to suppose that the citizen could protect every portion of his property from the lawless depredations of the soldiery, or discover the offending individual when discharged and dispersed over an extensive country.

The committee therefore submitted to the following resolution:

Resolved, That the prayer of the petitioners is reasonable and ought to be granted.

This report, on motion was laid on the table, ayes 41, noes 39.

Friday, January 22.

FOREIGN RELATIONS.

Mr. GRUNDY, (of Tennessee) from the Committee of Foreign Relations, made the following Report:

The Committee to whom was referred so much of the President's Message, of the 4th day of November last, as relates to our Foreign Affairs, REPORT—That in presenting to the house at this time a view of our relations with Great Britain it is deemed unnecessary to recite the causes which provoked the war. The wrongs which the U. States had received from that power, for a long series of

years, had already been laid before the public, and need not again be enumerated; they were too deeply felt to have been forgotten, although they may be forgotten by the American people. The U. States having engaged in the war for the sole purpose of vindicating their rights and honor, that course alone should animate them to its close.—It becomes a free and virtuous people to give an useful example to the world. It is the duty of a representative government to render a faithful account of its conduct to its constituents. A just sensibility to great and unprovoked wrongs and indignities will justify an appeal to arms, an honorable reparation should restore the blessings of peace; every step which they take should be guided by a sacred regard to principle.

To form a correct estimate of the duties which the United States have to perform, it is necessary to take a view of the communications which have passed between the Executive of the U. States and the British government since the declaration of war.—Such a view, the committee is persuaded will shew distinctly the existing ground of controversy between the two nations, and the intinsensible obligation on the U. States to maintain it.

Your committee has seen with much satisfaction that at the moment of the declaration of war, the attention of the Executive was engaged in an effort to bring it to a speedy and honorable termination. As early as the 26th of June last, the charge des affaires of the U. States at London was instructed to propose to the British government an armistice, to take immediate effect, on conditions which it is believed the impartial world will consider safe, honorable and advantageous to Great Britain. They were few in number and limited to positive wrongs daily practised. That the orders in council should be repealed, and that our flag should protect our seamen, were the only indispensable conditions insisted on. Other wrongs, however great, were postponed for amicable negotiation. As an inducement to the British government to forbear these wrongs, it was proposed to repeal the non-importation law and to prohibit the employment of British seamen, in the public and private vessels of the United States. Particular care was taken that these propositions should be made in a form as conciliatory as they were amicable in substance.

Your committee cannot avoid expressing its astonishment at the manner in which they were received. It was not sufficient to reject the proposed armistice; terms of peculiar reproach and insult were adopted to make the rejection offensive.

It happened that almost on the same day in which the United States, after having been worn out with accumulated wrongs, had resorted to the last and only remaining honorable alternative in support of their rights, the British government had repealed, conditionally, its orders in council. That measure was unexpected, because every application for it had failed, although repeated to the very moment it was decided on. Conditional as the repeal was, it was admitted to have removed a great obstacle to accommodation.

The other only remained—the practice of impressment. It was proposed to the British government to open an amicable negotiation to provide a substitute to it, which should be considered an ample equivalent. The substitute proposed was defined, and of a character so comprehensive as to have removed, as was presumed, every possible objection to an accommodation. The proposition before made to exclude British seamen from our service was enlarged, so as to comprehend all native British subjects not already naturalized or entitled to naturalization under the laws of the U. States. This was likewise rejected.

Your committee have sought with anxiety some proof of a disposition in the British government to accommodate on any fair condition the important difference between the two nations, relative to impressment, but they have sought in vain; none is to be found either in the communications of the British minister to the American charge des affaires at London, or in those of the commander of the British naval forces at Halifax, made by order of his government to the Department of State.—They have seen with regret that although Lord Castlereagh professed a willingness in his government to receive and discuss amicably any proposition having in view either to check abuse in the practice of impressment, or to provide a substitute to it, he not only declined entering into a negotiation for the purpose, but discountenanced the expectation that any substitute could be proposed which his government would accept. It merits notice also, though it ceased to be a cause of surprise, that in the communication of Admiral Warren to the Department of State the subject of impressment was not even alluded to.

Had the Executive consented to an armistice on the repeal of the orders in council, without a satisfactory provision against impressment, or a clear and distinct understanding with the British government to that effect, in some mode entitled to confidence, your committee would not have hesitated to disapprove it.

The impressment of our seamen being deservedly considered a principal cause of the war, the war ought to be prosecuted until that cause was removed. To appeal to arms in defence of a right and to lay them down without securing it, on a satisfactory evidence of a good disposition in the opposite party to secure it, would be considered in no other light than a relinquishment of it. To attempt to negotiate afterwards, for the security of such right, in the expectation that any of the arguments, which have been urged before the declaration of war and been rejected, would have more weight, after that experiment had been made in vain, would be an act of folly which would not fail to expose us to the scorn and derision of the British nation and of the world.

