

MR. SLOAN'S SPEECH.

In the House of Representatives of the United States, December 27, 1808, on the 5th Embargo Bill. (CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST.)

To the second charge, that "the language of the anti-embargo men, is, *put us in power*"—I answer they need not even ask it. Let the gentleman and his party persist in their present plan—Let them pass additional laws, to enforce more rigorously that plan—Let them raise troops ostensibly for the purpose of repelling invading foes; but as no such foes can be found, and as the people would complain of the expence of an army doing nothing, let their artillery be turned against those wretched renegado, base anti-embargo-men, who durst to complain of their suffering under those laws—Let every bay and inlet, from one end to the other, of our extensive coast, be safely guarded by gun-boats and revenue-cutters—Let a cordon of regular troops encircle round these United States and the territories thereof, in such manner, that not a single evasion of those celebrated, patriotic embargo laws, could possibly take place—Let this plan be completely carried into execution, and continued twelve months—In that case, unless a law should be passed, depriving the anti-embargo-men of their right of suffrage, (which would be as just and constitutional, as the one now under consideration,) I undertake, as positively as that gentleman, to predict, that if any of the present overwhelming majority should retain a seat in the twelfth congress, they would be reduced to a more trivial and insignificant minority, than that, upon which, from his high and exalted seat, he now looks down!—Yes, Mr. Speaker, I repeat it, the present minority need not ask to be put in power; the electors would need no further stimulus than the pressure of those laws, to bring them to the poll. They would look as anxiously for the election-day, as the poor slaves, under the Jewish law did, for the year of jubilee.

I shall ask the indulgence of the house but a few minutes longer, to some general remarks on the effects of the embargo laws, and of the bill under consideration, to which I am impelled by the sacred impulse of my conscience—by my firm attachment to our present administration—and by my duty, as a representative of the people, to preserve inviolably their rights—to say God in his infinite mercy grant it may never pass into a law. No, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, we have passed too many laws on this subject already. Passing the resolutions reported by our committee on foreign relations, has in the few days that have elapsed, transferred an immense sum of money from the industrious yeomenry of the country, to idle speculators and flock-jobbers of both town and country. Is not this fact known to many members on this floor? Do they not know, that domestic produce is sold one half, and even at that reduced price, there is little or no sale for it; and that foreign articles have risen in the same proportion; and that in consequence thereof, in various parts of the nation, where, until the commencement of the session, the embargo, if not approved, was borne with patience—the people now cry with one voice, "We can bear it no longer; give us any thing that the wisdom of Congress can devise rather than the Embargo!" But I have frequently been asked, if these be facts, why do not the people petition? The reason is obvious: Federalists have petitioned; what has been the answer? Why, they are enemies to our administration; who wish to involve us in war with France, and an alliance with England. Nay farther, is not every member on this floor, who has exercised his own judgment as a free and independent representative of the people, if in a single instance that judgment runs counter to the will of the majority, denounced as an apostate.

Is this question asked with a view of exciting jealousy, or deceiving the people? No, Mr. Speaker; to undeceive them, to lay before them a true statement of the conduct of their representatives. I speak to a free and enlightened people, who want nothing but true information to induce them to act right. Is there a man in these United States, that in proportion to his station, has spent more time and money, to bring about a change in favor of democracy, and when brought about to support it, than I have? If there be let him come forward and show it. Have I deviated from those principles? If there be a citizen in these United States that durst to make such a charge, let him come forward and substantiate it. But what has been the consequence! Last session, I opposed the famous, or rather infamous court-martial bill; a bill that I now suppose was intended as the first chapter of a statute book, in which the present bill under consideration was to have been the second. That horrid attempt to lay the foundation of a military despotism failed; and I pray God the second may also.

But my observations upon that bill, was by some who occupy the front rank in the majority held up to public scorn, as being my maiden federal speech. Why really, Mr. Speaker, if the motives of the federalists are pure as those which dictated that speech, I do not consider the charge dishonorable. I also brought forward a resolution, for the purpose of removing the greatest evil under which the people of these United States groaned to erase from our statute book, a principle repugnant to republicanism and self-government—to destroy in its infancy, a young vulture, whose nature is such, that it cannot be nourished and raised to maturity upon any other food, but the vitals of liberty—I mean the removal of the seat of government. This conduct, by another member in the front rank, was publicly on the floor of the house, declared to be worse than the conduct of the arch-traitor, Burr—That is to say, that barely to attempt to prevent the rights and liberties of the people from being swallowed up, and totally absorbed in the vortex of this masked monarchy, contrary to the will of the chosen few, who either do at present, or hope in future to live upon its munificence—is a crime of deeper die, than the highest crime in our statute book, high treason.

