



AND

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Carry the plans of fair, delightful Peace, Unwar'd by party rage, to live like Brothers

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AN EXPOSITION OF THE CAUSES AND CHARACTER OF THE LATE WAR WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

[Continued.]

Thus, were the United States, in a season of reputed peace, involved in the evils of a state of war—and thus, was the American flag annoyed by a nation still professing to cherish the sentiments of mutual friendship and affection, which had been recently renewed, by the faith of a solemn treaty. But the American government, not even yet abstained from vindicating its rights, and from avenging its wrongs by an appeal to arms. It was not an insensibility to those wrongs; nor a dread of British power; nor a subservience to British interests, that prevailed, at that period, in the councils of the United States; but, under all things, the American government abstained from the appeal to arms, as it has repeatedly done, in its collisions with Great Britain, as well with Great Britain, as with the purest love of peace, while peace could be rendered compatible with the honor and independence of the nation.

During the period which has hitherto been particularly contemplated (from the declaration of hostility between Great Britain and France in the year 1793, until the short-lived pacification of the treaty of Amiens in 1802) there were not wanting occasions, to test the consistency and the impartiality of the American government, by a comparison of its conduct towards Great Britain, with its conduct towards other nations. The manifestation of the extreme jealousy of the French government, and of the intemperate zeal of its ministers near the United States, were co-eval with the proclamation of neutrality; but after the ratification of the treaty of London, the scene of violence, spoliation, and contumely, opened by France, upon the United States, became such, as to admit, perhaps, of no parallel, except in the contemporaneous scenes which were exhibited by the injustice of her great competitor. The American government acted, in both cases, on the same pacific policy; in the same spirit of patience and forbearance; but with the determination also to assert the honor and independence of the nation. When, therefore, every conciliatory effort had failed, and when two successive missions of peace had been contemptuously repulsed, the American government, in the year 1798, annulled its treaties with France, and waged a maritime war against that nation, for the defence of its citizens and of its commerce, passing on the high seas. But as soon as the hope was conceived, of a satisfactory change in the dispositions of the French government, the American government hastened to send another mission to France, and a convention, signed in the year 1800, terminated the subsisting differences between the two countries.

Nor were the United States able, during the same period, to avoid a collision with the government of Spain, upon every important & critical question of boundary and commerce; of Indian warfare and maritime spoliations. Preserving, however, their system of moderation, in the assertion of their rights, a course of amicable discussion and explanation, produced mutual satisfaction; and a treaty of friendship, limits and navigation was formed in the year 1795, by which the citizens of the U. States acquired a right, for the space of three years, to deposit their merchandize and effects in the port of New Orleans; with a promise, either that the enjoyment of that right should be indefinitely continued, or that another part of the banks of the Mississippi should be assigned for an equivalent establishment. But, when, in the year, 1802, the port of New Orleans was abruptly closed against the citizens of the United States, without

an assignment of any other equivalent place of deposit, the harmony of the two countries was again most seriously endangered; until the Spanish government, yielding to the remonstrances of the United States, disavowed the act of the Intendant of New Orleans, and ordered the right of deposit to be reinstated, on the terms of the treaty of 1795.

The effects produced, even by a temporary suspension of the right of deposit at New Orleans, upon the interests and feelings of the nation, naturally suggested to the American government, the expediency of guarding against their recurrence, by the acquisition of a permanent property in the province of Louisiana. The minister of the United States, at Madrid, was, accordingly, instructed to apply to the government of Spain upon the subject; and on the 4th of May, 1803, he received an answer stating, that by the retrocession made to France, of Louisiana; that power regained the province, with the limits it had, saving the rights acquired by other powers, and that the United States could address themselves to the French government, to negotiate the acquisition of territories, which might suit their interest. But before this reference, official information of the same fact had been received by Mr. Pinkney from the Court of Spain, in the month of March preceding; and the American government, having instituted a special mission to negotiate the purchase of Louisiana from France, or from Spain, whichever should be its sovereign, the purchase was, accordingly, accomplished for a valuable consideration (that was punctually paid) by the treaty concluded at Paris on the 30th April, 1803.

The American government has not seen, without some sensibility, that a transaction, accompanied by such circumstances of general publicity, and of scrupulous good faith, has been denounced by the prince regent, in his declaration of the 10th January, 1813, as a proof of the "ungenerous conduct of the United States towards Spain." In amplification of the royal charge, the British negotiator at Ghent, have presumed to impute "the acquisition of Louisiana, by the United States, to a spirit of aggrandizement, not necessary to their own security;" and to maintain "that the purchase was made against the known conditions, on which it had been ceded by Spain to France;" that "in the face of the protestation of the minister of his catholic majesty at Washington, the President of the United States ratified the treaty of purchase;" and that "there was good reason to believe, that many circumstances attending the transactions were industriously concealed." The American government cannot condescend to retort aspersions so unjust, in language so opprobrious; and peremptorily rejects the pretension of Great Britain, to interfere in the business of the United States and Spain; but it owes, nevertheless, to the claims of truth, a distinct statement of the facts which have been thus misrepresented. When the special mission was appointed to negotiate the purchase of Louisiana from France, in the manner already mentioned, the American minister, at London, was instructed to explain the object of the mission; and having made the explanation, he was assured by the British government, "that the communication was received in good part; no doubt was suggested of the right of the United States to pursue separately and alone, the objects they aimed at; but the British government

