

MR. FENNO,

As the reasoning in the House of Representatives against Mr. Clark's motion for prohibiting British commerce has not appeared in the public papers, you are requested to give a place in your paper to the following, which contains the substance of Mr. Dexter's arguments against it:

Mr. Dexter introduced his observations by remarking that he had never risen with so great reluctance on any former occasion. At so late an hour when patience seemed exhausted, when reasoning had given place to invective, when to oppose the resolution was but soliciting reproaches, when the friends of it, confident of a majority, were from all sides of the House impatiently calling for the question, when the mover of it heard arguments against it only that he might treat them with contempt, and their authors with insult, he said it was in vain to ask for an attentive hearing. He should not have risen but for a remark just fallen from a gentleman from New-Jersey (Mr. Dayton) which had forbidden him to be silent. That gentleman, said Mr. Dexter, has told us that the present measure is a stepping-stone to sequestration of British debts. Viewing it therefore as the beginning of a system of hostility, which is to be so conducted as to sacrifice not only our interest and peace, but our national honor, the duty to resist it becomes indispensable. Whatever may be thought of making laws to annihilate the ties of honor and personal confidence, and to dissolve the moral obligation of contracts—Whatever may be thought of the modern usage of nations, which probably from general consent has become a law, which cannot now be violated without perfidy—whatever may be thought of the odium it might bring on our national character, and the complete destruction to our credit at a moment when we shall probably need the utmost extent of it; we have not taken those previous steps for pacific accommodation, which the custom of nations and all writers of authority hold to be first in order and indispensable. We have not made that demand for a recompense, which ought to precede every species of reprisal.—After the observations, sir, which I made in the beginning of the debate, it will not be thought strange that I suffer on the present occasion an unusual conflict of reasoning and of feeling. I then stated with the frankness which I felt, and with the zeal which the hazardous crisis of our country inspired, the reasons and passions which kept my mind in a state of vibration. Struggling with indignation at the injustice and folly of Britain, I said we have suffered until confidence is folly—until patience is a crime. Believing that the resolution involved a principle, which might be useful both for obtaining justice and preserving peace; but that the present shape rendered it not only useless but injurious; believing too that it is improper for this branch of our government to begin a negotiation with a foreign nation and pre-emptorily dictate the terms of it, I proposed an amendment, which left the principle in all its force and avoided some of the objections. We have heretofore heard much of a spirit of accommodation; but the friends of this resolution have not discovered it. After wearying themselves in hunting for a reason against the amendment, it was negated without any. They will agree with us, but it must be precisely on their own terms. This is the language of accommodation—hear and believe whatever we teach—stoop down and bear whatever we impose. Victory is in our own power—a triumph is better than peace. If sir, it be connected with discord and public calamity, the laurel is too withered to excite my envy.—If amid the fire which rages, we have not forgotten the cause which produced it, we must remember that the condemnations of our vessels in the West-Indies in consequence of the orders of the British government of the sixth of November, are the great and immediate cause of complaint. Have we sir demanded a recompense for this injury, and waited a reasonable time for an answer? So far is this from fact, that we have not taken one step towards this, nor have we even heard from Britain since it was known there that any condemnations have taken place.

Our last dispatches from our minister at London tell us, that Lord Grenville declared that he presumed no condemnations

would take place in consequence of those orders.—The words themselves certainly do not justify any.

