

## 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's observations concluded.

HAVING shewn, that the actual state of our commerce is by no means the most beneficial, as far as navigation is concerned, I will proceed to consider the benefits derived from the consumption of those European manufactures, which form the principal part of the stores of American—and here it may safely be said, that national policy by no means justifies the almost exclusive preference, given to those of Great Britain. It is not always true, that the commodity which is bought for least money is the best bargain, for the means of payment form an important consideration in all traffick, and accommodations in it, may more than counterbalance an inequality of price. If one man will receive an article in exchange which you can sell to no other, it will certainly be a saving to deal with him, at a high advance on his property. If there are countries which would become great consumers of American produce, on the terms of reciprocal consumption, and we find a difficulty, as is often the case, in vending that produce, is it not of great national importance to excite those acts, which are to become the foundation of the connection, even if in the first instance, it is to be attended with inconvenience and loss. France may be made a connection of this sort; she is at this time, almost if not quite, on a footing with Great Britain in the consumption of American products, and every hand which shall receive employment from us, will add to her wants. We are told that it is of no less importance to us, to find a country which can supply us advantageously, than one which will consume our productions, and that as commerce is no longer carried on by barter, it is no less beneficial, to sell in one country and buy in another, than if we could complete the exchange in the same country. This might be true if your production was limited, and the demand for it certain, but with a greatly improving agriculture, and some risk in our markets, the object is important. Great Britain being the factory of those things which would make her most dependent on the agricultural interest, and the national wealth being probably at the greatest height, there is no expectation that her consumption will encrease. On the other hand, as labour is now to receive its direction in France, to the manufacturing arts so far as concerns America, you will take from the agricultural strength, a large class of people, and by that means create a dependence on you, at least to the amount of their own consumption, and the wealth you will diffuse, will give ability to thousands who are now too poor to bid for your commodities. Nor is it probable, that you will purchase this important benefit, on very disadvantageous terms, for it is agreed on all hands, that many important arts are well understood there, & that labour, which forms the principal part of the cost of most articles, is considerably cheaper in France, than in England.

Another very important operation, of a discrimination in favor of France, will be that by encouraging liberal industry, you may put an end to some practices, which in the existing state of consumption greatly depreciates our commodities, I mean the public provision made in granaries, and the supply from them in times of scarcity which destroy the competition that raises every thing to its just value. Different consequences have been foretold, as likely to result from those measures, to which I shall give a short examination. We are told that the preference long since given by our laws, has been equal to a prohibition of British vessels, and that to the extent to which it has gone, the best effects have been produced. To secure this operation from a recent attack, and at the same time to extend it to some branches of trade, to which its principle would equally extend, is the object of the marine resolutions. We have no reason to apprehend bad consequences, from an action which has hitherto had good consequences. As to the increased duties on manu-

factures, I think the prospect in no way threatening, for if there should be found no country to supply our wants on better terms, the diminution of consumption will be only in proportion to the duty.—This can be by no means alarming, considered as the worst consequence of the measure to men with whom the impost is the favourite mode of collecting the revenue, at a time when the public wants are equal to any possible produce. If there shall be found a competitor with Great-Britain for our consumption, the great object will be attained, as it must be accompanied by a corresponding consumption of American productions. But we are told that there will be a conflict of commercial regulations between this country and Great Britain, and that the consequence will be, the loss of the market she affords us. The probable consequences of such a conflict will best determine whether it is to be expected, as it will commence on her part as well as ours, with a view to consequences. The danger which she can alone apprehend, is the loss of the market for her manufactures, and to obviate this, it would be absurd to widen the breach between us, as that would tend in a direct proportion, to the establishment of unfriendly habits and manufactures, either here or in other countries, which would rival her own. If however, the ultimate advantage would justify such measures, the immediate distress of her people, would forbid it. The American trade must be the means of distributing bread to several hundred thousand persons whose occupation would be wholly ended with the trade, and the government is by no means in a situation to bear their discontent.

