

AMERICAN CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Dec. 22.

The bill to enforce the embargo, was this day taken up in the house, and referred to a committee of the whole.—Although admitted on all sides to be the most important question that ever was agitated in Congress, the majority seemed determined to force its consideration. It was moved by Mr. Quincy, to make it the order of the day for Monday, allowing three days to digest its provisions. The question was lost, and every disposition evinced to force the bill immediately upon the consideration of the house. Mr. Quincy then moved to make it the order of the day for Saturday.—This was also opposed.

“Mr. QUINCY sustained his motion in a manner so spirited and feeling, as to shake the guilty purposes of his democratic majesty's troops. He declared, that “the bill proposed, struck at the very root of the constitution, and was fraught with the most daring and alarming consequences. It was intended to strip the people of their freedom, to destroy the fundamental principles of our constitution, to make them slaves to the will of masters.” I was born a freeman (said Mr. Q.) and I mean to remain one. I will transmit to my children as fair an inheritance as my father bequeathed to me, or I will *perish* in the trial.—This bill was only passed by the senate, at a late hour last night, and I solemnly declare, that I have not yet studied it. If I am not allowed a reasonable time to consider the law, I shall disdain to act upon it when it is brought before the House.—If it is to be hurried through this house by force without permitting its deformities to be exposed, I for one will employ every means to arouse the spirit of the nation, and inform the people of the manner in which their rights have been invaded.” These remarks made a sensible impression upon the majority, but men were not wanting in desperate devotion to execute will, to oppose the reasonable request of Mr. Quincy. Messrs. Eppes, Smilie and Bacon, spoke in approbation of the Embargo, and the necessity of losing no time to enforce it.

Mr. GARDNER, of New-York, made some spirited remarks on the subject.

Mr. Lyon observed, “I am one of those Mr. Speaker, who think the embargo ought not to be continued, but at all events, that if provision is to be made to force it down by military power, that time ought to be allowed to study and digest the bill which has been passed by the Senate for that purpose. At any rate, Mr. Speaker, for goodness sake, do give us a day, don't take it up to day. This is the twenty second of December, the anniversary of the embargo. It is an ominous day, and the bill offered now for our consideration contains the worst attack upon the constitution and the liberties of my country that ever was before heard of. I have always been a republican, and I mean to continue one—I exerted all my might and main to put out the *Federalists* and to get the republicans upon top of them, but I wont help to put them under them again. If you pass this bill, mark what I tell you, the *Federalists* will get uppermost, FOR OUR PARTY IS FALLING OFF EVERY DAY. If you will make a law like this, the people will soon let you see that the same things which put one power out, wont keep another in. By this law a man cant pass the lines without having his pockets picked by these dictators, the collectors. If he appears to be going across the line with a little money in his pocket, he may be rifled of all of it, for money is money whether it be a £1000 or 10 cents. Mr. Speaker we want time to read this strange law before we take it up to speak about it.—We shall be longer speaking about it, if we begin to speak upon it at once without knowing any thing about it, than if we understand it first and then speak about it. The furtherest way round is the shortest way home sometimes, and I'm sure no gentleman will speak on this bill until he has read, and at least *thinks* he understands it.”

Mr. Elliot said, that he was not situated precisely as the gentleman from New-York had described himself to be. I am prepared, said Mr. E. to act upon this question; but I think that it is very desirable that time should be allowed for others to investigate and reflect upon the subject.—Though the bill, in its amended form, has been placed upon our table this morning, I have read it, I have studied it, I have traced it from its origin, I have marked it in its progress, every step of which I have regarded with additional horror, and am prepared to say, that if you adopt it, you trample every principle of freedom in the dust, you grind your constitution to powder. With the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. Lyon) I agree that it is introduced into our walls upon an ominous day, and in an ominous manner.—But while I unite in opinion with the gentleman from New-York, that

*A day, an hour of virtuous liberty,  
Is worth a whole eternity of bondage—*

I cannot think, considering the nature of the crisis, the aspects of the times, all the circumstances of the moment, that if the dictator is to be invested with new powers, it is of material moment whether they are conferred on this day, to-morrow, or next Monday. Whenever the question shall present itself, the full exertion of the few and feeble powers which it has pleased Divine Providence to bestow upon me, shall be devoted to resist a triumphant majority, rushing with overwhelming power in a course destructive to their country. From the moment the first embargo law was passed, I have believed that the policy of the system was to place all power over commerce in the hands of the President, to create a Commercial Dictatorship.—

The Speaker interrupted Mr. E. and suggested to him that he was going more at length into the general subject than was consistent with order in the present stage of the business.

Mr. Bacon said that as the gentleman from Vermont was ready to debate the subject, he thought the discussion might proceed without much delay. That gentleman had promised to devote his time and talents to the question, and he had no doubt would do it justice. For one, he should listen to him with pleasure. Alluding to some remarks of Mr. Quincy, he said, that as there must always be a certain num-

ber of storms in the natural system, it was not disagreeable to see the political one somewhat agitated upon particular occasions.

