

THE TRUE REPUBLICAN, OR American Whig.

"The truth our guide—the public good our end."

VOLUME 1.

WILMINGTON, DELEWARE, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1809.

PUBLISHED BY
WATSON & RAMSEY,
On Second, near Market Street,
At Three Dollars per annum, half in advance,
or Three Dollars & Fifty Cents, if not
paid within the year.

WILMINGTON PRICES CURRENT. Mar 23, 1809.

QUALITY (DISE.)	QUAN.	FROM	TO
Bacon,	Lb.	10	12
Butter,	—	16	18
Bees-wax,	—	35	55
Beef,	Barrel	9	10
Brandy, (4th proof)	Gallon	2 50	2 75
Corn,	Bushel	62	75
Cotton, (upland)	Lb.	16	17
Coffee,	—	25	—
Flour,	Barrel	7 50	8
Flaxseed,	Cask	7 50	8
Gin, (American)	Gallon	75	—
Boards, (1 1/4 inch)	1000 ft.	10	12
Timber, (square pine)	—	3	—
Shingles, (cypress)	1000	2	2 25
Staves, (w. o. hds)	—	28	30
— w. o. ditto	—	14	16
— w. o. bbls.	—	14	15
Heading, (w. o. hhd.)	—	38	30
Lard,	Lb.	10	12
Molasses,	Gallon	44	50
Tar,	Barrel	2	2 25
Rosin,	—	3	—
Turpentine,	320 lbs.	3 75	4
Spirits Turpentine,	Gallon	37	40
Pork,	Barrel	13	14
Peas,	Bushel	62	70
Rum, (Jamaica, 4th pr.	Gallon	1 20	—
— 3d proof	—	1 25	—
American ditto,	—	70	—
Rice,	100 lb.	3	3 25
Salt,	Bushel	75	—
— Liverpool,	do.	70	—
Sugar, (Muscovado)	100 lb.	11	12
— Loaf	Lb.	21	22
Tobacco,	100 lb.	5	—

THE INADMISSIBLE PRINCIPLES

OF THE
PROCLAMATION OF OCTOBER 22,
1807—considered.

BY THE LATE PRESIDENT ADAMS.
(CONTINUED.)

Thurlow, when he was chancellor, hazarded a saying to a committee of the city of London, that the practice of impressment of seamen was legal: but the committee answered him respectfully, but firmly, though in the presence of the king in council—"we acknowledge the high authority of your lordship's opinion, but we must declare that we are of a very different opinion;" and their answer appeared to be applauded by the nation. Press gangs are continually opposed and resisted at sea, by the sailors, whenever they have the means or the least hope of escaping. Navy officers and men are sometimes killed, and there is no inquisition for their blood. As little noise as possible is made about it. It is known to be justifiable homicide to take the life of an assailant in the necessary defence of a man's liberty.—There is not a jury in England who would find a verdict of murder or manslaughter against any sailor, on land or at sea, who should kill any one of a press gang in the necessary defence of his liberty from impressment.—Press gangs on shore are often resisted by the people, fired on, some of them wounded, sometimes killed. Yet no inquisition is made for this. The practice is held in abhorrence by the men-of-war's-men themselves. The boatswain of the *Rose* frigate, after the acquittal of the four Irish sailors, who were prosecuted in a special court of admiralty at Boston, for killing a gallant and amiable officer, lieutenant Pantton, said, "this is a kind of work in which I have been engaged for twenty years, i. e. fighting with honest sailors, to deprive them of their liberty; I always suspected that I ought to be hanged for it." Since I have alluded to this case, it may not be amiss to recollect some other circumstances of it.

A press-gang from the *Rose*, commanded by lieutenant Pantton, with a midshipman and a number of ordinary seamen, visited and searched a merchant ship from Marblehead, belonging to Mr. Hooper, at sea. The lieutenant enquired if any English, Irish or Scotchmen were on board? Not satisfied with the answer he received, he prepared to search the ship from stern to stern. At last he found four Irishmen retired and concealed in the forepeak. With sword and pistol he immediately laid siege to the enclosure and summoned the men to surrender. Corbett, who had the cool intrepidity of a Nelson, reasoned, remonstrated, and laid down the law with the precision of a Mansfield. "I know who you are. You are the lieutenant of a

man of war, come with a press gang to deprive me of my liberty. You have no right to impress me. I have retreated from you as far as I can; I can go no farther. I, and my companions are determined to stand our defence. Stand off." The sailors within and without employed their usual language to each other, and a midshipman, in the confusion, fired a pistol into the forepeak & broke an arm of one of the four. Corbett, who stood

