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[The following animated Essays are taken from a French paper. They were transplanted some time since into the Wilmington Gazette; but from some cause do not appear to have commanded that share of the public attention to which they are eminently entitled. Their length does not deter us from presenting them entire to the public. It will be noticed that they were written before Mr. Fox came into office, and that the severity with which they criminate the British ministers, is applicable to his predecessors. We trust that his policy will be too enlightened and magnanimous to merit the same reproaches. The republication of these pieces in this country is still seasonable. They present a perspicuous and condensed view of the important principles at issue; and they will powerfully tend to cherish that tone of mind which it is highly desirable the nation should maintain until our affairs are brought to an amicable settlement. They are also seasonable in another point of view. Although a vast majority of the people has pronounced the measures of their government correct, there are still a few men who are actively endeavoring to excite dissatisfaction at them. The best antidotes to such efforts are pieces of this stamp.]

FROM A PARIS PAPER.

TO THE BRITISH NATION.

Arrogant as your government has often shewn itself in moments of success, proud and domineering as is the character of your civil and military officers towards unarmed & defenceless nations, I have too much philanthropy to attribute to the mass of any nation the vices of its administration. I will still delight to believe, that there exists in the British nation a fund of justice and humanity, ready to avenge the injured, & threatened rights of peaceful and impartial neutrality. In making an appeal to your sense of equity, I am still aware that I enter into an unpromising career. The application is made to one of the coldest, against one of the most influential principles of human action. National glory, cupidity, patriotism and self love will be all invoked to combat your reason, your sense of justice. Still, supported by truth, and animated by a strong sense of unmerited injury, I come boldly to the combat, and if there yet remain in British bosoms, more love of honor than of money, more regard to reputation than wealth—more respect for justice than passion for domination, I shall not make my appeal without effect.

During the whole course of the late and present wars, it is well known to all Europe, and to *no part of it* better than *yourselves*, that the conduct of your cruizers, & of your courts of admiralty has been marked by an uninterrupted series of violations of neutral rights. So long as these infractions were restrained within such bounds, that upon authentical calculations, neutral nations thought it cheaper to submit to injustice, rather than incur the expences and risques of the process necessary to redress, so long have they submitted to it as to an inevitable evil.—But increasing insolence, and accumulated injury have fully proved the wisdom of the ancient maxim, "*Obsta principiis*," and have compelled us to adopt the sentiment of an elegant writer of your own country, "that a nation who weighs its *purse* against its *rights*, will in the end be sure to lose *both*."

In the early part of the late war, America made a stand, and it was a feeble one against your gigantic maritime pretensions, and 1,200,000 pounds sterling paid by you to her citizens, while it is a recorded proof of the injustice of your seizures, had perhaps the double and unfortunate effect of lulling her into security, and of exposing her in a defenceless state to the storm which appears to be now ready to burst upon her head.

Within a few months past, your cruizers and your obedient tribunals have overleaped the feeble boundaries which a sense of justice had hitherto opposed to rapacity, and the purlieus of Doctors Commons would lead a stranger to believe, that America, and not France, was the object of your vengeance. Aware of the just indignation of a brave and loyal people, your ministry are endeavoring to shelter themselves from the tempest, and, by rousing the avarice and the resentment of the nation, to throw the responsibility from their own shoulders upon those of the people. A pamphlet, we learn, has lately appeared, under ministerial sanction, attempting to justify their unprincipled and unexampled aggressions, and preparing the public mind for what they know will be the effect of their perseverance, an open war.

Will you lend a patient ear to a stranger, while he examines one or two of the principles advanced by your courts styling themselves courts of *justice*—& in the second place, while he offers a brief reply to some of the ideas *said* to be advanced in the ministerial pamphlet in favor of a war with America.

Although from the nature of the case, there can be less precision and certainty in discussing questions upon the law of nations than upon those of municipal authority, founded upon decrees or statutes, yet the common consent of all the nations of Europe to adopt certain principles as laid down by certain able commentators on these laws, and the introduction of these writers, as authorities in the courts of admiralty, seem to have furnished a solid basis on which to rest our opinions on any questions which may arise between conflicting nations.

Great Britain *especially* has no right to controvert the principles laid down by these writers; because she has uniformly received them as authorities in her courts, and has always made them the basis of her claims on other nations, in her judicial and diplomatic relations. If on the other hand, there existed no such commentators, nor any positive conventions between nations, still the force and obligation of the laws of nations, founded on the immutable principles of justice and morality, would be equally great; but in this latter case we could only have recourse to the principles of natural law suggested and deduced by impartial reason.—Let us examine the two great modern, novel doctrines advanced, and attempted to be enforced by G. Britain, by either of these standards. And, first, as to her interdiction of the *Colonial trade either directly or indirectly*. G. Britain contends that neutrals in time of war shall not carry on a trade between the colonies of her enemy and the mother country, which was not lawful in time of peace, although the trade be bona fide on neutral account—at neutral risk, and for neutral profit.