Their navigation and manufactures draw many important ingredients from America which would be lost to them. The creditors of the people of America to an immense amount would be deprived of the remittances which depend on a friendly intercourse. On the whole it would add to the disorders of the government among those who, perhaps, have heretofore contributed to its support, without gratifying any thing but an arrogant resentment: but we are told that our own citizens would be equal sufferers and are more to be injured by being stopped in a career of rapid improvement: it will be hard to anticipate any real misfortune to America, in such a contest, unless the temporary loss of indulgencies which are by no means necessary, can be so called. The consumption of Great-Britain is, according to the most friendly calculation not more than one third of our purchases from her, and therefore the national wealth, independent of the gratification of our appetites, will receive an immense addition and a vast fund will be procured to make lasting and valuable improvements which would be degraded by comparison with the gewgaws of a day. It is to be remarked, that the diminution of our exports would be divided among large classes of people, and in all cases forms a deduction from the annual income rather than a total loss: this will result from the various objects of American industry and the division of the markets of its produce. This forms an important difference between America and Great-Britain, in an estimate of the effects of a rupture between the two countries. In my opinion the habits of the southern states are such as to require the controul which is said to be the consequence of these measures; under the facility offered by the modes of trade before spoken of and the credit which is said to be so beneficial; they have not only involved themselves in debt, but have contracted habits which with the power of gratification must always keep them so. We did hope that the administration of justice would have corrected the evil, but we now find that it cannot be corrected but by entire changes; it is founded in the policy of the merchant himself and this circumstance is enough to present to the minds of the committee a long train of dependent mischiefs; it is a fact supported by the best evidence, that our merchants who get their goods from the manufacturer pays as much for them as the shopkeeper who buys at Baltimore or Philadelphia, this is one of the consequences of the want of credit which always will follow a reliance on collection from farmers, and there can be no doubt that the merchant is indemnified for his disgrace, as well as his advance. The result of the whole train of indulgence is, that our goods are bought at an advance from a half to one fourth of what they could be

afforded for in cash sales; nor does the mischief stop here, it brings a subjection which materially affects the sale of our produce. I do believe myself, that the war with Great-Britain did not bring half the mischief on us that their credit has, and I very much suspect a credit for consumption will always be found equally mischievous; it by no means resembles money loans as is insinuated by the gentleman from South Carolina, by freeing a man's own resources for any other use; it is certain that there is no other safe regulation of a farmer's expences than his income, and experience every day proves that when so regulated they always fall short of the income and that when they depend on credit they always exceed it, and thereby subject future revenue; lessening the importation of foreign manufactures will increase our household fabrics which experience has proved to be highly profitable as the labor is done by a part of the community of little power in any other application. Regular efforts in this way have been in my country certainly productive of independence.

It is acknowledged that we may derive great advantages from France in our commerce but it is said they should be secured by treaty, and we should not pay beforehand for them. If advantages are to be drawn by treaty from foreign nations, to enable the executive to procure them we must advance the impost beyond the revenue standard or they will have nothing to give in exchange; will gentlemen agree to involve France in this measure indiscriminately when we have already a commercial treaty with her, which was concomitant with that treaty which gave us independence; will they under such proofs of friendliness and while they are laboring under a revolution that must strengthen our connection, shew distrust of their justice when the distinction now proposed may give them a knowledge of those advantages they may derive from our trade, and thereby make them more eager for a permanent contract; it will be always in our power when we find ourselves deceived, to restore the equality with Great-Britain. We are asked what will become of our revenue under such an establishment? the answer is obvious from my former observations, if the consumption is reduced only by means of revenue, the revenue will encrease; if it is lessened by competition it will not be diminished, for the present rates will continue on all foreign goods, and we shall be better able to pay from the improvement of our foreign markets; but if there should be a diminution without lessening the power of the people to pay, what mischief will there be—every body understands that the people pay the revenue altho' it is collected by custom-house officers, and there is reason to believe, that the expence of collection is greater in that way than any other, as there is not only the apparent expence but a secret compensation to the merchants for advancing it.