in a sort of menaces and denances with the fleet. He repeated what he had before said, and marking a line with a harpoon in the salt, with which the ship was loaded, said, "You are determined to deprive me of my liberty, and I am determined to defend it. If you step over that line, I shall consider it as a proof that you are determined to impress me, and by the eternal God of Heaven you are a dead man." "Aye, my lad," said the lieutenant. "I have seen many a fellow before now." Taking his snuff box out of his pocket, and taking a pinch of snuff, he very deliberately stepped over the line and attempted to seize Corbett. The latter, drawing back his arm, and driving his harpoon with all his force, cut off the carotid artery and jugular vein, and laid the lieutenant dead at his feet. The *Rose* sent a reinforcement to the press gang; broke down the bulk head, and seized the four Irishmen, and brought them to trial for piracy and murder. The court consisted of governor Bernard, governor Wentworth, chief justice Hutchinson, judge Achmuty, commodore Hood himself, who then commanded all the ships of war on the station, now a peer of the British empire, and twelve or fifteen others, counsellors of Massachusetts, New-Hampshire, and Rhode-Island. After the trial, the president of the court, governor Bernard, pronounced the judgement of the court, that the action of the prisoners was justifiable homicide, and in this opinion the whole court was unanimous.—The sailor who was wounded in the arm, brought an action against the midshipman, and commodore. Hood himself interposed and made compensation to the sailor, to his satisfaction, after which the action was withdrawn. Such was the impressment of seamen, as it stood by law, before our revolution.—The author of my text, then carries his courtly complaisance to the English government, farther than governors Bernard and Hutchinson, and even than lord Hood carried it, when we were a part of the British empire. He thinks, that as every nation has a right to the service of its subjects in time of war, the proclamation of the king of Great-Britain, commanding his naval officers to practise such impressments, on board, not only the vessels of his own subjects, but, of the United States; a foreign nation, could not furnish the slightest ground for an embargo! It is not necessary for me to say, that any thing could furnish a sufficient ground for an embargo, for any long time; this I leave to the responsibility of our president, senators, and representatives in congress. But, I say, with confidence, that it furnished a sufficient ground for a declaration of War! Not the murder of Pierce, nor all the murders, on board the *Chesapeake*, nor all the other injuries and insults, we have received from foreign nations, atrocious as they have been, can be of such dangerous, lasting and pernicious consequence to this country, as this proclamation, if we have servility enough to submit to it.

What would the author of my text have advised? Would he counsel the president to stipulate in a treaty with Great-Britain, that his navy officers should for ever hereafter have a right to visit American merchant ships, and impress from them all English, Scotch, and Irish seamen? Will he be so good as to explain the distinction between ships. Are not merchant ships under the jurisdiction and entitled to the protection of the laws of their country upon the high seas, as much as ships of war? Is not a merchant as much the territory of the United States as a ship of war? Would the author of my text oblige the president and congress to acquiesce in silence, under this proclamation, and permit it to be executed for ever hereafter? Would not such a tame and silent acquiescence, as effectually yield the point, and establish the practice if not the law, as an express stipulation in a solemn treaty? If the United States had as powerful a navy as Great-Britain, and Great-Britain as feeble a force at sea, as ours, would he advise the president either to concede the principle, by treaty, or acquiesce in it, in silence? Does the circumstance of great power or great weakness make any alteration in the principle or the right? Should the captain or crew of an A-

merican merchantman, resist a British press gang on the high seas, & in defence of their liberty, kill the commander and all under him, and then make their escape, and after returning to Salem, be prosecuted, would the writer of my text, as a judge or juror, give his judgment for finding them guilty of murder or piracy? Although the embargo was made the watchword in our late elections, the votes in our greatest nurseries of men, for example, in Salem, in Marblehead, in Barnstable, Sandwich, and other places on Cape Cod, in Nantucket and the Vineyard, and other places, seemed to shew that our seamen preferred to be embargoed rather than go to sea and be impressed.

No doubt, it will be said, that we have nothing to do with the question in England concerning the legality or illegality of impressments. This, as long as they confine the law and the practice to their own country, and to their own seamen, is readily acknowledged. We shall leave them to justify their own usage, whether it is a mere abuse or a legitimate custom, to their consciences, to their own sense of equity, humanity or policy. But, when they arrogate a right and presume, in fact, to transfer their usurpations to foreign nations, or rather to Americans, whom they presume to distinguish from all other foreign nations, it becomes the interest, the right and the indispensable duty of our government, to enquire into the nefarious nature of it in England, in order to expose the greater turpitude of it, when transferred to us, as well as to oppose and resist it to the utmost of their power, and it is equally the duty of the people to support their government, in such opposition, to the last extremity.

Permit me now to enquire, what will be the effects of an established law and practice of British impressments of seamen from American ships, upon the commerce, the navigation and the peace of the United States, and, above all, upon the hearts and minds of our seamen.