On what authority is this extensive and important principle founded? Is there a single dictum in Puffendorf—in Grotius—or Vattel which justifies it? Is it supported by any convention explicit or implied made between any nations of Europe? Have there been any usages in past wars, decisions of any courts of admiralty which countenance it?

To all these questions we can boldly reply. *None*. Not a sentiment like this can be found in any writer; nor has any nation but G. Britain yet dared to offer such an affront to the rights of independent nations.

On the contrary, no principle can be more clearly settled than that neutrals may freely carry on their commerce with belligerent nations, with the single, *well defined* exceptions, of not giving relief to an *invested* and *blockaded city* or *fortress*, and of not supplying the enemy with things *appertaining to war*, to which has been applied the appellation of *contraband*.

This privilege of neutrals is even carried so far, that neutral nations have the right to supply freely one of the belligerent nations with *implements of war*, provided its usual commerce in time of peace consisted in supplying such articles. Never did the question, whether the traffic was such a one as was allowed by the belligerent nation in time of peace, applied to any other than contraband articles, arise in any single instance, till the British, inspired by the same jealousy against the Dutch in 1756, as now actuates them against the Americans, chose to advance this monstrous doctrine.

And let me ask, what is it to G. Britain, if France or Holland should see fit during a war to relax their municipal regulations, in favor of other nations? If these nations supply them with none of those articles which are denominated contraband of war, what pretext could G. Britain have to complain of the indulgence? The enormous and preposterous principles set up by the British courts, would go the length to say, that no nation at war with *her*, could change her municipal laws, could alter her colonial regulations in time of war. Let us examine this point a little nearer as it respects G. Britain, and her own conduct, and see whether it comports with her principles. It is a well known fact, that by the standing laws of G. Britain, other nations have no right to supply the British colonies with provisions or to carry on any trade therewith. Particular permission is, however, granted in time of war, by proclamations from the governors of these islands, authorising the importation of provisions during the existence of the *scarcity only*. Did G. Britain ever conceive, did any other nation ever contend, that the American vessels which carry on this commerce were a lawful prize to the enemies of G. Britain? Miserable indeed would be the situation of the Caribbee Islands if such a construction had prevailed! Yet it must be admitted that the cases are pefectly analogous. It is a trade which the Americans were not free to exercise in time of peace, and which G. Britain allows only on account of her necessities in time of war.

To shew that this principle set up in *one case only* by the British courts in the war of 1756, and afterwards wholly abandoned till the year 1794, is not one on the solidity of which the British courts themselves place any great reliance, we will examine the history of its exercise and execution.

No one can doubt that, with the British power and with the British *temper* to maintain all their legal maritime rights, they have extended their principles as far and as fast as the law of nations would warrant.

They set up this principle of the illegality of the trade between the colony and the mother country, against the Americans, in the year 1793. They founded it upon the ground, and *the single ground*, that the trade not having been lawful in time of peace, and being granted only on account of the inability of their enemies to carry it on themselves, was for *that reason only* unlawful. If this doctrine was founded in law, then the trade between America *itself* and those colonies, having been unlawful in time of peace, was equally illegal in time of war. But at no moment have they dared to start this odious idea, though on principles equally tenable. A few captures only were made before our treaty with G. Britain, and for these few ample compensation has been made by G. Britain, thus implicitly recognizing the injustice of the principle.

The residue in another number.

AN AMERICAN.

SECOND ADDRESS

TO THE BRITISH NATION.

Permit me to resume the history of the proceedings of your courts in relation to the question of the trade with the colonies of your enemies, and indulge me to hope that it will excite a blush in the countenance of every honest Briton. During the whole of the war of 1793, and the greater part of the existing one, this principle was either suffered to lie dormant, or when brought into exercise in a few cases, it was construed to extend only to *cases* of direct intercourse between the colony of the enemy and the mother country. The *right* of the Americans to trade with the colonies, to transport the produce of those colonies to America, and from thence to Europe, was *explicitly* sanctioned by a long series of decrees, either never appealed from, or at least never reversed or even doubted. Sir *William Scott*, the most intelligent judge that Doctors' Commons has ever produced, sanctioned this right in a variety of cases, out of which I will cite the Polly, Lasky, in which that learned officer declared, "that *if the landing the goods* in America, and securing the duties, was not sufficient to break the continuity of the voyage, and to render of course the re-exportation of the goods lawful, he did not know what circumstances would suffice."

