

# THE RALEIGH MINERVA.

[THREE DOLLARS PER YEAR.]

RALEIGH, N. C.—PUBLISHED (WEEKLY) BY LUCAS AND A. H. BOYLAN.

[OR 50 CENTS IN ADVANCE.]

Vol. 16.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1812.

No. 830.

## Political.

From the London Courier of December 5.

The Speech of the American President, which we received too late yesterday afternoon to insert more than a sketch in part of our impression, is such a one as we expected. Not a document can issue from the mind and cabinet of Mr. Madison that does not bear the stamp and seal of indiscriminate attachment to France and invariable dislike of Great Britain. These feelings pervade and influence the whole policy of his Government, and while they lead him to palliate all the aggressions of one Power, induce him to exaggerate and inflame all the acts of the other. What but such feelings could have made him attempt to draw such a distinction between different periods and parts of the conduct of France towards America? He tells us first, that there have been successive confirmations of the repeal of the French decrees, and that these induced him to hope we should repeal our orders in council. Most willingly we reply, but show us that these confirmations do not consist merely in promises & State Papers, but are furnished by solid and open deeds that cannot be mistaken. We see you, America, wanting to make us the dupes both of you and France, and desiring us to give you a substantial benefit in return for a mere paper assurance that France has repealed her decrees. Every day furnishes us with ocular demonstration that these decrees are still the policy of Bonaparte's Empire, and yet, you complain of us because we will not be such idiots as to abandon that system which he and your conniving with him forced us to establish. Does not every vessel that reaches your ports bring you fresh confirmation of the vexations and robbery to which you are yet exposed in the French ports?—True, says Mr. Madison, Bonaparte has made an ungrateful return for our justice and fairness. He will not repair the other wrongs done or us, to restore the immense amount of property he has seized and condemned. But these acts were committed under edicts which do not affect our neutral relations, and therefore do not enter into questions between the U. States and other belligerents. Is it possible! does Mr. Madison mean seriously to make use of such a paltry argument—does he think we have been educated in one of his colleges, that we cannot detect the poverty and impotence of it? America is a neutral power, and belligerent seizures and condemnations her property, under no matter what edicts, and yet the president says, that these acts do not affect our neutral relations! She is treated in a hostile manner, and yet her neutral character and rights are not at all injured!!—But these violations are committed, not under the Berlin and Milan edicts, but under others! Allowing, for the sake of argument, that there is some force in this argument, yet Mr. Madison must permit us to remind him, that one of the conditions which he communicated to us, of the alleged repeal of the Berlin and Milan decrees, was that the commerce of the United States would be restored to the footing on which it was before they were imposed, and that henceforth America might carry on her trade without hindrance or molestation. Prove that it is so—prove that the conditions which were to accompany the promised repeal have been fulfilled—and our orders in council are repealed of course. But if you cannot, we shall still conceive, as one of our own secretaries said, that those decrees are yet substantially in existence, and that however the Berlin and Milan edicts may have varied their form or changed their name, they still continue to influence the policy of the French government.

It is true, however, that Madison, in alluding to the rigorous and unexpected restrictions to which the trade with France is subjected, insinuates the necessity of corresponding restrictions on importations from France. But how different always is his language in speaking of the conduct of France from that which he uses in discussing the conduct of England. He knows that our conduct has been the necessary result of the measures of France; yet he keeps this distinction studiously out of sight. One would have thought that the imposition practised upon America, assuring her that she might trade freely and fearlessly, and then seizing her property, and ruining her merchants, would have roused the indignation, and swelled the tone of her chief magistrate—that he would have felt for his country, that he would have felt for himself. But no—“he has reason to be dissatisfied; and at some future indefinite period that dissatisfaction may be shown in some restrictions upon imports from France?”

The affair of the President and Little Belt is brought prominently upon the canvass, and the whole blame is attributed to Captain Bingham. Notwithstanding the court martial, we shall never abandon our opinion that the attack was begun by the American frigate—that she was sent out with orders to commit hostilities (why are her orders so studiously kept back?) and that it is against all probability and common sense that a 13 gun sloop should volunteer an attack upon a heavy 44 gun frigate. Certainly, if we were called upon for an opinion, we would not now make this affair the subject of negotiation by a diplomatic character—but we would send a stout frigate as our ambassador, to attack and capture the first American frigate she fell in with—’Tis thus the British navy punishes any aggression upon it.

