

CONGRESS.

House of Representatives.

January 16.

In committee of the whole, on the report of the Secretary of State, relative to the commercial intercourse of this country, with foreign nations.

Mr. NICHOLAS spoke as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN,

I feel a great embarrassment in speaking on this subject, from a distrust of my ability to treat properly its acknowledged importance, and from the apparent expectation of the audience. I feel too, as the member from Maryland who spoke yesterday did, from the imputation of motives, well knowing that the Representatives of my country, are indeliberately reported to be enemies of the government, and promoters of anarchy, and that the present measure is imputed to these principles.—It is somewhat remarkable, that farther north, we are charged with selfishness, & want of attachment to the general welfare, for a supposed opposition to measures of the import of the present.—I mention this contradictory inference, to shew that the shameful designs charged upon us, are not proved by the fact, and to place the guilt where it only exists, in the malignity of the accuser.

It is a commonly received opinion, that trade should be intrusted to the direction of those immediately interested in it, and that the actual course of it, is the best which it could take;—this principle is by no means a safe one, and as applied to the trade of America, is extremely fallacious. It can never be just, where the beginning and growth of commerce have not been free from all possible constraint, as to its direction; as that can never be called a business of election, which has been created under foreign influence.—The manner in which America was first peopled, and the nurture she received from Great-Britain, afford the most striking contrast to the requisite before-mentioned. The first inhabitants of America, were educated in Great-Britain, and brought with them, all the wants of their own country, to be gratified chiefly by the productions of that country. Aided by British capital, in the settlement of the wilderness, and depending on the same means for the conveyance of its produce, to a place of consumption, it was inevitable, that the demand for British commodities, should keep pace with the improvement of the country.—In the commencement of American population and its early stages, there does not appear to have been a chance of comparing the advantages of commercial connection, with different countries, and it will be found that in its progress, it was still more restrained. In the last years of the dependence of America on Great-Britain, the principal part of America, was occupied by large trading companies, composed of people in Great-Britain and conducted by factors, who sunk large sums in the hands of the farmers, to attach them to their respective stores, by which means, competition was precluded, and a dependence on the supplies of those stores completely established. Since the revolution, the business has been conducted by persons in the habit of dependence on Great-Britain, and who had no other capital, than the manufactures of that country, furnished on credit. The business is still almost wholly conducted by the same means. In no stage of its growth then, does there appear to have been a power in the consumer to have compared the productions of Great-Britain, with those of any other country, as to their quality or price, and therefore there is no propriety in calling the course of trade, the course of its choice.

The subject before the committee, naturally divides itself into navigation and manufactures, in speaking of which, I shall offer some other considerations, to shew that the same effects are by no means to be expected, from the greatest commercial wisdom in individuals, which are in the power of the general concert of the community; the one having in view, profit on each separate transaction, the other promoting an advantageous result to the whole commerce of the country.

In considering the importance of navigation to all countries, but especially to such as have so extensive a production of

bulky articles, as America, I think I shall shew that the last observation, is accurately right, and that the interest of the whole community, not those only who are the carriers, but those also who furnish the object of carriage, positively demands a domestic marine, equal to its whole business; and that, even if it is to exist under rates higher than those of foreign navigation, it is to be preferred. In circumstances of tolerable equality, that can never however entirely be the case, for in the carriage of the produce of one country, by the shipping of another, to any other place than the country to which the shipping belongs, there is considerably more labour employed, than would have been by domestic shipping, as the return to their own country, is to be included. On this ground, it may be confidently asserted, that where the materials of navigation, are equally attainable, they will always be more advantageously employed, by the country for whose use they are intended, and that if under such circumstances, another country is employed as the carrier, it must be under the influence of some other cause, than interest, as it respects that particular business. A dependence on the shipping of another country, tends to establish a place of deposit in that country, of those exports which are for the use of others, if it is at a convenient distance from them. The superintendance of property, makes short voyages desirable for the owner, and the connection that soon takes place, between the money capital of a country and its shipping interests, greatly strengthens the vortex. The attainment of wealth beyond the demands of navigation, leads to an interest in the cargo itself, and then the agency in selling to the consumer, becomes important. It is apparent, that as the final sale depends on the wants of the purchaser, all intermediate expenses of care and agency, must be taken from the price to which the maker would be entitled. Our own commerce has involved this loss, in a remarkable degree, and it has gone to an enormous extent, from a necessity of submitting to the perfidy of agents, arising from a dependence established by means of the so much boasted credit.