In every case therefore where the goods had been landed, sir William Scott ordered the restoration of them.

Will it be contended, that sir Wm. Scot, an eminent practitioner in Doctors' Commons for 40 years, was ignorant of this principle of the law of nations? Or will it be contended that foreign nations are bound to admit a principle of doubtful authority, of which the most eminent man of *the nation* most interested to extend belligerent rights against those of neutrals, was ignorant after 40 years' study?

Last year the court of appeals, consisting of three officers in the pay of the crown, in the case of the Essex, Orne, reversed the decision of sir Wm. Scott, and laid down the monstrous rule, that the goods, though landed in a neutral country, are still liable to seizure if re-exported by the same person who had imported them. Had these gentlemen sitting as a court of appeals, discovered with their telescopic eyes some new planet, some new light in the science of the law of nations which justified such a departure from her former decisions? If they have, let them state the book and page. Sir Wm. Scott is, however, *still ignorant* of this authority, because in the application of it to the case of the brig owned by Messrs. Bradbury of Boston, he acknowledges his former contradictory opinions, but says that "now it is his duty to bow to higher authorities," without assigning a single reason for the opinion given by the higher tribunals.

This decision was the signal for hundreds of hungry privateersmen, and greedy commanders of the royal navy, to spring upon our defenceless commerce—and soon the ports of the channel swarmed with the ships of our unfortunate countrymen. So long as it was possible to presume, that these seizures were the effect of a simple decision of your courts rendered in the ordinary course, unauthorised and uninfluenced by the cabinet, so long the indignation of the Americans has been in some degree repressed. But since the late pamphlet issued by the government, or at least under its sanction, supports those decisions, and even proposes an extension of them, it is no longer to be doubted, that the reversal of the decree in the case of the Essex, Orne, was the effect of a decision of the cabinet, and a part of a deliberate system intended either to force us to renounce the advantages of neutrality, or to accept the alternative of the sword.

Thus then I have endeavored to give a history of the rise and progress of this modern law of nations, or to give it a name a little more truly conformable to its character, this modern decree of G. Britain against Neutral Trade. Let me here notice a suggestion made by the British writers upon the subject of the late decisions, that the Americans cannot complain of not having had due notice, as the case of *the Essex, Orne*, was a sufficient advertisement to them of the principles set up by G. Britain. This reminds one of the old legal fiction, *that every one is presumed to know the law*; but I believe it is the first time it was ever applied in this manner between nations. What! the American merchants are bound to know every decision of Doctors' Commons, and this too by a sort of inspiration, as soon as they are declared, though the Americans are at three thousand miles distance!!

In fact many of the vessels were captured before the decision could have been known in America by physical possibility, and while the Americans were acting under the sanction of sir *William Scott's* decisions, published by Robertson, and spread throughout the U. S. Is it credible in point of fact, that the Americans would thus throw their property into the hands of the British cruizers, if they had understood the nature and extent of the principles set up by G. Britain? How much more noble would it have been in the Cabinet of your country, if its real design was to hinder the state, rather than to crush the rising prosperity of the U. S. to have formally notified to our government its intention to maintain this new principle?

The second doctrine advanced by your ministry during the late and present war, is the right to declare a whole country in a state of blockade, and this, whether there be ships constantly before the ports of that country or not.—This sort of blockade by proclamation, is founded upon the perversion of a very reasonable doctrine of the law of nations, that when a town or castle is actually invested, that is to say, so surrounded that its inhabitants have no means of getting out, and while there is a hope of reducing the town or fortress, it shall not be lawful for a neutral to enter into the besieged or blockaded port, or to carry in any provisions to their assistance. It was reserved to G. Britain to discover, that under this very rational and limited doctrine, was comprized the right to declare all the ports of an enemy in a state of blockade, whether actually invested or not, and where there was neither a hope nor an intention of reducing the port of the country. Now there is another equally clear principle of the law of nations, and that is that neutral nations may lawfully carry on their trade with either of the belligerent nations without interruption. One of these two principles must then fall, for they cannot consist together. If a belligerent nation has the right to declare a whole country in a state of blockade, whether actually blockaded or not, or whether there be hopes of reducing the place or not, then the right of neutrals is entirely nugatory, & may be expunged from the code of nations.

