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CONGRESS.

From the Georgetown Federal Republican.
RECAPITULATION OF THE DEBATE IN SECRET SESSION ON THE EMBARGO.

The President in a confidential message having recommended an Embargo, the usual reference was made to the committee of foreign relations. Mr. Calhoun (chairman of that committee) reported the next day, that it was "inexpedient" to pass such a law. The report was referred to a committee of the whole house, and made the order of the day for that day. Mr. Speaker Clay, after many observations in support of the policy of the measure, its efficacy in distressing the enemy, which would be tested by its compelling him to abandon Canada, and break up the blockades, animadverted with some asperity upon the report of the committee. He expressed his regret that such a committee should have made such a report; saying, he was not to be driven from his course, or deterred from discharging his duty by the clamor that might be raised against an embargo, &c. &c.

Mr. Taylor (N. Y. Demo.) of the committee, rose and repelled with spirit, the insinuation of the Speaker.—He for one was not influenced by an apprehension of clamor, but had a single eye to the state of the country, and the effect to be produced by the measure. He was proceeding when the Speaker rose to explain—he assured the gentleman he made no such insinuation. Such was not his practice. He alluded to no gentleman in that house—whenever he had occasion to make allusions, he should be explicit. A sharp debate ensued, in which Mr. Calhoun defended his report in a concise and pertinent speech, which could not be answered by the visionary believers in the efficacy of our restrictive energies. Mr. Duvall, of Kentucky, was particularly distinguished in opposition to the embargo. Mr. Nelson, of Virginia, was loud and rude in support of it. When he took his seat, Mr. Hanson rose with several members, but he was declared to be entitled to the floor. Mr. Duvall begged to be indulged by the gentleman from Maryland with the floor, until he made a short answer to the gentleman from Virginia. Mr. H. said he would certainly indulge the gentleman upon an understanding that he would be afterwards entitled to the floor. The chairman of the committee (Mr. Kennedy) said he would have the reference. Upon which Mr. Duvall was permitted to proceed. When he concluded, Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Nelson, skirmished smartly for some minutes. Upon which Mr. Hanson rose, and full notes being taken of his remarks by a friend, they are now written out.

Mr. Hanson said, if his rising at this time would put an end to the wrangle and war of words between the gentlemen over the war, he should be the more rejoiced, that he was entitled to the floor. He said, he imagined so severe a personal penalty—he paid a heavy tax in pain for every effort he made in the house, that if he consulted his own ease and well being merely, he would have remained silent. But such admonitions were not to be regarded when a measure so mischievous and fraught with danger and ruin to the Union, was under discussion. He felt an irresistible impulse to reply to the gentleman from Virginia particularly, as well as to others who preceded him.

Mr. H. said, if he possessed the lungs of the hon. member from Virginia, (Judge Nelson) and could with equal facility swell himself into the same dimensions of immense importance, he might perhaps present himself to the house much oftener than gentlemen would be willing to afford him a patient audience. But if like the gentleman, he had been gifted by nature with the power, he would not like him to hamper the house by wandering in their ears, lest a gentle rebuke, to be found in Pope's Essay on Man, should be quoted against him, with the same just application that it might be now referred to for the correction and edification of the gentleman.

* How could we wish that Heaven had him still.
* The whispering zephyr and the puling.

Mr. H. said, it was not by blustering or scolding, or heaping epithets upon the enemy, that the evils of war were to be lessened, victories achieved, conquests effected, or war conducted to an honorable and glorious issue. If the enemy was ultimately provoked to do all the harm to our defenceless country, which the powerful means at his disposal would enable him, Mr. H. asked, whether we were to depend upon a muttering curses upon his head to repel his attacks, and ensure our safety? Were we to rely upon words, war reports, war proclamations and embargoes? We might fly to our passions for relief, but should find poor consolation from that source. While the angry passions bubbled, and the paroxysm of rage continued, temporary ease might be gained, but like leivatives that merely deadened the sense of pain, but reached not the seat of the disease, nor could operate a cure, rage allayed and reason restored would leave the subject a prey to the keenest anguish.

When the deluded Athenians were resolved to engage in hostilities with a neighboring state, more powerful in belligerent means, and complete in all the circumstances of war, the good old Phocion interposed his counsel to temper the rage of demagogues, direct the multitude from their purpose, and ward off the calamities which war, under such circumstances, would bring upon his country. He admonished them to listen to other counsels than their own blind passions.