That there is this tendency in the employment of foreign shipping, is not only proved by the commercial importance of Holland, which became thus from her naval resources the store-house of Europe, without furnishing any thing from her own productions, but also from the varied experience of America. Before the revolution, every thing for European consumption was carried to Great Britain, but since America has possessed shipping of her own, and in the northern states, there has been an accession of capital, the export to England is reduced one half. It is true indeed, that there is still nearly one half of what she receives, that is re-exported, but it will be found that she still retains a proportioned share of those influences, which formerly carried the whole. Great-Britain, under all the discouragements of our laws, which we are told by the mercantile members of the committee, amount to a prohibition where they have any rivals, did, until the European war, possess one-third of the foreign tonnage employed in America. This has been supported by the dependence into which the southern states were placed by credit, and here as in every other step of the connection, this engine extorts advantages from us, beyond the compensation which is always secured in the first advance. If there wanted other proof of the British interest in the American navigation, being supported in direct opposition to our interests, it may be found in the comparative state of the tonnage employed, where it appears that, after the protecting duties once had their effect, the additional tonnage to a considerable amount, has been entirely American, and that the British tonnage has remained very nearly stationary, and in proportion to their undue influence.

In time of war, in addition to the inconveniences before stated, which are enhanced by throwing the trade from its accustomed channel there are great and important losses brought on a country by this kind of dependence. If your carriers are parties to the war you are subjected to the war freight and war insurance on your cargo, and you are cut off from all the markets to which they are hostile; and indeed from our experience in the present war, I may say you are cut off from the market of your carriers themselves, as it would have been impossible for

British vessels to have escaped in our seas last summer. To what extent this loss goes may be seen from a calculation in the Secretary of State's report on the fisheries, making the proportion of war to that of peace in the 100 years as 42 to 100; and on that calculation there can be no hesitation in determining that the interest of the farmers requires that this foreign dependence should end here.

But the European war, by making a temporary exclusion of British shipping has already brought on us the greatest mischief of such a regulation; and by the encouragement it has afforded to our shipping, almost completed the remedy; so that we have reason to consider this as a fortunate period. But it is not merely the advancement of our marine that is contemplated by the present resolutions, the security of that which we have is also dependant on them. The danger from the Algerines has been estimated in this house at 5 per cent on the vessel and cargo, but the whole encouragement to our own shipping in our existing laws consists in the one tenth additional duty on goods imported in foreign vessels. Whenever there shall be an European peace, which cannot be far distant, the whole difference between the two sums will be a direct encouragement on British ships and will probably be equal to two freights. Do gentlemen rely on the precarious prospect of building frigates, and the more precarious service to be rendered by them when built, so much as to neglect any other regulations for the safety of our shipping when they are so much in their power?

(To be Continued.)

Foreign Intelligence.

On Tuesday last the Sloop Hiram, Captain Harris, arrived at New-York from London, after 52 days passage. By this vessel, London papers to the 17th of November are received, from which the following are extracts:

MANHEIM, Oct. 21.

The Republicans are now busied entrenching themselves about Saverne, a defile not easily to be penetrated. Landau has been summoned; but the commandant answered, that he would have the whole town burnt and pillaged rather than surrender, as he would at any rate, lose his head were he to give up that Fortress.

BRUSSELS, Nov. 7.

The grand army, under the Prince of Cobourg has moved forward. The head quarters have been transferred from Bernmerain to Engel-la-fontaine.

TOURNAY, Nov. 12.

Large detachments of troops have arrived here for the winter. Since the action at Lannoy nothing has occurred.—Most of the wounded officers who were here are recovered.

The few last days of our stay in the bleak plains of Cfoing, we experienced the greatest inconvenience; the disposition the enemy betrayed to terminate the campaign, justified our retreat to winter-quarters, a circumstance as unexpected, as it is gratifying; at Menin, Courtray, Ypres, &c. the army is cantoned for the present: Ghent and Bruges are the principal posts. The guards go to Brussels.

NAMUR, Nov. 2.