But we are told, that we are including countries, in the general description, which are our best customers—Spain, Portugal, the Hanse towns and Denmark. It will be found, that they are little within the reach of the propositions, not being carriers, and very little manufacturers of the articles to be taxed. It will be in the power of the Legislature to save them, in filling up the blanks, but this is not intended to shut out any nation, which chuses to trade with us on liberal terms, and if we are satisfied with our footing in their trade, there is no doubt, but we can secure it by treaty; they will not complain of our taking away benefits, which they may resume at any time. We are told that this business is merely commercial; and that we should not think of our political relations to Great Britain; but in my opinion, most of our grievances have commercial objects, and therefore are to be remedied by commercial resistance; if you take away what is contended for, contest must end. The Indian war and the Algerine attack, have both commercial views, or Great-Britain must stand without excuse, for instigating the most horrid cruelties. I consider, however, the propositions before you, as the strongest weapon America possesses, and the most likely to restore her to all her rights political and commercial, and I trust I have shewn, that the means will have a beneficial effect, if they should fail as a remedy with respect to Great-Britain.

[Debate to be continued.]

From the Philadelphia Gazette.

MR. BROWN,

Nothing can be more displeasing to a lover of truth, than the pains which are taken to impress the American public with false ideas of the present situation of France. Of this, the representation of French affairs, said to have been brought by Captain Culver, commander of the advice boat lately arrived from Havre-de-Grace, is an example.

The account really brought by Capt. Culver, presents a scene dishonorable to human nature.

He states, that from the vigilant severity of government, a spirit of mutual distrust is predominant among the citizens of Paris. That every man is afraid of his neighbor. That executions are so frequent as to have ceased to excite curiosity. Not a day passing without some victims of the guillotine more or fewer. That the place where it stands is almost continually wet with human gore. *That the head of a man seems to be of little more value than that of a chicken.* And as a proof of the slightness of the causes which involve the sacrifice of life, he mentions the instance of a woman, who, having on her finger a ring with a fleur de lis, was asked why she continued to wear it, to which replying that she had worn it for twenty years, and in better times than the present—she the day following suffered death by the guillotine.

In relation to the death of the Queen, to which he was a witness, he mentions, that as she went along to the place of execution, she was reviled and abused (chiefly by women of the worst appearance) in the most obscene and shocking manner—all which she bore with composure and dignity; which she continued to exhibit to the last fatal moment.

To crown the detail of atrocities, Captain Culver adds, that every method is taken to debauch and debase the mind of the young dauphin, a child of seven or eight years old, and that among the expedients for that purpose, he is kept in a state of almost constant intoxication.

A LOVER OF TRUTH.

## Foreign Intelligence.

STRASBOURG, Nov. 6.

The National Commissioners, it is said, have discovered a depot of 14 millions of livres in specie, made for the purpose of corrupting Strasbourg, and the department of the Lower Rhine.

Several domiciliary visits were made this evening, which have produced a great number of arrests. The revolutionary army parade the street night and day.

Saint Just is making use of every endeavor to put the army that covers this fortress on the most respectable footing. His repeated representations to the committee of public safety, have procured a large supply of heavy cannon, with a reinforcement of 3000 men belonging to the artillery.

Lacoste, the other National Commissioner, is in this city, where he has adopted every measure necessary to induce the inhabitants to make a vigorous defence. Yesterday he visited the Popular Society of Strasbourg, in which he stated the means he had used to supply the army with those necessities which they had lost at Weissenbourg.

As a measure of general safety, 80 priests, and several other suspected persons, have been sent from Strasbourg to Besancon. Near 100 women have also been sent away, because, it is supposed, that the Combined Armies mean to attempt the blockade of Strasbourg.

LONDON, November 13.

The veteran Luckner, after his dismissal from the army, wished to end his life in retirement; but to this there exists an obstacle of which he had no conception. The possession of wealth is an unpardonable crime with the Sans Culottes; and as he has grown rich by the profits of a contract he long held, for supplying the French army with horses, this brave officer, who not long ago was acquitted of all malversation, and permitted to retire where he thought fit, is now in confinement. As he has a large estate in Germany, it seems a want of foresight that he did not retire thither.

All the British merchants at Bourdeaux have been arrested; each is confined to a separate room, with liberty to walk in the day time in a large garden, set apart for the purpose. Seals have been placed on their papers.