Mr. Speaker—Sensible that I have trespassed long upon the indulgence of the committee, I will hasten to a conclusion, first observing, that I have no language capable of fully expressing my regret and sorrow, in beholding Congress at this time, endeavoring when the session is nearly half gone, to pass a law to enforce more rigorously divers already passed—the facility of which is in my opinion, self-evi-

dent—the loss and burden they inflict upon the people, intolerable—their present and future effect, if continued, more injurious to the interests, peace and happiness of these United States, than any that have been passed since we were an independent nation. Upon the bill now under consideration, I shall at present only say, that if it is passed into a law—to prevent unnecessary expence in printing, and to render it more easily understood, especially by the poor, ignorant, despicable renegado anti-embargo men, upon whom it is intended to operate—I hope it will be curtailed, as it is evident the whole purport could be comprized in a few words, to the following effect: *That whereas, we repose full faith and confidence in the wisdom, integrity and ability of the President of the United States to enforce the embargo laws; and also to issue from time to time, and enforce such edicts as he shall think proper, we hereby authorize and empower him so to do.* But I will not yet despair; I will yet fondly hope that although this bill has passed one branch of the legislature by a great majority, that the immediate representatives of the people will never sanction a bill, compared with which the Alien and Sedition laws were humane and just. But should my hopes be blasted in a majority of this house giving it their sanction, I will still hope that the wise and justly celebrated author of the NOTES ON VIRGINIA, will not, in advanced age (as Solomon did in days of yore,) tarnish and cast a gloomy shade over that wisdom that shone so conspicuous in his meridian days, by placing his signature to such a bill. With that respect due to his superior station, I must request the favor of him first to look over his NOTES, and particularly attend to the following sentence. "Our interest is to throw open the doors of commerce, and to knock off all its shackles, giving perfect freedom to all persons, for the vent of whatsoever they may choose to bring into our ports—and asking the same in theirs.—The actual habits of our countrymen attach them to commerce. They will exercise it for themselves." I will read it again, because it is language worthy of the chief magistrate of a great and independent nation—it is worthy the attention of the representatives of a great agricultural and commercial people. We have been frequently called upon for a plan—here is the principle of a plan in a few words, the best adapted to the real interests of this nation, that ever has, or ever can be introduced. Would to God, that instead of prowling over non-intercourse resolutions, and straining every nerve to devise means to enforce laws, which, twelve months experience has incontestibly proved, is not only inadequate to the end proposed, but, by their long continuance, become ruinous to the interests, peace, and happiness of the nation, we had adopted the foregoing principle of our worthy chief magistrate, the production of his penetrating genius when at meridian height, agreeably to the resolution offered by my worthy friend from New-York, (Mr. Mumford.)

But we are told that, adopting this plan, would be submission to England—the reverse is the fact—it would exonerate us from the degraded state of submission in which we now stand. I say degraded state, which, with permission of the house, I will prove, I trust, to the satisfaction and full conviction of every impartial mind. It is incontestibly proved, by reference to official documents now before the public. First, we have demanded the restoration of our impressed seamen, and to coerce Great-Britain into a compliance with that demand, we have passed a non-importation law. Secondly, we rejected a treaty, (as I have understood,) because that demand was not fully complied with. And thirdly, in consequence of the horrid outrage committed upon the frigate Chesapeake, our President having issued a proclamation, prohibiting all British armed vessels from entering our ports, refused to revoke that proclamation until reparation was made, or at least until a plan was proposed by the British envoy, which should be considered adequate to the purpose. Let these facts be contrasted with the offer made by our President, (which was laid before this house in his public message) to the British-Cabinet, that upon a single revocation of their orders of council, our embargo should be raised—to far as respected that Nation. No condition annexed, of returning our seamen, or making reparation for the outrage upon the Chesapeake!!! Can any rational being, can any man possessed of common sense, and not perfectly blinded by partiality, misunderstand this language. No, Mr. Speaker, it is too plain—so plain, that he who runs may read and clearly understand. What is its genuine meaning? Why, when stripped of its deceptive covering, and exposed in its real form, it will read thus: "We are convinced by woeful experience, that our coercive plans are futile—that they rebound back upon our own citizens with redoubled force—that therefore, we are now willing, if you will be graciously pleased to grant us liberty, to renew our former trade with you, even under all the embarrassments of which we have so long and so loudly complained; the murder of Pierce, and the outrage upon our national ship, to the contrary notwithstanding."

I will not long detain the house with commenting upon the answer returned, but briefly observe that it was less insulting, and more humane and sympathizing, than might have been expected from that haughty nation.—The purport may be comprized in a few words, to this effect: "We are sorry for the sufferings of your citizens, produced by your own imprudent conduct; and we would gladly relieve them, were it in our power, consistent with our national honor and dignity; but as that cannot be done, we must for the present leave you to devise means for yourselves, to relieve your citizens from their present increasing distress, and truly deplorable situation." The foregoing is not a picture too highly coloured. Would to God, for the sake of my suffering country, that it was. But alas! it is the life—it is the original—it is a statement of facts contained in official documents gone out to the public, and therefore can neither be controverted or recalled.