Have we any right to say that a demand of recompense would be fruitless, when the injuries we complain of, are thus expressly disavowed by the minister? Did we know that a demand would be fruitless, still we ought to make it in conformity to the usage of nations, from a decent respect to their opinion; and to convince them in case of a war that our enemies are altogether the aggressors, and that we have been just and circumspect. We are judging in our own cause, and we ought not to trust ourselves to deviate from established principles, lest prejudice should mislead us. But it is said, that we have negotiated in vain, respecting the breaches of the treaty of peace, and that the delays here, are sufficient to justify immediate war. Do we not know sir, that there are two sides to that negotiation? Have not they made demands on us for breaches of the same treaty? The negotiation is still pending in the ordinary train. We have never given them our ultimatum on the subjects of it. It is now under the direction of the Executive, which is the constitutional authority. It is not proper for us to assume to put an end to it by an act of legislation. Who, sir, that calls himself an American, would dare to pursue a measure which may tarnish our national honor? If any one would take even a doubtful step, "Shame ought to burn his cheek to a cinder." To prevent being misunderstood or misrepresented, perhaps I ought to say here, that I by no means deny our right to regulate or prohibit American commerce. I only mean that if the present controversy should end in war, we cannot justify engaging in it without first demanding justice, and if we make this demand with circumstances which forbid success, we do not comply with the spirit of this rule, but evade it. Taking the measure now proposed, would forbid Britain to treat with us on the subject. We know that we should refuse in similar circumstances. Are we more proud than Britain? Did any nation ever begin negotiation with threats? The external forms of regard on such occasions are so excessive, that nothing but custom prevents this appearing ridiculous. Humanity as well as usage requires that every peaceful method should be tried, and that too in the form best calculated to be successful. Faithfulness to our constituents, requires this. Their interest and their wishes are against courting war. But sir, we are told that negotiation is pusillanimous. Passion is called American feeling. We hear much about energy, and some seem to think that the occasion calls for insult. Sir, noise and declamation, are very distinct from fortitude and patriotism. The bravest men do not bluster and threaten. Why should it be thought too tame a measure to state the injury, and with manly firmness demand a recompense? The pride, the petulance of Kings, has always submitted to this, but the moderation of a Republic forbids it. More proud than Kings—more insolent than Tyrants—we despise this law of humanity, this compact of mankind.—Where is the despot, the crined monster, who dares to spread desolation and havoc, without demanding first his right? And where sir, is the difference between not demanding at all, and demanding in such a way as to insure a refusal?—How much justice there is in the charge of pusillanimity, which has been so often and liberally made, I will not undertake to determine. Perhaps he who pursues with decent firmness the steps, which propriety, humanity and general consent have provided, and while he feels the strongest indignation, is too proud to throw dirt or threaten, but places himself in the best posture of defence, lest war should follow unsuccessful negotiation, is as truly magnanimous, as he who talks loudly of revenge, avows passion as his principle, calls hard names to produce conciliation, and gives blows to keep peace, who at the same time does every thing to provoke war, and opposes every measure to prepare for it. Lest the difficulties of the present crisis, and the attack on the pride of Britain, by prefacing our demand with a threat, should not be sufficient to prevent a recompense & provoke to war—old causes of controversy are added. The breaches of the treaty of peace, by detaining the posts and negroes, are old subjects of complaint.

Why they are brought forward now,

and made an indispensable preliminary of treaty, when Britain is aided by a powerful confederacy, and the world is like tinder, is difficult to conceive; unless we wish to kindle here the flame of war.—Further sir, this throws such an unequal burthen on our Merchants, as amounts to oppression. They have already suffered extremely from British and other depredations. They bear the principal burthens in raising our Revenue. Is it right to add to all this, and forbid many of them to exercise that business, by which they get their bread, until Britain shall not only make compensation for their recent injuries; but also settle all the old matters of difference precisely on our own terms? We are connecting matters which our interest requires should be separate. Britain, following our own example here, will say that by the treaty, all British debts were to be paid; but the State laws and the Courts of Virginia have prevented this. They will offer to set off these against the injuries suffered by our merchants, and perhaps the balance will be against us. Will this be protection to the sufferers? Yet if we connect these claims together we cannot object to their doing the same. It is throwing on the merchants all the political evils and burthens of America. Yet we who oppose this measure, have been charged with wanting feeling for their suffering. Provoking an unnecessary war will sacrifice all their property now abroad, and deprive them of all hope of recompense, for that which has been already condemned. Going to war is surely no way to induce Britain to make compensation; and it is as certain, that this Country will be under no obligation to do so, if war shall be the issue. This Country is bound to indemnify them only when we refuse to obtain satisfaction from Britain, or to avenge their wrongs. What inconvenience should we experience from the delay occasioned by the usual forms of seeking redress? Can Britain run away, like a private malefactor, so that we cannot catch her to punish her? We should at least, be better prepared for war. If the reasons for it are strong, they will not suffer by our taking time to examine them. Are we afraid that passion will cool, which we hear avowed as the principle which governs, and ought to govern our counsels? Or are we apprehensive that passion on this occasion is popular? I suspect this last idea, has no small influence. We ought to judge that nothing will be popular which is not right. I have more respect for my constituents than to believe that they will run mad, and then become so myself to please them. That I should continue in this feat, is of very small importance to me, and of none to the public; but it is of infinite moment to preserve our peace and national honor. The path of rectitude is the way to honor. The man who walks in it without deviating, will generally meet the public approbation. But if he should fail in this, his own feelings will reward him.

(To be Continued.)

Foreign Intelligence.

ST. PETERSBURGH, Feb. 1.