By report of the peasants, it seems that there has been a very warm action between Gen. Beaulieu and the French the day before yesterday, in the neighbourhood of Phillipville. The loss of the Austrians alone is estimated at between 2 and 3000 men. Waggoners are gone from thence to bring in the wounded, for whom it will be difficult to find place, as the hospitals are already full; three large convents have also been converted into hospitals.

BRUMDT, (in Alsace) Oct. 2.

The career of our success is checked. We have been most unexpectedly stoped by an army of 50,000 French, who have advantageously posted themselves near Strasbourg, and entrenched towards the side of the Saverne. Gen. Wumfer, sees himself reduced to the necessity of acting on the defensive, as well as the Prussians on this side of Saverne, who have been obliged to fall back, and to support themselves by the right wing of the Austrian army. We imagine that a general action is now

indispensable, as we cannot remain eight days in our present position without the most imminent hazard, and we have no longer any thing to hope from the favorable dispositions of the people of Strasbourg. Our negotiations were discovered; and the Commissioners from the Convention have so effectually intimidated all those who were inclined to open the gates to us—so many of them have indeed been seized, and so many more denounced—that we dread the fate of our incursion. This astonishing army of Republicans has been formed in three days, and it swells like a torrent. They are half armed, and want every thing but an enthusiasm for liberty, which perhaps is better than our discipline. Our hope is, that the Swiss Cantons will at length give up their system of neutrality, and declare against these Anarchists.

PARIS, November 7.

Execution of Philip Egalite.

This celebrated personage yesterday underwent an interrogatory before the Revolutionary Tribunal. All that is hitherto known of what passed there is that being questioned respecting his intimacy with Sillery, the deputy lately executed, he answered, "I was attached to Sillery until the moment that I refused any longer to see him."—"You have nevertheless (says the President) committed the care of your children to his wife who is now with them abroad."—"Yes (answered Egalite) but that was at a time when I had no cause to suspect Sillery."

This most villainous, most cowardly, and most infamous of wretches, was condemned to death at the same sitting at which he was tried; and yesterday evening, at half past five o'clock, he was executed on the Place de la Revolution, three hours after judgment was pronounced against him.

On the same day that Egalite suffered, and on the same scaffold, was likewise executed, Coustard, another Deputy of the Convention.

Bailly, the late Mayor, will soon suffer a similar fate; he has been transferred to the Conciergerie, and so has General Carles.

General Houchard and Brunet; and M. Barthelemy, the author of the Voyages of Anacharis, have been also transferred from the Abbaye to the Conciergerie.

The total number of persons confined in the several prisons, was yesterday 3255.

The wife of Roland is shortly to appear before the revolutionary tribunal, to give information respecting the retreat of her husband, or to undergo the punishment which was reserved for that Ex-Minister.

Madame Kolli, wife of the Ex-Farmer General of that name, had obtained a suspension of her sentence, by declaring herself with child. The time for that proof being elapsed, she was yesterday delivered over to the guillotine. Lemayne, Wamser, Lacombe, and Purguette, members of the Popular Commission at Bourdeaux, have shared the same fate.

Execution of BRISSOT and Twenty other Deputies.

On the 21st October, Brissot and twenty other Deputies, suffered the axe of the guillotine. The following is the official report published by order of the revolutionary Tribunal on this head:

The Tribunal, on the declaration of the jury, stating, that Brissot, Vergniaud, Genfonne, Duprat, Valaze, Lehard, Ducos, Boyer, Fonfrede, Boileau, Gardien, Duchastel, Sillery, Faucher, Duperrret, La Source, Carra, Reuvan, Mainville, Antiboul, Vigeo, and Lacaze, are the authors or accomplices in a conspiracy which has existed against the unity and indivisibility of the Republic: against the liberty and safety of the French people.

"Condemns the above-mentioned persons to death; declares their effects confiscated for the use of the Republic, and orders that the sentence be executed in the place de la Revolution and that it be printed and distributed throughout the Republic."

Valaze, one of the condemned, stabbed himself after he had heard his sentence.—The Tribunal has ordered, that the carcase of the suicide be brought to the place de la Revolution, that it may be buried with the other condemned Deputies in the same place.

On the day after their condemnation, they were conveyed together, to the bloody scaffold; on their journey thither, says one of the French papers they entered