‘Tis thus we painters write our names at Coa.

The rest of the president's speech consists in urging the necessity of putting the country in a corresponding armor and attitude, of increasing

the works of defence, and the military means of the state. The vast navy of the United States has received the important addition of a frigate to guard the coast. Now the very circumstance of the coast and harbors of a power which has so contemptible a naval force being unmolested by us, is a proof that we have used our naval superiority with exemplary moderation and forbearance. It has been remarked that the present speech resembles in many parts, the speech of last year, and that the politics of America are remarkably stationary. Every man must bear witness to the truth of this remark. America fluctuates between her inclinations and her apprehensions. She seems always to stand trembling and hesitating on the slippery verge of a war; and to be incessantly tossed about at the mercy of every event; a condition which, of all others, most directly tends to palsify the spirit and destroy the confidence of a nation. Of all the evils which can befall a people, is a government without any fixed principles or plan. No description of rulers can be as pernicious as that tribe of vulgar politicians, whose measures are governed or dictated by accident—whose schemes are perpetually fluctuating, and who live from day to day, and from hour to hour, agitated by every blast of wind, and borne away by every current.

From the Courier of December 21.

We have this day published all the documents accompanying the American president's message, those relating to the orders in council excepted, which, to be sure, are the most voluminous. This will seem strange to our readers, the main point lying within so small a compass, viz. whether the Berlin and Milan decrees are repealed or not? But the American government involve the discussion of that question with other points not immediately connected with it, and are, as usual, to use a word peculiar to their dictionary, remarkable lengthily in their diplomatic correspondence. They wish us always to take it for granted, that the French decrees are repealed, because Bonaparte tells the American government they are repealed, and they communicate that information to us. Now we, who have not much faith in Bonaparte's assurances, look to his actions, and find that vessels have been seized under the Berlin and Milan decrees, since November 1. Aye, but says Mr. Monroe, we have received fresh proofs that they are repealed, because four or five of our vessels have been lately released. To which Mr. Foster rejoins, “that the seizure of American ships by France since Nov. 1, and the positive declarations of the continued existence of these decrees, than the restoration of five or six vessels, too palpably given up for fallacious purposes, is a proof of their revocation.”

The perusal of the American state papers relative to these orders in council, convinces us more and more that America has not that great principle which she ought to have impartially between the belligerents—a fair estimate of the wrongs of each; and if it will please better, of the wrongs of each; and a conduct regulated accordingly. This is what England has required; but it is what America pertinaciously withholds. If the orders in council inflict direct wrong upon the United States, they could not be justified by the conduct of the enemy; but the wrong is direct only from France, the original aggressor. Our orders do not contemplate the United States; they look only at the enemy, and they are against him, not measures of aggression, but self defence. America suffers from them incidentally, by a reflected and not a direct stroke; a stroke, too, not given in malice or wantonness, but in self defence. When she calls upon us, therefore, to rescind our defensive measures, the orders in council, it is incumbent on her to prove, by indisputable evidence, that the offensive measure, the French decrees, are repealed—and this she has not and cannot prove.

The adjustment of the affair of the Chesapeake might seem to open a fairer prospect of an amicable settlement of other points than has yet been held out. But let our readers consider the manner, half sulky, half affronting, in which our proposals are entertained. They are accepted too with coldness; and still the language of complaint is used at the reparation having been so long delayed. Whose fault was it? The act was disavowed by our government as soon as it was known, and an offer of reparation made. But it was the American government that wished to mix the other points of differences with it, and not to adjust that point separately.

The affair of the Little Belt remains to be settled, the correspondence closing with Mr. Foster's declaration that he shall transmit the result of the court of inquiry on Rodgers, to his government. He will receive in return the result of the examination at Halifax of the officers of the Little Belt, directly contradicting the testimony of the officers of the United States' frigate. Which, or who is to decide between them? Each will adhere to his own statement, while common sense, and the opinion of the world will all be on the side of the Little Belt. It is against all credibility that she should have volunteered an attack upon a vessel three times her size. Mr. Monroe contends, “that the United States have a right to know the national character of the armed ships which hover on their coasts, and whether they visit it with friendly or unfriendly views?” We contend, that the United States, not being at war with any power, have no right to give chase to armed ships, or to suppose that they come with any hostile intentions.