Our ambassador at the Porte, has not yet received any precise answer to the several very interesting points presented to the Divan. The Turks express great uneasiness respecting the preparations making on the frontiers of Russia, where we on our side are establishing immense magazines. In the ports of Sebastopol, Oczakow, and Cherson, there are several ships of the line and frigates ready to sail. It is thought the Emperour meditates another expedition on the Dniester, to deprive Poland of all communication with Turkey. It is probable that the Divan itself has given birth to this object by the ambiguity with which it answered our demands on the last partition of Poland. Probably our court also itself perceived that the Porte would endeavour to establish a league with some other powers, which might easily become prejudicial to the repose of the North.

NANTES, February 15.

Vielaris has been shot at Noirmontiers, the guillotine continues to be occupied, and the Commission *ad hoc* dispatches by 400 and 500 at a time the wretched banditti which they bring us from all parts; they shoot or drown them, and bury them 40 and 50 in a grave, which occasions such a stench that we fear some contagious disorder breaking out; fresh graves are digging, and the others covering with earth; this will purify the air, but the victims are still very numerous, particularly towards the quarters of Chelien.

BASLE, February 5.

The contributions and provisions which the French have collected in the Palatinate are supposed to be more than necessary for the support of the army of the Rhine for one year. But, profiting from past experience, they have sent them all into the interior of France, to defeat the purpose, as they say, of any future treasons.

The Piedmontese, after a fruitless campaign, have retired from the Col de Tende, and have dispersed their troops in the neighbouring quarters. The king of Sardinia has begun and ended his campaign at Saorgio!

PARIS, February 27.

THE enquiry after subsistence is invariably the order of the day, and the cause of our distress begins to be very clearly seen through by those who are capable of reflection. Formerly we consumed 400,000 weight of stock-fish; an immense quantity of rice was brought us from the Levant, and our herring fishery went a considerable way towards our nourishment. At this time we are absolutely deprived of all these articles, which must be replaced by productions of our own growth; and the quantity of these also has been lessened in a degree on which it is impossible to calculate. The game and tame fowls, which heretofore formed an important part of our support, are almost entirely annihilated. Last year, it was found necessary to thresh the corn in the month of September instead of December, inasmuch that there has been an anticipation of no less than three months in the corn destined for the present year's nourishment. There can, therefore, be no longer any surprise respecting the difficulties of procuring subsistence.

On the other hand, those who deal in the most necessary articles of consumption, refuse to conform to the law against monopolists, notwithstanding the punishment of death annexed to it. The law of the maximum is very generally infringed; and in the Fauxbourg, St. Antoine, the populace lately stopped a waggon laden with butter, cheese, and eggs, brought from the distance of 18 leagues. 'Tis true the Constituted Authorities had these articles valued and distributed among the crowd, but this was done amidst the repeated exclamations of the women—"a la lanterne."

Heretofore all the departments of France have been sacrificed to Paris, and their provisions withdrawn from them to feed that focus of the Rebellion. But now that every resource and every supply is exhausted, Paris begins to feel, in common with the rest of the nation, all the horrors of a scarcity. The want of butchers meat, at this time, occasions the greatest distress. Chaumette and Hebert vainly endeavored to lay to the account of the aristocrats, and the criminal plans of Mr. Pitt, the famine which now prevails in Paris. The people saw through these idle declamations, and it became necessary to search the evil in its source.

We learn from Colmer, that forty of the richest Jews resident in that city have been all of them guillotined.

Gen. Pichegru writes, that he waits with impatience for muskets for the troops of the first requisition, who are without arms.

NATIONAL CONVENTION.

February 8.

The people of colour resident at Paris, appeared at the bar to congratulate the convention on the abolition of slavery in the French West-India Islands.

"This decree," exclaimed the Orator of the deputation, "has restored to liberty, and consequently to happiness, one million of the human race, who have hitherto groaned under the chains of slavery. You have made us forget the wrongs of two centuries! We mean not to return you thanks—Republicans acknowledge no ceremonies of that kind. We shall only declare that you have deserved well of your country, and of the whole world."

The people of colour were received with the loudest applause. In a second petition, they declared that they meant to devote themselves to the care of the wounded soldiers.

Jean-Baptiste-Belle, a black, Deputy from St. Domingo, entered into a long detail of the cruelties which the people of colour had suffered at St. Domingo, and requested the arrest of the chiefs of the Colonial Assembly, which was the only method, he said, of saving the Colonies.—Referred to the Committees of Public and General Safety.

DEPARTMENT OF PARIS.

30th Pluviose.—Feb. 18.

We are in the utmost astonishment at the news which we frequently find in the English newspapers, in the pay of government. Simon who had been employed in the care of young Capet, amused the municipality the other day, by reading an account to them of his arrival in London, though in fact he has