"Stick, said he, to the method in which you have the advantage, which is talking not fighting." How well suited to the condition of this people was the advice of Phocion. How different would have been the situation of the country, had it been followed. We were in our element when the war of words was vigorously prosecuted, and victory sat upon our banners. Every diplomatic controversy was only the prelude to another triumph, and our parliamentary contests acquired for us new trophies to adorn our annals.—The Cannings, Castlereaghs, Wellesleys, Stephens and Crokers, dwindled into despicable dimunutiveness!

Mr. H. said, by commencing war without adequate preparations for its prosecution, a state of fearful and unexampled calamity and danger had been brought upon the people. Disappointment, defeat and disgrace attended all our military operations.—That we might as well attempt to realize the dreams of the Alchemist as hope to go on upon the present scale of extravagant expenditure and waste, without perceiving the necessity of checking the authors of such confusion and profligacy, by at once assigning limits to their folly and unfortunate ambition. By land, said he, we have already lost all the war-like character acquired by our ancestors in a glorious seven years struggle for independence. Clouds and darkness are hanging the country, covering with a sable mantle the prospects so bright and cheering to a people, suddenly rising in importance among the nations of the world. Through this portentous gloom, the only ray of hope to cheer the sorrowing souls, dated from the unexpired members of federal policy. Another and another triumph over our most able marine animated the drooping spirits of the people, raised the nation from the lowest depths of degradation and despair, into which it sunk, dragged up our drowning honor by the locks and shed a lustre upon our national character. That navy was doomed to destruction, or if saved, would be useless as long as the war continued.

Mr. H. said, so deep was the interest which he took in the disgraceful and distressing situation of his country, so anxious was he to bring this unequal, unnecessary and destructive contest to a close, that he would even vote for the proposed occlusion of our ports, to lop off the last withering limb of our dying commerce, if it would have the effect of drawing nearer the period of pacification. But as much as the member from Kentucky (Mr. Clay) labored to show, that such would be the effect of an embargo; that it would harass the blockading squadron by withholding from them supplies, and reduce the British forces in Canada to great straits, he could see no foot hold for such an argument after past and bitter experience. Nothing was more astonishing, more ludicrous than to hear gentlemen extolling the efficacy of our restrictive energies after the conspicuous and mortifying failures which had attended all our persevering long tried efforts to starve the enemy. He never expected, after years of fruitless experiment and years of self-torture, that this suicidal system would be gravely recommended for its belligerent virtues. Nor did he believe it was recommended as a mean of annoying the enemy. Far different was the purpose of its authors. Stripped of its false disguises, and presented in its naked deformity to the nation, Mr. H. considered the message of the President with the accompanying explanations and avowals on the floor, as nothing more than recommendatory of a system of retaliation upon the Atlantic states north of the Delaware. It was designed to retaliate upon the section of country "favored by the enemy," the injuries inflicted upon the south by his formidable fleets. Because the cordon was not drawn from Maine to St. Mary's, but from the Delaware to the Mississippi, government would parentally unite with the enemy and make the blockade so complete as to include all the ports of the Union.

Mr. H. said, perhaps it would be more congenial to the feelings of the Executive to carry this retaliatory system a little further. In the language of an hon. gentleman from S. Carolina, (Mr. Lowndes) used on a similar occasion last session, if the enemy should burn down Norfolk, a law had better be enacted authorizing the President to burn down Boston. Perhaps this same system of domestic retaliation could to advantage be strained yet a little further by "tucking up" some obnoxious non-combatant citizen to the north, in return for every Southern knight slain in battle. If this course of undisguised hostility and hatred to the north was persisted in, and recurred to whenever a wretched pretext could be formed to put them under the ban of the Embargo, Mr. H. said it would result in a total alienation of their affections from the government, a disunion, sooner or later, would be the inevitable consequence.