The conduct of America to Spain affords a curious and no very favourable view of the morality

of American policy. She contends that West Florida formed part of Louisiana, which she bought France. But France had no right to sell and the negotiation carried on by the United States at Paris, for Florida, was throughout a series of humiliation and disgrace. But what is the defence set up by America for seizing East Florida? That Spain owes her money for spoils on her commerce. But has Spain refused all satisfaction? No, it is acknowledged that she admitted the injuries done, and was not indisposed to enter into a negotiation respecting them. But delay has taken place—Why? Because Spain is infamously invaded by Bonaparte, and her whole attention engrossed in finding the means of resisting the invader. And in this state of affairs, America, the friend of freedom, the foe of tyranny, takes advantage, to wrest her territories from her! An eternal blot this, and indeed the whole conduct of the United States relative to Spain, will be in the American annals. How will an American feel when investigating the history of the invasion of Spain, he shall inquire, what on that occasion, was the conduct of his ancestors, the only republican people then on earth, and who claim almost an exclusive privilege to hate and to denounce every act of ruffian violence, and every form of arbitrary power. It certainly will not kindle a glow of emulation in his mind, when he shall be told that of this unparalleled crime, an oblique notice was once taken by the American administration; that the people of that country seemed to rejoice at the conduct, of the invader, frowned on the efforts of his victim, and took advantage of their distress to despoil and rob them!

From the Boston Centinel.

## SPECULATIONS

On the debates in congress on the interesting subject of a British war.

To the Hon. Felix Grundy, the honorable Daniel Sheffey, and the honorable Hugh Nelson, three of the most independent democratic or republican members of congress.

Gentlemen,

The independence which you have so lately displayed in the late debates on the expediency of a British war, emboldens me to address you. I am, gentlemen, like yourselves, an independent citizen, connected with no profession, having in view nothing but the maintenance of the honor of the United States. It appears evident to me, that you are actuated by the same honorable feelings, and that we are honorably bound, to continue the non-intercourse, or to adopt the dreadful alternative of war, yet it has arisen wholly from the mistake into which you have been led by the cursory examination of the documents submitted to you by the president; and I feel convinced that if you could be satisfied that France has been wholly perfidious in her late offers to repeal her decrees, you would all of you concur in the opinion, that upon such offers, so perfidiously violated, no pledge could be possibly founded; and that however honest politicians might concur in the opinion, that both the belligerents are in pari delicto in equal fault, still that there is no new reason for rousing the resentment of the nation against Great Britain exclusively.

It is no reproach to you, gentlemen, coming as you all do, from states not especially commercial, to presume that you have no immediate and personal knowledge of the true state of our relations with France, and that you derive all your information from the very imperfect documents which it has pleased Mr. Madison to lay before congress.

It shall be my business, in the present essay to disclose to you one case out of a great number, which goes to prove that the French decrees are still in full force against our trade, and I rely on your patriotism and spirit, that you will cause a full enquiry to be had into these cases. For this purpose I shall send to each of you a copy of this essay. Let it not be said gentlemen, that an anonymous writer is undeserving of your attention.—Facts, important facts touching our foreign relations, can never be beneath the attention of wise and great statesmen, let the quarter from which they come be ever so humble.

It may be premised that if the French Berlin and Milan decrees are still in full force, we have no further or additional cause of complaint against Great Britain, than we had in the year 1807, and surely if such should turn out to be the fact, there is no reason why we should favor the views of France.

To statesmen like you, gentlemen, it would be needless to observe, that whether we form a direct and open alliance with France, or whether we attack her enemy by commercial restrictions or by arms, we as effectually subserve and promote her views, as if we openly entered into an alliance with her.

The case which I shall select among many others, (four of which met the same fate on the same day, by the same means; to wit, the personal decree of the emperor) is that of the brig Catherine of Boston, captain Ockington; both vessel and cargo owned by John Parker, esq. a citizen of Boston, and by other citizens of the United States, and of which vessel Mr. Ephraim Thayer, junior, was supercargo.

I shall not, gentlemen, rely on the declarations of the concerned, for whom I have the highest respect, but shall confine myself to the official declarations and process verbal of the French government, which Mr. Madison, if not you, gentlemen, will treat with respect.