\* See the letter from Don Pedro Cevallos, the minister of Spain, to Mr. C. Pinkney, the minister of the United States, dated the 4th of May, 1803, from which the passage cited is literally translated.
† See the prince regent's declaration of 10th of January, 1813.
‡ See the note of the British commissioners, dated the 4th of September, 1814.
§ See the note of the British commissioners, dated the 19th of September, 1814.
|| See the note of the British commissioners, dated the 8th of October, 1814.

appeared to be satisfied with the President's views on this important subject." As soon, too, as the treaty of purchase was concluded, before hostilities were again actually commenced between Great Britain and France, and previously, indeed, to the departure of the French ambassador from London, the American minister openly notified to the British government, that a treaty had been signed, by which the complete sovereignty of the town and territory of New Orleans, as well as of all Louisiana, as the same was heretofore possessed by Spain, had been acquired by the United States of America; and that in drawing up the treaty, care had been taken so to frame the same, as not to infringe any right of Great Britain, in the navigation of the river Mississippi. In the answer of the British government, it was explicitly declared by lord Hawkesbury, "that he had received his majesty's commands to express the pleasure with which his majesty had received the intelligence; and to add, that his majesty regarded the care, which had been taken so to frame the treaty as not to infringe any right of Great Britain in the navigation of the Mississippi, as the most satisfactory evidence of a disposition on the part of the government of the United States, correspondent with that which his majesty entertained, to promote and improve that harmony, which so happily subsisted between the two countries, and which was so conducive to their mutual benefit." The world will judge, whether, under such circumstance, the British government had any cause, on its own account, to arraign the conduct of the United States, in making the purchase of Louisiana; and, certainly, no greater cause will be found for the arraignment, on account of Spain. The Spanish government was apprized of the intention of the United States to negotiate for the purchase of that province: its ambassador witnessed the progress of the negotiation at Paris; and the conclusion of the treaty, on the 30th of April, 1803, was promptly known and understood at Madrid. Yet, the Spanish government interposed no objection, no protestation, against the transaction, in Europe; and it was not until the month of September, 1803, that the American government heard, with surprise, from the minister of Spain, at Washington, that his catholic majesty was dissatisfied with the cession of Louisiana to the United States. Notwithstanding this diplomatic remonstrance, however, the Spanish government proceeded to deliver the possession of Louisiana to France in execution of the treaty of St. Ildefonso; saw France, by an almost simultaneous act, transfer the possession to the United States, in execution of the treaty of purchase; and, finally, instructed the marquis de Casa Yrujo, to present to the American government, the declaration of the 15th of May, 1804, acting "by the special order of his sovereign, that the explanations, which the government of France had given to his catholic majesty, concerning the sale of Louisiana to the United States, and the amicable dispositions, on the part of the king his majesty, towards these states, had determined him to abandon the opposition, which, at a prior period, and with the most substantial motives, he had manifested against the transaction."

But after this amicable and decisive arrangement of all differences, in relation to the validity of the Louisiana purchase, a question of some embarrassment remained, in relation to the boundaries of the ceded territory.

\* See the letter from the Secretary of State, to Mr. King, the American minister at London, dated the 29th of January, 1803, and Mr. King's letter to the secretary of state, dated the 28th of April, 1803.
† See the letter from Mr. King, to lord Hawkesbury, dated the 15th of May, 1803.
‡ See the letter from lord Hawkesbury, to Mr. King, dated the 19th of May, 1803.
§ See the letter of the marquis de Casa Yrujo, to the American secretary of state, dated the 15th of May, 1804.

This question, however, the American government always has been and always will be willing to discuss in the most candid manner, and to settle upon the most liberal basis, with the government of Spain. It was not, therefore, a fair topic with which to inflame the Prince Regent's declaration; or to embellish the diplomatic notes of British negotiators at Ghent. The period has arrived when Spain, relieved from her European labors, may be expected to bestow her attention more effectually upon the state of her colonies; and, acting with the wisdom, justice and magnanimity, of which she has given frequent examples, she will find no difficulty, in meeting the recent advances of the American government, for an honorable adjustment of every point in controversy between the two countries, without seeking the aid of the British mediation, or adopting the animosity of British counsils.