But it may be said that G. Britain keeps a fleet off the ports of her enemies which she declares blockaded. This may be partly true, but this blockade is merely nominal; it never has interrupted the intercourse of these ports with the other ports of the same country; nor is it done with the hope or *intention* of reducing the place by famine, which is the essence of the principle, and upon which alone the right to exclude neutrals is founded. This leads me to consider the wickedness and injustice of these principles as practised by your government. These interruptions to neutrals are not done or permitted with a view of injuring the enemies, so much as with the design of aiding the commerce of G. Britain, or of checking the growth of neutral nations of whose prosperity she is jealous. That this is the case is manifest, because your government permits the free importation of the same goods to her enemies from her own ports that she prevents neutrals from carrying. It is a fact well known that American vessels bound to the Spanish colonies have been condemned in the Bahamas, their cargoes purchased by British subjects, and shipped for these very Spanish colonies under a licence from council with the king's own sign manual.

This is not merely confined to that trade, but in Great Britain itself, the commerce in the produce of colonies is permitted from the ports of England directly to the ports of the enemy.

It is not therefore to injure their enemy, it is not to cut off his supplies, that this vexatory warfare is carried on against neutral commerce, it is simply to arrogate to herself, to monopolise the advantages of a lucrative trade, and to check the too rapid growth of a nation whose prosperity she dreads.

This base, selfish, and abominable principle is explicitly avowed in the pamphlet which has lately been published, and which I shall examine in another number.

AN AMERICAN.

THIRD ADDRESS

TO THE

BRITISH NATION.

A pamphlet has lately appeared from one of your presses, said to be written under the sanction of your ministry, and which, from the notice taken of it in the journals devoted to your administration, must at least be countenanced by them. Far be it from me to impute to a whole nation, the infamy which attaches to the author and supporters of this work. Mankind are seldom corrupt and profligate in great masses. A wayward, short-sighted, perfidious policy may disgrace a Cabinet composed of a few individuals, but rare indeed are the examples of whole nations giving way to the debasing influence of selfish, dishonorable, and disgraceful motives.

The history of the political relations of all nations had taught us, that interested considerations too often entered into the discussions of cabinets, and decided the fate of empires. Still there had been always preserved some regard for those moral principles which ought to form the basis of the intercourse of nations—and amidst all the struggles of ambition or avarice, every sovereign had hitherto endeavored to cloak his designs under the specious appearance of justice. Hence modern history scarcely furnishes us an example of a war, which has not been preceded by manifestoes, in which the justice of the war on the part of the assailant has been attempted to be supported. It was reserved for your ministry in the beginning of the 19th century to offer the first example of a shameless avowal of a contempt for justice, and of a determination to regulate its conduct not by a regard either to its own right or the rights of neutral nations, but by the simple measures of its supposed, its imaginary, and I believe it will prove, its fallacious interests.

The most bitter aspersions of your enemies have been mild, compared to the infamous confessions of your friends. No nation had conceived against your ministry opinions so unfavorable. No foe had ascribed to them sentiments so unprincipled as this ministerial agent has dared to avow.

Leaving as *untenable ground*, the question of right, knowing, as he well did, that neutrals had already submitted to more than he could maintain on this point, he enters into a cool and infamous calculation of interest, and treats of the rights and privileges of neutrals and independent nations, as he would of a speculation in sugar or coffee—as a mere question of expediency, in which the amount to be gained was to be coolly weighed against the quantity to be hazarded or lost. It is upon this ground of *expediency alone*, that one can meet this atrocious enemy, because he has not deigned to give us a single argument to prove that Great Britain had a right to extend her principles against the neutral traffic. Setting out therefore upon the basis, that it is a mere question of plunder and profit which your government is now agitating, you will still suffer me to throw a few ideas into the scale, to show that plunder may be in one side of the balance, and real profit in the other.

The only argument of any moment advanced to show that it is the interest of Great Britain to shake off the shackles of justice, publick faith and morality, is, that the neutrals (that is, the Americans; *for they alone are intended*) bring the produce of their enemy's colonies to market so much cheaper, that they undersell the West India merchants of Great Britain, and thus ruin the planters in their Caribee islands. Thus then, it is to preserve the Caribee islands from destruction, that Great Britain would force America into a war. And have your ministry so soon forgotten, the distress which prevailed in the Caribee islands last year, when the American trade was only for one moment suspended? Is it possible to supply your islands with the necessaries of life, without the aid of the U. S.? There is not an island in the W. Indies but deprecates the idea of a war with the U. S. But a war with the U. States will not be the consequence, you say, and you found yourselves on the *extended and defenceless nature of their commerce—on their intestine divisions*; and on the *state of their revenue* (1). As to the first, let me assure you, that you know little of the American character, and very little of their temper towards G. Britain, if you suppose the property they have at sea exposed to your rapacity will deter them from asserting their rights. They know well that before your cruisers can get advices of the war, a large part of their vessels will be at home, and you will find from this moment they will be extremely careful how they begin new enterprises. But the people of America know too, that they have offensive as well as defensive means, and the ex-