On a full view, therefore, of the conduct of the Executive, in its transactions with the British government since the declaration of war, the committee consider it their duty to express their entire approbation of it. They perceive in it a firm resolution to support the rights and honor of their country, with a sincere and commendable disposition to promote peace, on such just and honorable conditions as the United States may with safety accept.

It remains therefore for the United States to take their final attitude with Great Britain and to maintain it with consistency, and with unshaken

liberal propositions of the Executive have been received by the British government has in a great measure extinguished the hope of amicable accommodation. It is, however, possible, that the British government, after instructing Admiral Warren to communicate to the Department of State the repeal of the orders in council, may have declined the arrangement proposed by Mr. Russell in the expectation that that measure would have been satisfactory to the United States. Be this as it may, your committee consider it the duty of this House to explain to its constituents the remaining cause of controversy, the precise nature of that cause, and the high obligation which it imposes.

From what has been stated, it appears that how ever great the sensibility to other wrongs, the impression of our seamen, was that alone which prevented an armistice, and in all probability an accommodation. Had that great interest been arranged in a satisfactory manner, the President was willing to rely on the intrinsic justice of other claims, and the amicable spirit in which the negotiation would have been entered into, for a satisfaction in their favor G. B. claims a right to impress her own seamen and to exercise it in American vessels. In the practice British citizens oppress American citizens, and from the nature of things, it is impossible that that abuse should not be carried to great extent. A subaltern or any other officer of the British navy ought not to be the arbitrator in such a case. The liberty and lives of American citizens ought not to depend on the will of such a party.

The British government has insisted that every American citizen should carry with him the evidence of his citizenship and that all those not possessed of it might be impressed. This criterion, if not otherwise objectionable, would be so as the document might be lost, destroyed or taken from the party to whom it was granted, nor might it in all cases be entitled to respect, as it might be counterfeited, transferred, or granted to improper persons. But this rule is liable to other much stronger objections. On what principle does the British government claim of the United States so great and shameful a degradation?—Ought the free citizens of an independent power to carry with them on the main ocean, and in their own vessels, the evidence of their freedom? And are all to be considered British subjects and liable to impressment who do not bear with them that badge? Is it not more consistent with every idea both of public as well as private right, that the party setting up a claim to any interest, whether it be to persons or property, should prove his right? What would be the conduct of G. Britain under similar circumstances? Would she permit the public ship of any other power, disregarding the rights of their flag, to enter on board her merchant vessels, take from them such part of their crews, as the boarding officer thought fit, often her own subjects, exposing by means thereof their vessels to destruction? Would she suffer such an usurpation to derive any sanction from her patient forbearance?

With the British claim to impress British seamen, the U. States have no right to interfere, provided it be in British vessels or in any other than those of the United States. That American citizens should be exempted from its operation, is all that they demand. Experience has shewn that this cannot be secured otherwise, than by the vessels in which they sail. Take from America citizens this barrier, which ought to be held sacred, and there is nothing to protect them against the rapacious grasp of the British navy. This then is the extent of the demand of the U. States, a demand so just in itself, so consistent and inseparable from their rights, as an independent nation, that it has been a cause of astonishment that it should ever have been called into question. The foundation of the British claim is, that British seamen find employment in the service of the U. States; this is represented as an evil affecting essentially the great interests of the British nation. This complaint would have more weight if sanctioned by the British example. It is known on the contrary, that it is in direct repugnance to it. G. Britain does not scruple to receive into her service all who enter in it voluntarily.—If she offend herself within that limit, the present controversy would not exist. Heretofore the subjects of even the most despotic powers have been left at liberty to pursue their own happiness, by honest industry, wherever their inclination led them. The British government refuses to its seamen that privilege. Let not this, then, be a ground of controversy with that nation. Let it be distinctly understood, that in case an arrangement should be made between the two nations, whereby each should exclude from its service the citizens and subjects of the other, on the principles and conditions above stated, that this House will be prepared, so far as depends on it, to give it effect, and for that purpose to enact laws, with such regulations and penalties as will be adequate. With this pledge, it is not perceived, what ground the British government can persist in its claim? If the British seamen are excluded from the service of the United States, as may be effectually done, the foundation of the claim must cease. When it is known that not one British seaman could be found on board American vessels, it would be absurd to urge that fact as a motive for such impressment.

In declaring a willingness to give effect to the proposed arrangement, your Committee consider it equally the duty of the House to declare, in terms the most decisive, that should the British government still decline it, and persevere in the practice of impressment from American vessels, the U. States will never acquiesce in that practice, but will resist it unceasingly with all their force. It is not necessary now to enquire what the course would have been with respect to impressment, in case the orders in council had been repealed before the declaration of war—or how long the practice of impressment would have been borne, in the hope that that repeal would have been followed by a satisfactory arrangement with respect to impressment.

War having been declared, and the case of impressment being necessarily included as one of the most important causes, it is evident that it must be provided for in the proclamation. The omission