You will observe that the last communications to congress are dated the 15th July; but the president must have been in November, in possession of the outrageous and perfidious decision of the emperor of the 10th of September, to which I shall hereafter allude; or else Mr. Russell, who knew all the facts, has been guilty of a most gross neglect.

The judgment and process verbal, or record, in the case of the American brig Catherine, is dated the 10th of September, 1810, ten months after Mr. Madison's proclamation stating the decrees repealed, and recites as follows:

“That the French privateer, Jean Adolphus, on the 31 of May, 1811, [six months after the pretended repeal of the Berlin and Milan decrees] captured on the high seas the vessel called the Catherine, David Ockington, master, bound to St. Petersburg, laden with coffee, sugar, cocoa, dye wood, and cotton, on the ground that part of the same were the produce of French and Spanish colonies, and that the rest of the cargo was prohibited by his imperial majesty's decrees.”

The process verbal then declares, that the vessel departed from Boston, on the 10th of April, 1810, and that the goods were chiefly of the growth of Batavia, [a Dutch port] that the vessel belonged to Americans; that the cargo was first destined for Gottenburg, [a Swedish port] or for such other port of the Baltic where it would be most advantageous to sell the said cargo; that on her passage she had been taken by a Danish privateer, and after having been detained ten months and five days she had been liberated by [those friends to neutral rights] the Danes, and after proceeding up the Baltic, she had been visited by nine Danish privateers, and had been once hailed in English by a vessel which did not board her; that she remained eight days in Gottenburg, where laid an English packet boat armed with five or six guns, but which did not board her; that on coming out of Gottenburg she saw at a distance a great number of vessels, but she did not approach them so near as to ascertain the nation to which they belonged; that she was never visited by any ship; that two mariners who were interrogated confirmed these facts, that the supercargo also confirmed them: The council of prizes at Paris having noticed all the above facts, and no others, decreed as follows:—“Considering that the anchoring at Gottenburg by the Catherine, where there was an English packet boat armed is a proof that the expedition, [from Boston ten months before] which consists almost wholly of colonial produce, is in the enemy's trade and interest, and moreover there is no proof that she had been visited by the enemy, it is because the American flag was only a mask, and that therefore the confiscation is a matter of no difficulty.”

Now I request you, gentlemen, to pause before you proceed one step further in your legislative measures, and examine this case. It was decided at Paris, after, as I shall shew you, an application from our public agent. It assumes as the supposed cause of condemnation:

- 1st. The having on board colonial or British goods not bound to a French, but a neutral port.
- 2d. The having been in the same port with a British packet boat, but not boarded.
- 3d. The having been hailed by a vessel the officers of which spoke the English language, but not boarded by her.

It is not even alleged that she came fully within the Berlin or Milan decrees, but she was condemned because there was a suspicion of her having been within them.

This is the whole case: The original French document is before me, and I will forward it to either of you, if you wish it as a foundation for a motion to enquire into the state of facts, or rather an attested copy of the protest before our consul, Mr. Warden, and condemnation you will find in the department of state. It is your solemn duty so to enquire. You ought not to let the nation be deceived on so important a subject.

If this had been a single case, or if there had not been many cases of this kind, I am too much of a statesman to contend that the particular wrong done to individuals by an unjust tribunal unknown to its government, is cause of serious complaint against such government; but gentlemen, there have been many cases of this sort, on the emperor, on appeal, has confirmed those decisions, in September last, ten months after the alleged repeal of his decrees, not on the ground simply of a violation of his decrees, but of a suspicion of an intent to violate them. Thus giving them an extension far more dangerous and injurious than the decrees themselves.

These facts I shall prove, first, by a protest before David Baillie Warden, esq. consul general and agent for prizes for the United States in Paris; and 2dly, by letters from the supercargo of the above named vessel.

1st. By the protest, dated September 24, 1811, it appears, that the aforesaid brig Catherine never took convoy, never was boarded by a British ship of war; that the supercargo applied to Jonathan Russell, esquire, our agent in France, on the 11th June; that Mr. Russell applied to the French government in behalf of that vessel and of three others; that he was led to expect a favorable decision; that he applied a second time, and was informed they had all been condemned on the 10th of September last.

Has not Mr. Russell stated these facts to President Madison? If so, were they not known prior to his message? Were these facts not material to the question whether the decrees were or were not repealed? What were the allegations?