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Once are the plow and sheaf of wheat, Unwary'd by party rage, cultiv' like brothers.

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Debate on the DISPUTE with G. BRITAIN. Mr. GREGG'S RESOLUTION.

Continued from our last.

Mr. SMITH said, lest he should be considered as an enthusiast in respect to commerce, and deserve to be classed among that desperate order of men called merchants, according to the representation which we have had yesterday from the gentleman from Virginia, he had been led to think that the situation of the people of the United States, separated from the rest of the world by an ocean of 3000 miles, possessing an immense region of land, having full employment for all her people in the cultivation of the earth, having, from the variety of her climates and the difference of her soil, the means of supplying herself, not only with all the necessaries of life in abundance, but with many of its comforts, and even some of its luxuries, it had been happily the American people, when they became an independent nation, had found themselves without commerce, and had still remained so. Thus circumstanced, they would certainly have avoided those dangers which flow from the weakness of an extended trade, and those luxuries which have hitherto proved so fatal to morals, happiness, and liberty. In my opinion, we should have been a happier people without commerce. Among the considerations which have induced me to believe that this would have been a happy state, is, that we should have enjoyed a perfect state of safety. We should not have been under the necessity of conflicting with foreign nations, because commerce and commerce alone, can produce those conflicts. I was astonished yesterday to hear it mentioned by the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. J. Randolph) and boldly asserted, referring to the constitution, that the American government was under no obligation to protect any property of its citizens one foot from the shore. I was astonished at this declaration, because I could see to what it went. I saw, if this was the opinion of the southern states, where it would end. The situation of this people, when they became a nation, was this:—The eastern states might properly be said to be a commercial people, as they lived by commerce;—the middle states were partly commercial and partly agricultural. This opposition of character must have created great difficulty in forming the constitution, and, in truth, this and other points threw great obstacles in the way of its formation. But a spirit of concession overcame all difficulties. Mr. S. referred to the constitution itself to prove that commerce was intended to be protected.

Having established the right of commerce to protection, he would consider the resolution under consideration. We find our rights invaded by foreign nations, and an attack made by one nation on our carrying trade, which in my opinion cannot be warranted by the law of nations.—I shall not condescend to argue this point. I believe it to be a lawful trade, let whoever may deny it. I have taken some pains to make myself acquainted with the subject, by reading several treatises upon it; and notwithstanding the contempt with which a certain book was yesterday treated by the gentleman from Virginia, I will venture to predict, that when the moral part of that gentleman and myself shall be in ashes, the author of that work, will be considered a great man. But there was a curious feature in all the luminous discoveries yesterday disclosed to us by the gentleman from Virginia, in which he strictly observed the rule of the rhetorician, where a point could not be justified, to get over it as well as he could. On the inappreciation of our seamen he said nothing. He knew that the American feelings would not bear it. When I think of what is called the carrying trade, I consider it a small evil compared to this. It has been compared to Algerine slavery, but it is worse. What is this imprisonment of your citizens as seized by the hands

of violence, and if they refuse to fight the battles of those who thus lay violent hands upon them, you see them hanging at the yard arm.—We are told we are not to mind these things, that the nation who commits the outrage is a powerful nation.—But really as an American, I cannot feel the force of this observation.

The gentleman from Virginia yesterday assumed it as a principle, and the whole of his argument turned on it, that this is a war measure; and that its friends are going to war. Were I satisfied of the truth of this remark, I should change my mind with regard to the resolution. But is it a war measure? I believe the same duties and obligations exist between nations as between individuals in a state of nature. If my neighbour treats me with injustice, I have a right to decline all intercourse with him, without giving him a right to knock me down. If we deem it our interest not to trade with a particular nation, have we not a right to say so? A nation with whom we have no commercial treaty, and towards whom, therefore, in regard to trade we have a right to do what we please. If a commercial treaty existed between us, it would be our duty to observe it; but without one, we have an undoubted right to say whether we have or have not a use for her productions. If, then, this be a peace measure, why treat it as a war measure? But it is said that it will lead to war. Britain is said to be a great nation, high spirited and proud, and therefore we must not take this step for fear of the consequences.—Trace this argument.—See where it leads us.—It leads us to this: That with a powerful nation we must on no account whatever quarrel, though she commit ever so many aggressions on our rights. No, we must not let her go whatever length she may, until on this same principle, we shall be called upon to surrender our independence, because we have to deal with a powerful nation! If we do not make a stand now, against her aggressions, when or where shall we do it? But one alternative will remain.—To bend our necks, to crouch beneath the tyrant, to submit without murmur to her insolence and injustice. It is surprising to me to see this resolution scouted by gentlemen, when this same measure has ever been considered as the most proper instrument with which to contend with Great Britain. If we look back to the times of the stamp act, we will see that this was then the opinion of the American people.—Voluntarily associating themselves together, they cheerfully and unhesitatingly, as the means of obtaining redress, relinquished the luxuries, and even the necessaries of life drawn from Great Britain. These associations were voluntary, as from the situation of the colonies they could not be otherwise. And it is remarkable that Great Britain did not consider this as a cause of war, though the people of this country were then her subjects. Coming down to later times, and approaching the period of our national independence, the same measure was resorted to, and considered an effectual expedient to obtain redress of our grievances.—In 1776, what was the sense of the people of England on this subject, and how did they feel the effects of the non-importation agreement of the colonists? They said