Mr. H. said, it was a great question of national policy whether an Embargo should be imposed under the existing circumstances of the country, and he proceeded to show that it was highly improper, and could not have the effect of distressing the enemy as contended for. If the laws were so framed as to prevent an illicit importation of the enemy, an embargo would not be necessary. The privations already endured by the people, the intense suffering produced by the war, the loss of property, the enhanced value of every article of luxury, comfort or convenience, the wish of foreign countries and necessary to the condition of this people, together with the hardships to be imposed upon all classes of citizens, should admonish against

traitor to forbear, to pause, to reflect before striking this last blow at the remnant of trade—before closing the last outlet for our surplus produce, which the enemy has not a sufficient naval force on our coast to block up. Mr. H. said, if an embargo was superadded to war and taxes, if at the moment of imposing heavy taxes upon the suffering people the means of paying them were cruelly taken away, it would be discovered when too late that the chord had been stretched to the cracking point. He would remind the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. Clay) that as there was a last dollar that would bankrupt a treasury, a last drop of blood that closed the grave on a man, so there was a last hair that would break the camel's back. There could be no doubt of the effect. An embargo at this time would break down the little spirit left in the country, would reduce the desponding to despair, and render despair those whom the perverseness of profligate ministers have already brought to penury and want. Even now the war languished on the hands of administration, and was brought almost to a stop. An embargo would produce a dead calm through the country, as respected military operations; but that calm might be followed by a storm which would make a wreck of the constitution.

Mr. H. ridiculed the measure as a mean of prosecuting the war with vigor and effect. It was giving up the game without a trial. To make the blockade of our whole coast complete when the enemy could only blockade a part was playing into his hand. It was little better than withdrawing from the contest, and abandoning the right to navigate the common highway of nations, when the war was declared in maintenance of that right.—If but a single port in the country was left open, because the force of the enemy was too small to close it, we should insist to the last upon the right of sailing from it, and using in common with all nations, this highway so much prized about, by the very men who would give the monopoly of it, though it cannot be taken.

Mr. Hanson said if it was in order for the Speaker to introduce into a discussion in the house the proceedings and conduct of the other branch of the legislature it would be in order for him (Mr. H.) to reply. Aukward as a vindication might appear, coming from such a quarter, he would nevertheless defend the Senate. That body had acted with becoming dignity and spirit in relation to the mission to Russia. Its independence had been so well maintained, and the encroachments of the executive so manfully resisted, it was not too much to say they had acted nobly. To have acted otherwise than they did would have been to change their characters and stain the honor of an executive council into the mere slaves and creatures of an overweening grasping ambitious President. Mr. H. said, after all that had passed in relation to the mediation of Russia, the Senate could not consistently with what was due to itself act differently. Mr. H. had no more confidence in the Russian mission than the Speaker. He possessed information himself which satisfied his mind, that it was a mere trick, a juggle, a stroke, of Machiavelian policy to deceive the nation and replenish the treasury. That the hopes of the desponding had been directed to this mission as to the sign of Heaven's favor, which indicated that the tempest had spent its force and a serene sky would soon re-appear. He said, no good would, could, or was intended to grow out of it. The Congress was the only mediator that could restore the relations of peace with England, for so long as appropriations were made to carry on the war, and money could be raised, so long would the war continue.—Bonaparte living and his armies not destroyed.

Mr. H. here stated, that sometime in the latter end of January last, and at least six weeks before the court gazette contained any mention of the occurrence, and at a time when no one dreamt of such an event, he was informed by a distinguished gentleman that the Russian Minister had a few days before offered to the Executive the mediation of his sovereign to bring about peace between Great Britain and this country.—That Mr. Madison had testily rejected the overture, saying he wanted no mediation—the United States were contending for their rights, and would accept of nothing short of their rights. Mr. H. said, he caused publicity to be given to the communication, and unless he was thought to be endowed with a spirit of divination, and the house was willing to pronounce him a prophet, they must believe the mediation was tendered several weeks before Congress adjourned, and at least six weeks before it was acknowledged by the Executive. What was the motive said he for the President to keep back the information until Congress adjourned? He had never himself doubted a moment as to the real cause of the suppression and consequent delay. It was determined to send Albert Gallatin at the head of the mission, and it was at least apprehended, if not considered certain, that such a nomination would not be confirmed by the Senate. This opinion was corroborated by the departure of the envoys only ten or twelve days before the Senate convened. It was further confirmed by the refusal of the Senate to ratify the appointment. Mr. H. was convinced that the apprehension of Mr. Secretary Gallatin's rejection by the Senate induced the President to keep back Mr. Daschkoff's offer until Congress should have adjourned, when it was intended to smuggle him off before the extra session, that time might be gained on his

voyage before his letter of recall could follow after and overtake him. He said it was no wonder after all this, that the Senate should discover some sensibility at the slight and contempt manifested by the Executive towards them, and he approved the proceedings of that body most cordially.

