fully demonstrates this: No doubt in case of war by privateering, we could take many of her vessels; suppose we took more of hers than she did of ours, would this be a commerce that would be beneficial to agriculture or to the merchants engaged in exporting by fair and regular trade the productions of the country? No, it would not. In the regular trade every thing is certain, in the other all uncertain.

It has been said we might sequester the debts due from this country to Britain, and thus indemnify ourselves. This I never will consent to, so long as the treaty made by Mr. Jay is in force, however I may disapprove that instrument, I consider the faith of the nation as much pledged by it, as it can be by any engagement she can enter into with any foreign power. But it has been observed, that we may repeal the treaty, and thus, I suppose, get clear of the objection to sequestration, which is derived from it. We have once before tried this plan of repealing a treaty, with other half war measures; but the repeal did not produce any consequence favorable to the U. S. Suppose you repeal the treaty by law, and then undertake to negociate, and your ministers are asked, are you in consequence of the repeal at war? What answer will be given? This treaty too provides against sequestration in case of actual war; what opinions civilians and jurists may entertain of the repeal of such treaty, I know not. But be this at it may, I never will consent to aid in blasting the fair fame which this nation has deservedly acquired for honesty and fair dealing; in this she is in my opinion inferior to none. I sincerely hope the gentleman who used the expression, will, from his known candor, on reflection, take it back.

I very sincerely regret that a gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Smilie,) ascribed to a sentiment delivered by a gentleman from Virginia (Mr. J. Randolph) a tendency to dissolve the union. In my mind it had no such tendency. The dissolution of this union ought not, I conceive, to be mentioned in this House on any pretence whatever, and certainly ought not to be hinted at on slight grounds. I believe every state and every part of the country attached to the union, indeed the union may be compared to a chain, the value of which depends on its being whole, but may be destroyed by taking any one of its links away; and whoever breaks the chain, by which the states are linked together, will render the whole people miserable.

I come now, to that part of the subject where every man must feel the injury done to his fellow-citizens. I mean the impressment of our seamen. Is there a father who does not feel this? No not one in the nation, and that man who shall devise a certain remedy for this evil will deserve the thanks of his country; he will, indeed, be its greatest benefactor; he, like the impressed sailor, will have a place in the tenderest part of the hearts of his countrymen. If a plan, to prevent this injury, was only made known, the very knowledge of the plan would put an end to the injury. But can gentlemen seriously believe that the adoption of the resolution will produce this effect; the means are not adequate to the end, I conceive, at least it remains to be shewn that they are. I will, without hesitation, state what I believe to be the best remedy for the evil. It is this, to agree with G. Britain that neither country shall employ the sailors of the other, and to agree also, on the proof that shall be required on both sides; we might expect that G. Britain would adhere to an agreement of this kind, because it would be her interest to do so, and on her interest alone I should rely. In considering this subject, we must look at things as they really are, and not as we could wish them to be. The British government exercise the right or rather the power of impressing their sailors, and I believe in time of war of prohibiting their going into foreign service. Under these circumstances it may not be adviseable for us not to employ them; nothwithstanding we may do it with their consent, especially if it would prevent their impressing our countrymen. If the merchants really be the friends of the American sailors, they would willingly agree to such a regulation. If they would not be willing, is it not clear they would employ British sailors at the risk of having ours impressed? On this subject it might not be improper to state, that I have been informed in some parts of the world, certificates of persons being American citizens are sold, and that the market has been well supplied. I have also been informed, that a British officer in Philadelphia actually procured one for the purpose of enabling him to go home. This favored G. Britain. I have given this information, to shew that others, besides citizens, may obtain certificates. Impressments I fear can only be prevented by negociation; indeed I have heard that the two governments have been engaged on this interesting subject. I hope it will be resumed, and that it will end in securing to our countrymen their safety on the ocean.