In considering those innumerable dangers, from winds and seas, rocks and shoals, which all ships are exposed, in their voyages, the owner and master must sit down together, in order to terminate the number of seamen necessary for the voyage. They must calculate the chances of impressment, engage a supernumerary list of sailors, that they may be able to spare as many as the British lieutenant shall please to take, and have enough left to secure the safety of the ship and cargo, above all the lives of the master and crew.—They know not how many British ships of war they may meet, nor how many sailors the conscience of each lieutenant may allow him to impress. For the lieutenant is to be judge, jury, sheriff and jailor, to every seaman in American vessels. He is to try many important questions of law and of fact.—Whether the sailor is a native of America; whether he has been lawfully naturalized in America; whether he is an Englishman, Scotchman or Irishman; whether emigrated to America before the revolution, or since? Indeed, no evidence is to be admitted of any naturalization by our laws, in any of the states, since the revolution, if before. In truth, the doctrine of the inherent and indefeasible duty of allegiance is asserted, so peremptorily, in the proclamation, that the lieutenant may think it his duty to impress every man who was born in the British dominions. It may be the opinion of this learned judge, that the connection between the king and subject, is so sacred and divine, that allegiance cannot be dissolved by any treaty the king has made, or even by an act of parliament. And this pious sentiment may subject us all to impressment, at once.—This however, *en passant*.

The lieutenant is to order the captain of the merchantman to lay before him a list of his crew; he is then to command the crew to be ordered, or mustered, or summoned, to pass in review before him. A tribunal ought to be erected.—The lieutenant is to be the judge, possessed of greater authority than the chief justice of any of our states, or even than the chief justice of the United States.—The midshipman is to be clerk, and the boatswain sheriff or marshal. And who are those lieutenants? Commonly very young gentlemen, the younger sons of wealthy families, who have procured their commissions to give them an honorable living, instead of putting them apprentices to trade, merchandize, law, physic, or divinity. Their education, their experience, their manners, their principles are so well known, that I shall say nothing of them. Lord Keppel said, that he knew the maxim of British seamen to be, "to do no right, and

receive no wrong." The principles of the officers I believe to be somewhat better; but, in this, they all seem to agree, officers and men, and their present ministry seem to be of the same opinion, that the world was made for the British nation, and that all nature and nations were created for the dignity and omnipotence of the British navy.

It is impossible to figure to ourselves, in imagination, this solemn tribunal, and venerable judge, without smiling, till the humiliation of our country comes into our thoughts, and interrupts the sense of ridicule, by the tears of grief or vengeance.

High on a splendid seat, which far outshone

Henry's gilt tub, or Fleemoe's Irish throne.

The lieutenant examines the countenance, he gait and air of every seaman. Like the sage of old, commands him to speak, "that he may know him." He pronounces his accent and dialect to be that of the Scotch, Irish, West Country, Yorkshire, Welsh, Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney or

descendants of emigrants from all these countries and retain a tincture of the language and pronunciation of their fathers and grandfathers. These will be decided to be the king's subjects. Many will be found to be emigrants or the descendants of emigrants, from Germany, Holland, Sweden, France, Spain, Portugal or Italy.—These will be adjudged by the lieutenant not to be native Americans.

(To be Continued.)

Appropriate Remarks.

The federal faction claiming the merit of the late propositions to the President of the U. States, is similar to a felon at the gallows claiming the applause of the public, because his villainy has exhibited the energy of the government. The principles upon which the late overtures are made, are in every respect different from what has ever been contemplated by the Junta faction. They have always maintained this ground, that the British nation would never condescend to make proposals to the United States while we presumed to hold a rod of retaliation over them. Rose's mission was altogether founded on this principle. Mr. Jefferson could not bring into view one specific proposition from him, till he had removed every thing which had the appearance of coercion. Even the proclamation was to be formally repealed, and it is evident that the whole process of this business was to take a course solely calculated to weaken the energies of the American government as to any influence resulting from their retaliatory measures. The faction highly approved of this high toned position of the British, and reproached the President for not condescending to these terms, styled them a mere punctilio, which never ought to be adhered to—addressed the President to submit to negotiation on these degrading conditions—and the papers of that day will show how clamorous the faction was in consequence of the dignified deportment assumed by Mr. Jefferson, in insisting on the powers of Mr. Rose being made known to him before he would relax in his conduct. In this part of the business between Britain and the United States, the faction cannot pretend to say, that they have brought about the late proposition by Mr. Erskine. So far from the President being now called on to repeal his proclamation before any overtures are made, the whole business is explicitly stated in the first communication, and the ground work of all the preliminary articles are offered for the consideration of the government. It seems then that the late mission carefully avoided the former difficulty; & finding that the spirit of the government would not yield to such humiliating terms as were proposed by Mr. Rose, Mr. Erskine began in the first instance to tell what his majesty would do, before he could expect the President to relinquish our demands, or relax in our measures. Here then the federal party are completely baffled by the firmness of Mr. Jefferson, and we have the happiness to find, that the British government have not the insolence to propose the same derogatory terms to his successor.

But of all follies & absurdities, the pretended claim of merit from them on the present overtures is the most ridiculous. The terms now offered are predicated on the non-intercourse law, which has been more severely reprobated by the faction than even the embargo. It was called a poor miserable subterfuge, calculated to excite war with England! It was said, that its tergiversations were ruinous to our commerce—that it