But still the United States, feeling a constant interest in the opinion of enlightened and impartial nations, cannot hesitate to embrace the opportunity for representing, in the simplicity of truth, the events by which they have been led to take possession of a part of the Floridas, notwithstanding the claim of Spain to the sovereignty of the same territory. In the acceptance and understanding of the United States, the cession of Louisiana embraced the country south of the Mississippi territory, and eastward of the river Perdido; but "their conciliatory views, and their confidence in the justice of their cause, and in the success of a candid discussion and amicable negotiation with a just and friendly power, induced them to acquiesce in the temporary continuance of that territory under the Spanish authority." When, however the adjustment of the boundaries of Louisiana, as well as a reasonable indemnification, on account of maritime spoliations, and the suspension of the right of deposit at New Orleans, seemed to be indefinitely postponed, on the part of Spain, by events which the U. States had not contributed to produce, and could not control; when a crisis had arrived subversive of the order of things under the Spanish authorities, contravening the views of both parties, and endangering the tranquility and security of the adjoining territories, by the intrusive establishment of a government, independent of Spain, as well as of the United States; and when, at a later period there was reason to believe, that G. Britain herself designed to occupy the Floridas, (and she has, indeed, actually occupied Pensacola, for hostile purposes,) the American government, without departing from its respect for the rights of Spain and even consulting the honor of that state, unequal, as she then was, to the task of suppressing the intrusive establishment, was impelled by the paramount principle of self-preservation, to rescue its own rights from the impending danger. Hence the United States in the year 1810, proceeding step by step, according to the growing exigencies of the time, took possession of the country, in which the standard of independence had been displayed excepting such places as were held by a Spanish force. In the year 1811, they authorised their president, by law, provisionally to accept, of the possession of East Florida from the local authorities, or to pre-occupy it against

\* See the letter from the secretary of state to governor Claiborne, and the proclamation, dated the 27th of October, 1810.
† See the proceedings of the convention of Florida, transmitted to the secretary of state, by the governor of the Mississippi territory, in his letter of the 17th of October, 1810; and the answer of the Secretary of State, dated the 15th November, 1810.
‡ See the letter of Mr. Morier, British charge d'affaires, to the secretary of state, dated the 15th of December, 1810; and the Secretary's answer.
§ See the correspondence between Mr. Monroe and Mr. Foster the British minister, in the months of July, September and November, 1811.
|| See the letter of Mr. King, to the secretary of state, dated the 16th of May, 1808.

the attempt of a foreign power to seize it. In 1813, they obtained the possession of Mobile, the only place then held by a Spanish force in West Florida; with a view to their own immediate security, but without varying the questions depending between them and Spain, in relation to that province. And in the year 1814, the American commander, acting under the sanction of the law of nations, but unauthorised by the orders of his government, drove from Pensacola the British troops, who, in violation of the neutral territory of Spain, (a violation which Spain it is believed must herself resent, and would have resisted, if the opportunity had occurred) seized and fortified that station, to aid in military operations against the United States. But all these measures of safety and necessity were frankly explained, as they occurred, to the government of Great Britain, antecedently to the declaration of war, with the sincerest assurances, that the possession of the territory thus acquired, should not cease to be a subject of fair and friendly negotiation and adjustment.

The present review of the conduct of the United States, towards the belligerent powers of Europe, will be regarded by every candid mind, as a necessary medium, to vindicate their national character, from the unmerited imputations of the Prince Regent's declaration of the 10th January, 1813, and not as a medium, voluntarily assumed, according to the insinuations of that declaration, for the revival of unworthy prejudices, or vindictive passions, in reference to transactions that are past. The treaty of Amiens, which seemed to terminate the war in Europe, seemed also to terminate the neutral sufferings of America; but the hope of repose was, in both respects, delusive and transient. The hostilities which were renewed between G. Britain and France, in the year 1793, were immediately followed by a renewal of the aggression of the belligerent powers, upon the commercial rights, and political independence of the United States. There was scarcely, therefore, an interval separating the aggressions of the first war, from the aggressions of the second war; and although, in nature the aggressions continued to be the same, in extent, they became incalculably more destructive. It will be seen, however, that the American government, inflexibly maintained its neutral and pacific policy, in every extremity of the latter trial, with the same good faith and forbearance, that in the former trial, had distinguished its conduct; until it was compelled to choose from the alternative, of national degradation, or national resistance. And if G. Britain alone then became the object of the American declaration of war, it will be seen, that Great Britain alone had obstinately closed the door of amicable negotiation.

The American minister at London, anticipating the rupture between G. Britain and France, had obtained assurances from the British government "that in the event of war, the instructions given to their naval officers should be drawn up with plainness and precision; and, in general, that the rights of belligerents should be exercised in moderation, and with due respect for those of neutrals." And in relation to the important subject of impressment, he had actually prepared for signature, with the assent of lord Hawkesbury and lord St. Vincent, a convention, to continue during five years, declaring that "no seaman, nor seafaring person should, upon the high seas, & without the jurisdiction of either party, be demanded or taken out of any ship or vessel belonging to the citizens or subjects of one of the parties, by the public or private armed ships or men of war belonging to or in the service of the other party; and that strict orders should be given for

\* See the letter of Mr. King, to the secretary of state, dated July 1803.
† See the letter of Mr. King, to the secretary of state, dated July, 1803.