We are told that the nation calls for strong measures, that the President has recommended them, and that men of the greatest talents think them requisite. This may be true, but as I have neither seen nor heard of this call of the nation, and as I do not know the opinion of others, I shall certainly pursue my own. The first message of the President to Congress, most unquestionably pointed as strong toward Spain, as it did to G. Britain; and hitherto but little has been said about the usage we received from her. But the recommendation of the President alone, is not always a good reason for legislating, I apprehend; because, every President has recommended subjects for the consideration of Congress, on which no act was ever passed. If ever the liberties of this nation are destroyed, by strong measures, it will be, when the recommendation of the President shall alone be deemed good cause for their adoption. At present we have choice of all the resolutions on the table, notwithstanding all that has been said in favor of the one now under consideration. No doubt can be entertained, but the mover of each thinks his own the best. From the number, it would seem there was no difficulty in finding remedies for the injuries we have received. Again, we must adopt this resolution or we shall be degraded. This is no new phrase to me; I have formerly heard it so often, and on so many occasions, that I have become a sort of a sceptic on it. We shall not be degraded by living in peace with all the world. We shall not be degraded, by not following the example of the European nations, by rushing into war, on every opportunity that may offer. War is nothing but another name for blood and taxes; we shall not be degraded, being free and happy at home; but we shall be degraded, if we fail in paying the national debt, or if we refuse to observe treaties, constitutionally made. This will be the worst kind of degradation, because it will proceed from a want of morality. In order to induce us to adopt the resolution, we are seriously told, that the revenue is derived from commerce. This I deny, and say that it is derived from the whole labor of the community. Stop the laborer in his field, and the revenue is gone—Commerce is useful, it is the means by which our productions are exchanged for the productions of other countries.

It has been said, that the land tax overthrew one administration; adopt this measure, and you may possibly overthrow another. I doubt whether the gentleman who made the assertion, is altogether correct in point of fact; it may have aided; but other laws were passed, which undoubtedly had more effect, and were more obnoxious in the part of the country where I live; I mean the attempt to raise an army without an actual war; an army of officers, almost without soldiers; the alien, and sedition laws. It was also said, we were pledged to protect this carrying trade. This reminds me of what I once heard said before, which is this, that we were pledged to pay the salaries of certain judges, after the law was repealed, under which they were appointed. I believe, we are as much pledged in one case as in the other, and not more; I know of nothing binding in this country except the constitution and the laws. A majority of both Houses of Congress may pass a law to give the carrying trade what protection they please, and that law will be binding. We are also called on to become the champions of the laws of nations, as if all nations would at once agree, with us, what these laws really are, and as if a majority of them adhered to their principles; when we know that scarcely a nation in Europe pays any regard to them; and that they will at different times, entertain different opinions on the same subject. Have not most of them formerly declared, that free ships should make free goods, and have not some of the same nations since given up the principle? Before we undertake this business, would it not be prudent, to endeavor to ascertain the opinions of other nations, whose interest may be most like our own. I wish no alliance with any of them; but, if all the nations of Europe should be willing to yield the principle which we are desirous to maintain, no man will be mad enough to say we ought to contend for it. There is certainly a great difference of opinion, as to the nature of the measure. Some think it a war measure; others that it may lead to war, and others again consider it entirely pacific. Without attempting now to enquire which of the three opinions is most correct, it is sufficient for me, that I believe it will not produce the effect intended, and that its operation on the U. S. will be partial. If, however, it should be adopted, and produce war, that war we must support with all our strength; and if it produce a good effect, I for one will rejoice as much any man in this House. A great many appeals have been made to the spirit of 1776; that spirit was not only the spirit of liberty, but also of magnanimity and justice; all the measures then taken, operated equally on every part of the union.

It is said, this is the right time to settle all our disputes with G. Britain, because she is now hard pushed—if we wish to make a treaty that may be lasting, we ought not to take any unjust advantage of her situation—if we do, whenever she shall be free from her present embarrassments, she will be discontented and restless under it, and never satisfied until she gets clear of it. The true rule for us, is to take no advantage, and in all cases to act justly.

I agree in opinion with the gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. Smilie) that war destroys the morals of the people, hence I was greatly surprised, when he followed this correct sentiment, with an assertion, that he would rather have war than loss of national honor. This thing called national honor has ruined more than half the people in the world, and has almost banished liberty and happiness from Europe. Destroy the morals of the people, and we may play over such a game of war as has been played in France—nothing less than to perpetuate the liberty and happiness of the nation, ought to induce us to go to war.