“There scarce was ever any affair debated in a British parliament in which the public thought themselves more deeply interested or for the result of which they felt a more impatient anxiety.” Down to the beginning of the American war, this was uniformly considered as the most powerful instrument in our hands to oblige Britain to do us justice. Since that time, it will be found that the same sentiment was expressed when Mr. Madison's resolution on this subject was under consideration. With regard to the effect of this measure upon the revenue, I believe it will have such an effect to a certain degree, but I am far from believing it will be to the amount talk-

ed of. I have no doubt that we will obtain from other countries what will suffice for our wants, without applying to Great Britain. But suppose there should be a greater deficiency in our revenue, and suppose we shall not get from other countries all the articles we want. Are we to compare these privations with the sacrifice of our rights as a nation? I, for one, am of the opinion that if we were not to consume half the luxuries, and many of the conveniences at present imported, we should be as happy as we now are. This would have one excellent effect. It would revive that spirit of industry which our large importations, so far as relates to family manufactures, have almost annihilated. I cannot see what is to prevent every family among us from manufacturing what is necessary for their own wear. The true we might want our fine cloaths, and our wives be deprived of their silk gowns. But would this diminish our happiness? Are such privations to be put into competition with the preservation of our rights? I hope there still remains too much of that ancient virtue, which once glowed in the American breast, to consider this as an evil.

The gentleman from Virginia has told us, that in adopting this measure, we shall be goaded by commercial interest, into a contest with Britain on the seas. For one, I hope we shall have no war. I view this measure as a peaceable measure, and entertain great hopes that it will have the effect we wish. When we consider the situation of Britain we may be confident that she will not wish to increase the number of her enemies, and it will surely be good policy in her to avoid taking that ground which will have this effect. But the gentleman from Virginia tells us, that the situation of England is different from what it was in 1793. Agreed.—But that change is in our favour. G. Britain has at present her hands so full, that she will not wish to increase her enemies. The events of the present contest are extremely uncertain. If the Emperor of France shall prove successful, and make a peace on the continent, to the exclusion of Great Britain, he will undoubtedly shut out British manufactures from every port of Europe. The present therefore is the most favorable time for pursuing our measures.

The gentleman also enquires what will England say of our conduct to Spain. He laments that his lips on this subject are closed. I too lament that mine are closed, and that every measure entered into, were not known to every man, woman and child in America.—I shall not, on this occasion, say more, but to express the hope that the day is not distant when the gentleman's statements will be rectified by a complete disclosure. The same gentleman has avowed his hostility to a certain nation, and he is willing to go to war with her, because he considers her feeble, and because she has been guilty of aggressions on our rights. Mighty aggression! Which is nothing more than what happened the other day at Detroit, where certain British officers seized a man with the view of carrying him over the line. I hope such trivial things, the offspring of accident or personal resentment, will never be considered as a cause of war.

For my part, I cannot see what this measure has to do with our affairs with Spain. Have we not a right to manage those affairs independent of England? Have we got to this, that we consider England as a party to our transactions with other nations? In our affairs with Spain we are doing England no injury, and she has no right to interfere with the exercise of our rights as an independent nation.

The gentleman has also portrayed the great danger to the constitution from war. I agree with him. I too deprecate war. I consider it one of the worst evils that can befall mankind. But as I have already shewn that this is not a war but a peace measure, his remarks do not apply. I know that war is attended with numerous evils, that it not only exhausts our blood and treasure, but

that it has a still more fatal effect on our manners. Still am I not willing to prostrate the dignity, the interest and the honor of my country, even if war should be the consequence. He has also sounded an alarm among us because this is not a measure of the cabinet, that gentleman however knows full well that any member on this floor, without even consulting any of his fellow-members, much less the cabinet, has a right to bring forward any resolution he pleases. But he said at the same time there was no cabinet. How then could he expect us to consult the cabinet when no such thing exists? My friend, who offered this resolution, shewed it to me before he presented it. I concurred in it, and now advocate it, because I think it right, and the gentleman will not deny that every gentleman on this floor has equal rights.