Mr. Speaker, in this deplorable situation let me earnestly call the attention of the immediate representatives of the people, to a serious and all important question, a question on which, in my opinion, not only the present, but future union, peace, strength and prosperity of these United States much depends. Shall the laws passed last session, that have become so distressing to the people, not only be continued,

but more rigorously enforced? Will our government continue the futile attempt, to compel a great number of our hardy, brave and patriotic citizens to abandon habits, which our worthy president (in the quotation before adduced) admits to be impossible? I will repeat it: "The actual habits of our countrymen attach them to commerce, they will exercise it to themselves." Must these brave citizens be driven to acts of despair or desperation, either to abandon their country, or to evade laws under which they are unable to live? Must their petitions and memorials be treated as the product of enemies to government, as British patizans, and insignificant mal-contents, who deserve no further notice, than to have their clamors silenced by the strong arm of government, and their pretended wants supplied by the application of sharp pointed bayonets! I pray the majority of this house seriously to consider the inevitable consequence of persisting in this line of conduct. I pray them not barely to PAUSE! and reflect upon past conduct, but immediately reduce to practice the excellent precept of our President, contained in his first inaugural speech: "hasten to retrace your steps"—and instead of passing additional laws which will require an additional military force to execute them, and consequently add to the number of those whose affections are already alienated from our government repeal those already passed, so far at least as to open a trade to all powers and places that hath heretofore traded with us upon terms of reciprocity. This would evince to the world, that we are really a just nation, desirous of doing unto all men, as we would they should do unto us. This would not only release us from our present degraded situation as it respects our external relations, but what is infinitely more consequential, it would restore confidence in our government, and peace and harmony amongst our Citizens. Let the merchants of our middle and northern states, whose harbors will ere long be bound in winter's icy chains, enjoy by anticipation the pleasing prospects of beholding, as soon as they are dissolved, their canvas again spread to waft their merchandize to a foreign port hoping to receive in turn their usual profits. Let the Farmers also through the dreary scenes of winter enjoy the cheering hope, that upon the return of Sol's prolific rays, calling from the earth's sterile womb her innumerable productions, he may find a usual market for his produce on hand, and a pleasing stimulus to renew his cultivation of the earth to produce more. Thus would joy and gladness of heart again sparkle in each eye and sit smiling on every countenance: Thus would the inestimable blessings of peace be heightened into raptures of delight. Love and harmony would pervade the great mass of our citizens, and unite them together in such a manner that in case any of the tyrants of the old world should invade our peaceful and happy land they would soon repent of their temerity—they would soon be convinced that the conquest of a free and united people, governed by just and equitable laws of their own making, was a chimera of the brain that can never be realized. Such a line of conduct would add more to the strength and prosperity of the United States, than 10,000 celebrated, patriotic, flaming, blood-letting speeches delivered on this floor.

Is there an American citizen, possessed of common sense, who is not desirous to see so beneficial and lovely a scene realized? Is there a representative of the people, who would not cheerfully give his vote to produce (may I not say restore) such a rational millennium, in our once happy land? And vice versa, is there a real, true hearted American citizen, whose blood is not chilled in his veins, in reflecting upon the HORRIBLE PROSPECT of Military Mercenaries with the point of the bayonet enforcing laws, contrary to the habits of a great number of citizens: and ruinous to the interest, peace and happiness of a great majority of the people of these United States! Let me indulge the cheering hope that notwithstanding the present prospect there never will be found a majority of the immediate representatives of the people, who will vote in favor of continuing and enforcing such OPPRESSIVE LAWS.

Mr. Speaker—Having in my plain and unlearned manner, discharged that duty which I owe to my constituents in opposing a system, which I consider not only injurious to their interests, but aiming a deadly blow at the union, interests, peace and independence of that beloved country that gave me birth—before I sit down I have another duty to discharge—first, to return a tribute of humble gratitude to the Great Preserver of men, who having led and fed me all my life long, still graciously continues to me at this age, bodily and mental powers to discharge my duty as above-mentioned, and secondly, to acknowledge the patient indulgence of this house. And as it will probably be among the last public acts that will evince to the world, the continuation and prevalence, of one of those powerful ruling passions, that has long pervaded my breast, I mean love of my country, I embrace this opportunity to declare, that instead of declining in proportion to bodily powers, it increases with increase of years, and becomes more animated and vigorous in proportion to the number of days now behind me, as far beyond my reach as those before the flood.—Hence, I conclude it will continue to increase, the few remaining days that may be allotted to me in a state of mutability, and that when the number of my days are fulfilled, and this feeble frame engaged in that war, from which there is no discharge—this ruling passion will remain strong in death—and the language of a celebrated poet addressing his friend, may with propriety be adopted:

"In that dread moment as in all the past,
Oh save my country Heaven! may be my last."

CAUTION.

WHEREAS frequent and repeated Trespasses have been committed on Lots No. 5, 8, 9 and 10, on the West side of the Grand Lake, in Queen's County, belonging to the Subscriber. This is to forbid all persons whatsoever from cutting or carrying off Timber, Cord Wood, Hoop Poles, or otherwise trespassing on the above Lots, as I am determined to prosecute the offender or offenders at the Law may direct. WILLIAM BALSTER, Saint John, 11th July, 1808.