It is a little remarkable that the U. S. have, since the adoption of the present constitution, become the second commercial power in the world; when, if we believe the public prints, she has lost capital enough to have ruined the most wealthy nation in Europe. Million after million is lost, and yet her prosperity is unrivalled, either in ancient or modern times. I know full well that, according to the opinions of the writers on the laws of nations, we now have just cause of war against Great Britain. I also know as well, that we have heretofore had as good cause of war against both G. Britain and France. We then preferred peace—the result has been prosperity. What destroyed the prosperity and liberty of Venice, of Genoa, and of Holland? Wars—and wars, too, generally undertaken to protect the carrying trade.

[It being now about half past three o'clock, *Mr. Smilie* suggested the propriety of an adjournment, in which the House acquiesced, on the intimation of Mr. Macon that indisposition disabled him from finishing the remarks which he wished to offer.]

Tuesday, *March* 11.

MR. MACON, (in continuation.)—Permit me, Mr. Chairman, to return my thanks to the committee for their indulgence yesterday; I was then too much exhausted to have concluded the observations I wished to make. I was then shewing the fate of a few nations who had attempted to protect the carrying trade by war. It has I believe been the fate of all who have made the attempt, G. Britain alone excepted, & she is at this moment engaged in a most tremendous war, almost overloaded with taxes, and tottering under her public debt. Can any fact more clearly illustrate the advantage of the peace over the war system, then a comparison of the tonnage between the United States and Great Britain, in 1789 and now. Ours has been the peace, hers the war system, and we have probably increased ten to her one. It seems to me, that it is impossible for any nation to carry on the whole trade of the world; and every attempt to force trade, is acting under the idea that it can be done. And every attempt to engross the whole carrying trade, is acting under the same impression. The large capatalists in the U. S. are concerned in this business. I wish not to meddle with it, but leave it, like every other branch of industry to find its own level. They may not dread war, because they may employ their stock in another way. But what is to become of those less rich, especially the young beginners? They must be ruined. If the resolution produces any beneficial effects, it must be on the carrying trade. It does not appear to be intended for any thing else, and no one can believe that it will operate favorably to the seamen.

The measure will not only effect the revenue paid on the tonnage of vessels, and on the importations of goods, but it will also affect the revenue to be derived from the sale of the public land; it must very considerably lessen the number of purchasers, and may ruin many who have already purchased in Ohio. Many, no doubt, who have removed to that state, have sold their property, on a credit, to meet the payments which they were to make for the lands there purchased of the U. S. Stop by your measures, the sale of produce, or reduce the price thereof to almost nothing, and how are these people to get paid for the property sold before they went to Ohio? A disappointment to them may be ruinous; it may cause them to lose the land and all the improvements made on it. They have not quite so quick a remedy against their unfortunate debtors, as the U. S. will have against them. You may turn the people off the land, and nearly depopulate the state, but you will get no money.

It is pretty evident, from an argument of the gentleman from New York (Mr. Williams) that the resolution is not expected to operate injuriously on the exportation of grain from the middle states. He told us that we must protect commerce; and that he was in favor of the resolution (meaning I suppose, that the resolution would protect it) or the people in the back country would drink too much whiskey. If then the resolution will protect commerce, and thereby ensure the exportation of grain, there will not be grain left in the country, to make whiskey. This is in some measure acknowledging that for which we have been contending, to wit: that the resolution will operate partially; but I deny, that the people in that part of the country are more in the habits of intoxication than their neighbors in other parts of the union. They are as moral, as industrious, and as honest as those living elsewhere. I do not contend that they are superior, only that they are equal.

Much has been said about the spirit of the nation, and that we are far behind it; meaning, I suppose, those who oppose the resolution. As to my part, I do not know how the spirit of the nation has been ascertained. There is no manifestation of it on the table. It is however, true, that two towns have sent resolutions pledging their lives and fortunes to support whatever measures Congress may adopt. There are also several memorials from the merchants and insurance companies; but if gentlemen take these for the manifestation of the national spirit, they are, I think, mistaken. The national spirit is to be found no where but among those who are to fight your battles. These people may, for aught I know, be of that number. They may have been before Tripoli, and they may now be ready to enter into the army or navy. Addresses, we well know, will not fight battles nor fill regiments. We have seen in former days the Speaker's table loaded with addresses from almost every part of the union, pledging also their lives and fortunes, to support any measures that the then administration might adopt. What was done? Among other acts, one was passed to raise twelve regiments of infantry. There was no difficulty in getting officers; unless, indeed, it was to make the selection out of the great number that applied; but how was it about privates; instead of getting enough for the twelve regiments, scarcely enough for four could be enlisted. At that time too, we heard a great deal about the spirit of the nation, and saw a something of the spirit then talked of in a corps called ——— Blues. Those who then spoke of the spirit of nation, were deceived; they took the vapouring of the towns, and the noise of the addressers to be really the spirit of the nation. But, be assured, sir, that whenever the spirit of this nation shall move, that every individual, in every department of the government will move too.