Mr. N. WILLIAMS, said the resolution under discussion had for its principle object the protection of the active commerce of our country; it therefore became the house to enquire whether commerce is of itself so important to us, as to demand our protection. He went fully into this enquiry, and shewed its intimate connection with the Agricultural Interest of the country. He also shewed the necessity of this in order to secure our revenue, and that the moment we give up this source of revenue, or expose it to the cupidity and rapacity of foreign powers, a resort to modes of taxation less congenial with the spirit of freedom must be inevitable. Let those who are for giving up this, look and see what other sources of revenue our country can furnish. Experience, that mother of wisdom, has already instructed us, that excise laws are too odious in many parts of our country, to be borne; indeed this source of revenue would at best be trifling. Personal property is of a nature too occult and too liable to shift and change, to become a safe and permanent source of revenue. The sale of the public lands, relied upon by some, is an expedient, which on many accounts will be slow and inefficient; but if the sentiment prevails of leaving commerce to take care of itself, and my notions are correct that such a measure will paralyse the industry of the farmer, it may very justly be doubted whether our wild lands will meet with a ready market. What then, I would ask, remains, but a land tax, to supply a fund to meet the necessary calls of government; a tax so odious in many parts of our country, as to be one of the powerful causes of the overthrow of one administration, and if again resorted to, may possibly produce the destruction of another.

Besides it is certainly deserving the remembrance of this honorable body, that our government by the course it has taken, has long since pledged itself to support the rights and interests of our merchants upon the ocean. Aside of the immense revenues drawn from their enterprise and industry, we may consider the measures alone, adopted by our government to protect and guarantee their interests, by compacts with foreign nations and armaments for their defence, as having the direct effect of luring them to embark their property upon the seas with the most implicit security, and with almost a certain assurance that its protection should be continued. In short, I do not see how it can be denied, that these privileges are as much entitled to the protection of government as those, equally, though not more sacred, which are enjoyed by our fellow citizens upon land. To relinquish any of them would be taking a step towards a dastardly abandonment of our independence as a nation and would be announcing to every people on earth, that we have become so tame and submissive, that we are willing to be converted into simple tools and instruments for their use and profit, and to desert the defence of our own sacred rights.

Whatever course policy or wisdom might have dictated to this nation a priori respecting commerce, it is evidently too late now to retrace our steps, nay, we cannot do it, short of

resigning to the mercantile interests and without rendering ourselves a subject of derision and contempt to all Europe. If we shrink on the present occasion from this bold and energetic course which the times seem to call for, what a respectable figure we shall cut in history! This will be our story. The American nation, finding her commerce in the Mediterranean pestered by the petty Barbary powers surrounding that sea, clustered and talked manfully, like Bobadil in the play. Now this hero was invincible, or he would not have talked so valiantly. “Twenty more, kill'em! Twenty more, kill them too!” But the moment their rights upon the ocean were assailed by a nation at once respectable and powerful, they meanly shrunk from the contest, and in vain did their admired executive endeavour to rally the representatives of the people, in support of the firm and dignified measures which he recommended.

Should any gentleman here really believe, notwithstanding the volumes of evidence which have loaded our tables to the contrary, that our commercial rights have not been injured or insulted by the British nation, I confess I should feel myself at a loss how to address him. If he will discredit what all our merchants, all our statesmen, and the best of writers upon the law of nations declare to be true, I should consider him as irrecoverably lost in the region of doubt, where I should be disposed to leave him, in the undisturbed enjoyment of his own gloomy imagination. Indeed so clear does this subject appear to me, that I fear it would be wasting time even to state a grievance so well known to all. Great Britain has for many years stilled herself mistress of the ocean. And in truth it cannot be denied, that she has erected upon that element a colossus of power which overlooks and would overawe all the nations on the globe. “Rule Britannia,” is an old song of her singing; and I have somewhere read that the ballads of a nation go far to pourtray, if not to form the spirit and propensities of the people. Consequently, jealous of every other commercial nation this haughty queen would naturally endeavour to suppress the rapid and lofty soaring of the American Eagle. This jealousy has of course given rise to those principles which she attempts to interpolate into the laws of nations, and of which we now complain.

It is alarming (observed Mr. W.) to hear it said, as it has been upon upon this floor, with a kind of triumph, “What! shall we quarrel with a powerful nation for so trifling an object as the carrying trade? Such blindness is to me astonishing. That nation and her courts have not till lately insisted with any hope of establishing, upon the principles now contended for. It is now an experiment only. She will either advance or recede according to the spirit with which we meet her usurpations. To day she finds it inconvenient to prohibit our carrying the surplus colonial produce in our markets to foreign countries; tomorrow she will find it convenient to prohibit the carrying of our own produce, in our own bottoms, to foreign markets and she always has power to enforce the dictates of her convenience. No sir, I would not surrender on single right which our interests and honor call upon us to defend, and more especially, it by receding one step, we jeopardize all the fair features of our commerce, let us boldly contend for every vestige.

(To be continued.)

NEW BOOKS.

J. GALES has just received from Philadelphia, a fresh Parcel of Books in which, besides completing his Assortment, there are the following new Books: The Works of Edmund Burke, in 8vo a Carr's Stranger in France. Northern Summer, 2 vols. Lord Teignmouth's Life of Sir Wm. Jones Ferguson's History of Rome, 3 vols. Steven's Wars of the French Revolution, 2 vols. Miller's Retrospect of the 18th Century, 2v Trial of Judge Chase. Godwin's Fleetwood, 2 vols. What has been. Austin's Letters. The Gamblers.