Mr. Elliot replied, that it was not a little extraordinary that the gentleman from Massachusetts should *urge precipitation*, because one member had declared that he did not wish for delay. The gentleman intimates that as we must have storms in the natural system, it is proper to have them in the political one also.

Mr. Macon expressed his surprise that so much dislike should be manifested to every thing connected with the embargo. When she first made her appearance in the House, the damsel was so comely that every one strove for the honour of introducing her.

Mr. Sloan said that the remark of his friend from North Carolina was correct.—When the lady was first introduced, she appeared to be a chaste, beautiful virgin, and, Mr. S. said, he was one of those who were enamoured with her charms. But doubtless his friend would acknowledge that some females of that description had been transformed into impure painted harlots—in which point of view he now considered the embargo.

Mr. Livermore said that he had not been deceived like the gentleman from New-Jersey. He had regarded her as a prostitute from the beginning.

Mr. Gardner made a number of pertinent remarks, explaining the reasons why, although originally in favour of the embargo, he now wished its repeal. He was called to order by the Speaker. Mr. Gardner said he wished to shew that the original law ought to exist, and therefore ought not to be amended. He sat down, however, after making the following observation:—“When I gave my sanction to this system Sir, I did not intend to vote for a perpetual embargo.”

DOCUMENTS ACCOMPANYING THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, NOVEMBER 8, 1808.

MR. CANNING to MR. PINKNEY, accompanying his letter of September 23, 1808.

FOREIGN OFFICE, SEPT. 23, 1808.

SIR,—In laying before the King, your letter of the 23d of August, and in communication to you the accompanying answer, which I have received his Majesty's commands to return to it—I confess I feel some little embarrassments from the repeated references which your letter contains, to what has passed between us in conversation.—An embarrassment arising in no degree (as you are perfectly aware) from any feeling of *distrust* in you personally, but from a recollection of the *misrepresentation* which took place in America of former conferences between us. You gave me, on that account, the most satisfactory proof that such *misrepresentation* did not originate with you, by communicating to me that part of your dispatch, in which the conferences particularly referred to, were related correctly; but this very circumstance which establishes your personal claim to entire confidence, proves, at the same time, that a *faithful* report of a conference on your part is not a security against its *misrepresentation*.

It was for that reason, principally, that after hearing, with the most respectful attention, all that you had to state to me, verbally, upon the subject of the present overture, I felt myself under the necessity of requiring, as “*indispensable*,” a written communication upon the subject.

It is for that reason, also, that as in your written communication you refer me to our late conversations for the “*bearings and details*” of your proposal, I feel it necessary to recapitulate, as shortly as I can, what I conceive to have passed in these conversations beyond what I find recorded in your letter.

The principal points on which the suggestions brought forward by you in personal conference, appear to me to have differed in some degree from the *proposal now stated by you in writing* are two—the *first*, that in conversation the proposal itself was not distinctly stated as an *overture authorized by your government*—the *second*, that the beneficial consequences likely to result to this country from the acceptance of that proposal were “*pursued*” through more ample “*illustrations*.”

In the first of our conferences, I understood you to say little more on the authority of your Government, than that you were instructed to remonstrate against the Orders in Council of the 7th of January, and 11th of November 1807—but to add, as from *yourself*, an expression of your *own conviction*, that if these orders were repealed, the President of the United States would suspend the Embargo with respect to Great-Britain.

Upon the consequences of such a suspension of the Embargo, while it would still continue to be enforced against France, you expatiated largely—*still speaking*, however, (as I understood), your *own individual sentiments*.

It was suggested by you, that America would, in that case, probably arm her merchant-ships against the aggressions of France—an expedient, to which, you observed, it would be perfectly idle to resort against Great-Britain. The collisions of armed vessels would probably produce war—and the United States would thus be brought into the very situation in which we must wish to place them—that of hostility to France, and virtual, if not formal alliance with Great-Britain.

In our second conference, you repeated and enforced the arguments calculated to induce the British Government to consent to the repeal of the Orders in Council, and in this conference, *though not stating yourself to be authorized by your government formally to offer the suspension of the Embargo as an immediate consequence of that repeal*—yet you did profess (as I understood you) a readiness to take upon yourself to make that offer, *provided that I should give you before hand an unofficial assurance* that, coupled with that offer so made, the demand of the repeal of the Orders in Council of January and November 1807, would be probably rescinded.

I, of course, declined to give any such *previous assurances*—but as you appeared to attach *great importance to this suggestion*, and as I was lead to think that a compliance with it might *relieve you from a difficulty* in executing the instructions of your government, I consented to take a few

days to consider of it, and to reserve my definitive answer until I should see you again.