The ocean must be considered a common and undivided property, to which each nation has a right; hence the difficulty of affording the same security and protection there as on land, where each knows the spot where his dominion ends, and his neighbour's begins. It is vain, therefore, the real situation of the U. S. being considered, to expect from her that perfect protection on the ocean, which she can afford within her territorial limits; I believe this cannot be done even to that part of the ocean from whence we get a part of our exports; other nations also frequent the same place, for the same purpose; this like the rest is joint property; not so with our land, no nation pretends to claim a right to cultivate that.

Permit me here to remark, though not directly connected with my last observation; that I consider the report of the secretary of the treasury, to be as correct as any man living could make it. And that from custom house books, it is impossible to obtain that information, which could really shew the true balance of trade.

A gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. Findley,) has gravely told us; that it would do more harm, since the resolution has been taken into consideration, to reject it, than if it had never been brought forward. This is placing those who do not like it, or who prefer any of the other resolutions to it, in a strange dilemma. The friends of it, ought to have thought of this, before they went into the discussion. If any injury should be produced, either by the rejection or the adoption, they are to blame; and not those who oppose it. It is their measure, not ours. It is, in fact, endeavouring to throw the blame of their conduct on us. The same gentleman made a very unfortunate comparison, when he compared waggons, carrying our flour to market, to vessels engaged in the carrying trade. No two things are more unlike. The waggon is only intended to carry our own productions, to our own markets; and the vessels are engaged in carrying foreign produce, to foreign markets. Besides, the nation pays protecting duties, to encourage the owning of vessels; while the owner of the waggon, is left to depend on his industry and skill. And if any man should ask the government, to give encouragement to the employment of waggons, he would be laughed at; yet waggons are certainly as necessary as vessels. The one carries loads of our own productions, to our own markets; while the other, which is engaged in the fair trade, for home consumption, carries cargoes of them to foreign markets.

A gentleman from Maryland, (Mr. M'Creery,) in order to induce us to adopt the resolution, has informed us, that the towns, in proportion to their numbers, pay more taxes than the country. He did not prove the fact to be so; he cannot. The towns, I apprehend, pay little or no tax. Their merchants and mechanics, who act prudently, calculate on, and generally get, a certain profit. You cannot tax the capital of the merchant. Impose what duty you please on goods; he immediately considers it like first cost, and charges the same profit on it. The consumer not only pays all the tax and charges on merchandize; but he pays them with a profit to the merchant. Whenever a merchant shall begin to live on his capital, we all know he will soon eat it out. To the mechanic, the government has given protecting duties, which secures to him, the sale of every article he may make, at almost any price.—The cultivator of the soil depends on himself, and is often compelled to sell the products of his land for any price he can get; because they will not keep in good condition all the year, like the goods of the merchant and mechanic. From these considerations, it seems to me, that it is, at least probable, that the towns do not pay more than their proportion, nor even as much.