The mission failing, said Mr. H. the war is to go on, and we were now to understand that our restrictive energies were to be the great engine of annoyance, standing in the stead of armies, fortifications and an efficient marine. Mr. H. said he knew the resources of the country when properly called forth by able and faithful councils for just and noble ends. But without unanimity, these resources would lie dormant like the precious sinew of war, deep buried in the bowels of the earth. And there could be no unanimity until there was a change of rulers or a fundamental change of policy and measures. The manner in which the war was conducted, the circumstances under which it was declared, its being a war of foreign conquest, and the total incapacity of administration in all the departments, would ensure a continued and vigorous opposition from all men of reflection, who appreciated the blessings of peace, and would not willingly sacrifice every thing dear to themselves and families and country in an unrighteous war. Mr. H. said in a defensive war there would be no diversity of sentiment—all would unite in repelling invasion.—the federalists had stood foremost every where in meeting the enemy when a hostile foot was set upon our shores—but they would not go a tilting in Canada, which was not worth the cost of conquering, and which we could not keep if we conquered. Mr. H. here reminded the house of the part taken by the minority in secret session, when the enemy was understood to be within a few hours sail of the Capital. The sentiments he himself uttered on that occasion flowed from the heart—he was proud to say, they were entertained in common with all the Tories, and if ever an opportunity offered, such as was then anticipated, he would go hand and hand, heart and heart with the majority in any effort to drive the invading foe from the Capital. He would be one to set an example which was not shewn in '93 by the then minority.

But, said Mr. H. ready as the "Tories" are, and have proved themselves to be in all parts of the country, to take up arms against their invaders, they will nevertheless continue to maintain the rights of private judgment as unalienable—they will defend to the last, the liberty of speech and free enquiry—they will continue to inform the people of the total absence of preparation to meet the enemy, and of the defenceless state of the nation. When the enemy was approaching the Capital, in what state of preparation was the District? The enemy was at our gates, and they were open for their reception. The Citadel was defenceless; not a rampart raised, nor a cannon mounted. A file of soldiers scarcely was left to guard the Capitol and secure Congress in its deliberations. All had been despatched helter skelter to Fort Warburton, which was pronounced a mere slaughter-house by a gentleman of military science and experience.—And at the moment of the highest alarm, Congress adjourned without doing any thing to lessen the panic, and infuse ardor and confidence in the dismayed inhabitants. No, while the enemy was at our doors, Congress sat deliberating in cold debate. The next day, when the enemy was considered as still approaching, they continued to deliberate upon the simplest mode of overthrowing the British Empire by a tax of so much more, or so much less upon whiskey, salt, carriages, stamps and the like.

Mr. H. now complimented Mr. Duvall, of Kentucky, upon his judicious and sensible arguments against the proposed Embargo, though he had no hope of their producing the slightest good by staying the hand of power.

Mr. H. continued—Had not administration already reaped a sufficiently abundant crop of disgrace from this war, and do they not live in expectation of another rich crop now ripening for the sickle? Was government willing to stand responsible to the people and posterity, for a recurrence of those afflictions and privations, those disasters and disgraces which had reduced the nation to the most ignominious condition? Were they irrevocably determined to transmit to the next generation the effects of those follies and calamities which the present race had so bitterly experienced?

Mr. H. said it was certainly not according to strict parliamentary rule to enter into a general discussion of the merits of the measure proposed until the bill was introduced, at which time he would cheerfully take a share in the debate. He had no great objection to the amendment proposed by the Speaker, because it would be timely enough to discuss the measure and throw it out of the house after the bill was introduced, fully discussed and perfectly understood. He had some curiosity himself to see what would be the provisions of the bill, and would patiently await its introduction.

Mr. Hanson having taken his seat Mr. Gray rose. He said, he hoped that would be the last as it was the first time he had risen to reply to the gentleman from Maryland. He had promised to reply to him in the course of the session, but the school in which he was taught forbade him to engage in such controversy. He was taught to rest his character upon good deeds, and not to be ambitious of attaining a bad em-