I never doubted, in my own mind, as to the inexpediency and impropriety of encouraging you to take an *unauthorized step*, by an unofficial promise that it should be well received—but in a matter of such delicacy I was desirous of either confirming or correcting my own opinion by the opinion of others.

The result was, that in a third interview, which took place shortly after the second, I had the honor to inform you, that after the most mature deliberation, I found it impossible to yield to your suggestion, and that it, therefore, remained for you to *frame your proposition according to the instructions of your government*, as to your own unbiassed discretion.

My own share in these several conferences, beyond what was implied in the above statement, was very small. I have (as you know) always wished to refer the argumentative discussion of the subject of the Orders in Council, to the official correspondence, which I have more than once been *taught to expect* you to open upon it, than to engage with you in a verbal controversy, which, if confined to ourselves, would be useless—If afterwards to be reduced into writing for the purpose of being communicated to our respective governments—superfluous.

But to the representations which you have repeatedly made against the Orders in Council of January and November, “*as violating the rights of the United States, and affecting most destructively their best interests upon grounds wholly inadmissible both in principle and in fact*.”—I have uniformly maintained the unquestionable right of His Majesty to resort to the fullest measures of retaliation, in consequence of the unparalleled aggression of the enemy, and to *retort upon that enemy the evils of his own injustice*—and have uniformly contended that “*if third parties suffer from those measures, the demand of reparation must be made to that power, which first violates the established usages of war and the rights of neutral states*.”

There was, indeed, one point, upon which I was particularly anxious to receive *precise information*, and upon which, from your candour and frankness, I was fortunate enough to obtain it. The connecting together in your proposed overture, the suspension of the embargo, and the repeal of the Orders in Council—as well as those of Nov. as the succeeding one the 7th of January, might appear to imply that the Embargo had been the *immediate consequence* of those Orders, and I was, therefore, desirous to ascertain whether, *in fact*, the Orders in Council of Nov. had been known to the Government of the United States previous to the message of the President *proposing the embargo*—so as to be a moving consideration to that message. I had the satisfaction to learn from you, that such was *not the fact*—that *rumours*, indeed, might have reached America of some measure of *further retaliation*, being in the contemplation of the British Government, that, perhaps, (as I understood you,) some more severe and sweeping measures might have been expected—but that the Orders in Council of the 11th of Nov. as having been *issued*, there was no knowledge of in America—at least none in possession of the American Government at the time of proposing the embargo.—Such, Sir, is, (according to the best of my recollection,) correctly, the substance of what has passed between us at our several interviews, previous to the presentation of your official letter; and such I have represented to have been the substance of what has passed on those several occasions in the reports of our conferences which it has been my duty to make to the King.

If, in this recapitulation, there is any thing mistaken, or any thing omitted, you will do me the justice to believe the error unintentional, and you may rely on my readiness to set it right. I have the honor to be, &c.

GEORGE CANNING.

SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

It was one of the curses denounced from Heaven upon the Israelites, in case of their rebellion, that the *sound of a shaken leaf should chase them*. (See Levit xxvi. 35.) The faintest breeze from the Atlantic, the slightest breath of rumor from Havana, is fraught with ALL THE HORRORS to the ruling democrats at Washington. Knowing that their friend Bonaparte swindled old King Charles out of Louisiana, and apprehending that the Junta will rescind the conveyance, they appear to be praying with all their might that the poor patriots may be humbled in the dust.—One thousand men are immediately to march for Orleans, and a Col. Bell of Georgetown, who commands one of the new regiments, sets out in a few days. Of course a new army, as well as a new navy, must be raised to support the Embargo and Non-Intercourse. Our republicans affect to consider the war in Spain as a *sacred war*, like that which preceded the destruction of the liberties of Greece. They say that if the Spaniards succeed, England will have a tolerable chance to recolonise us, and will certainly monopolise the commerce of the world. They pathetically lament that the Seas are not to be made free, agreeably to the glorious project “*planned on the rasi that bore Alexander and Napoleon on the waters of the Niemen?*” They deny the Spaniards the right of self-government, although they admit that monarchists have sometimes become republicans. “*The vanquishers of Marathon descended from the followers of Agamemnon, and the hundred Grecian kings that demolished Troy; The proud Romans had a Numa for a king long before their republic was exalted by a Cincinnatus or a Cato.*” We do not say that it is right, but we do say it is natural, that the Spaniards should have hostile feelings towards our government. When the Spanish Nation arose as one man to burst the bonds of the oppressor, and to every man of sense it was evident that they did so from the beginning, they certainly had a right to expect that we would open trade with them as an independent and friendly people. When our own citizens petitioned that such might be the case, our illustrious chief magistrate answered, No, there is only “*a contest for the government in Spain.*” Let the cold-blooded and hard-hearted politicians say what they will, it was not a contest for power, but a contest of Freedom against Despotism. There is now and