The same gentleman told us, that the nation sustained a considerable loss by sending too much tobacco to England. This seems to me, to be a little like, what we heard about the balance of trade. But it may be so. I will, however, state my sentiments on the subject. If erroneous, I shall be glad to have them corrected. Merchants like every body else, do business with a view to gain; and would they, year after year, send tobacco to England, if they could do better, by sending it to the continent. I apprehend they would not. They understand their business, and generally do that which is best calculated to promote their interest. In examining this subject, we ought to take into consideration the profit to be made on the whole voyage, not barely the price of a single article at a particular place. The place where the whole exported cargo can be sold dearest, and the imported one bought cheapest, is the place which will always give the most profit. If a merchant should send a cargo of tobacco to England, and wished a few pieces of Russia sheeting in part of the return cargo; would it not be better to purchase them there, than send his vessel to Russia for them, where they could be bought a little cheaper. He would, I conceive, actually save by so doing. I wish the gentleman had told us, the places where the tobacco might have been exported to, so as to save all that he now thinks we lose, by sending it to England. I should have been glad to have been informed, whether the places were known to possess mercantile capital, and whether merchants of established character lived at them; that sort of character, to which a prudent man, might with safety consign the most valuable cargo. He did not tell us, that we lost by sending cotton to Great Britain. It may, therefore, be presumed, that it could not be sold any where else at this time, to more advantage. Is there any other country in Europe, now prepared to manufacture it? I believe not; nor will it be purchased by any to lay up, until able to do it. Before it is possible to manufacture, mechanics, who understand the business, must be obtained. Neither they, nor the necessary machinery can be got in a day. It is now well known, that since the introduction of labour saving machines, manufactures do not depend so much on the number of people as formerly. I ask, what country on the continent of Europe, convulsed as she is to her center, can offer a market for this article? What country there, is now in a situation to commence large and extensive establishments, to manufacture for exportation? Is it Germany—overrun? Or is it France, raising every man she can, to make new conquests? If they have mechanics and merchants both; is the skill of the one, or the reputation of the other known? I fear not. Sir, I would to God that we had not so much commercial intercourse with Great Britain, and I sincerely wish, our commerce was more equally divided among the nations of the earth, than it is; but I know not how this is to be done. Trade thrives best when left to itself. The merchant must be left to trade in the way he most approves; provided he shall not hazard the peace of the country thereby.

The gentleman from Vermont, (Mr. Elliot,) has told us, that by adopting the resolution, we shall encourage other European nations, to manufacture for us. It is, I conceive, quite enough for the agricultural part of the community, to pay their money, to encourage the manufactures of this country. It is as much as I am willing to do. But what certainty have we, if we adopt the resolution, and give the proposed encouragement, that any one of them will leave their present occupation, be that what it may, to take our advice. Each one of them may think that their interest is as well understood at home, as we can possibly understand it.

The gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. Bidwell,) stated the case of our prisoners at Tripoli, as a case in point. He is I think mistaken. We were at open war with that power, when the frigate Philadelphia unfortunately struck on the rocks in the harbor of Tripoli. The result is known—the enemy got possession of the vessel, and the crew were made prisoners of war. There then existed a state of actual war between the U. S. and the Tripolitans. In the present case we have just cause of complaints against Britain; and are endeavoring to have them settled by negociation. I will state a case which seems to me to compare better with the situation of our unfortunate countrymen, who may be now impressed on board the British ships of war. It is the case of captain O'Brian and his crew, who were captured by the Algerines, and remained with them so long, that I believe the captain in the latter part of the time, dated all his letters to his friends, by the year of his captivity. I have understood that they suffered as much as any people could bear. We had then, I believe, no addresses, no resolutions, nor memorials from the merchants & insurance companies. But this case may not be thought to apply to that part of our complaints which relate to the capture of our vessels carrying coffee and sugar to France and Spain by the British armed ships. I will state one, which I think has some, it is the case of Scott, of S. Coarolina, which has been decided in this House. He claimed pay for property taken by the Indians at a time when no open and declared war existed. He got nothing from the national government. The U. S. in a treaty gave the property up to the Indians. I believe at the time it was taken, some hostilities had been committed. Permit me here to observe that no agent was appointed by the government to endeavor to recover this property, and that I well recollect, when the claim was under debate, that it was stated by a member of the House, that one of the Indian agents had got the treaty at his desire so formed, as to relinquish a claim for the property.

I have endeavored to confine my observations to the resolution now under consideration, and to answer some of the arguments urged in its support; though I confess, that while examining this, I have also paid some attention to the others on the table. I wish gentlemen before they vote, would seriously consider whether this is the best. I think it is not. When we reflect on the happiness we enjoy, the prosperity of the nation, the growth of the villages, towns, and cities; the improving state of agriculture, the number of turnpike roads, bridges, and canals, which are undertaken in many parts of the union, and that one improper act may alter for a time this happy state, and retard every improvement; we ought to be cautious before we change the ground on which we stand. Complaints have been made, of delay, on this important subject; they are, in my opinion,