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From the Enquirer of the 18th of November.

We lay before our readers the following interlocutory paper of Decius, with the essay which succeeds it on our British relations, without wishing to accompany them by a single comment. Whatever weight might belong to the observations that we might offer upon this subject, we still deem it much more liberal to trust the remarks of Decius to the world, without the slightest animadversion, and leave them to work all the effect which they are capable of producing. It will be time enough hereafter for the critic to apply his rule and his compasses; and that time shall not be far distant with us. We shall offer in our next paper seen remarks upon the statements and opinions of Decius, as their importance may seem to demand.

With respect to the "important facts," on which Decius himself comments in his introductory essay, it is scarce necessary to inform our readers, that they appeared some time since in the Enquirer, in the form of an editorial article. They were such facts as the editor deemed not less important than true. But it is a memorable truth that not a single public print has hitherto republished or noticed these statements. Common justice however seems to require that they should now be published along with the following objections of Decius; in order that both sides may be heard, and the public be left to judge fairly between them.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ENQUIRER.

Sir,

The enclosed sheets, which contain the second number of Decius, have lain for some weeks by the author, and possibly might never have emerged from their privacy, but for some late passages in your paper. The fate of his first essay, which, literally, "fell still-born from the press," gave but little encouragement to Decius to continue his labors, and held out to an indolent temper an inducement to repose, too inviting to be resisted. The work was accordingly suspended. The first number, indeed, contained a promise to prosecute the subject;—but there could be little occasion for a punctilious adherence to a voluntary engagement, whose performance no one seemed to require. 'Tis true that, under the pretence of fulfilling their promises to the public, authors do, too often, load the press with trash, which serves no other purpose than to enhance the price of paper. But Decius is no author—and can never encounter the drudgery of writing, but with reluctance, and even dread. He was sensible that the publication of his second essay would beget the necessity of a third, and he could see no reason why he should harrass himself with writing, what few seemed disposed to read. Except some flimsy objections, which were left to answer themselves, the publication appeared to have attracted the notice of no one. These however have since assumed a more serious form, and one which demands examination. Whilst Decius is little anxious who shall arraign his opinions, he can never stand indifferent, when his facts shall be called in question.

Among the objections which have been taken to the first essay, it has been alledged, that the federalists would make a handle of it, and torture it to suit their purposes. There is a plausibility in this assertion not illy calculated to captivate weak minds; but men of reflection and understanding must at once perceive that it covers too wide a ground: that it is equally applicable to the official, as well as private language, which has been held by the chief magistrate, since his induction to office; and to the wisest and most wholesome measures which have emanated from the legislative authority. Have not most, if not all of the President's communications to Congress; have not the most salutary reforms—the repeal of the judiciary law, the abolition of the internal taxes, been tortured and twisted by the federal party, to suit their own purposes.

Again—when the republicans came into power, upon their virtue alone it depended, whether there should exist such a thing as a check upon the exercise which they should make of it. It is not in the genius of federalism to oppose abuse in government, with good will. It is more congenial with her spirit to advocate it in her friends, and connive at it in her enemies. "'Tis her vocation," and she can never be brought heartily to disparage it. Accordingly we find that the most desperate resistance of the federal leaders has uniformly been made to the most wholesome and popular reforms. But setting aside the consideration, that they must always from principle, lean towards maiversation in office, the falsehood, scurrility, and rancor of their presses had justly prejudiced every sober-minded man against their statements. Certainly no republican could, or would, listen to charges against the administration from so polluted a source.

This situation of affairs has subjected the press to something like a virtual imprimatur. As the federal prints could not obtain belief, so the republican editors would not publish. It evidently rested then upon the vigilance and firmness of the republicans alone, whether there should exist any efficient opposition to unconstitutional, or other injurious measures, in case such should be proposed. If they possessed not virtue and courage enough to withstand such attempts, (by whomsoever made) it is plain that no effectual resistance could be opposed to them. What then? Is the present administration perfect? Amidst the various agents, supreme and subordinate, in the executive department, has there been, or can there be, no wrong committed? Grant them any thing short of papal infallibility—it became necessary, when they did err, in the opinion of those through whose active exertion they were brought into power, and whose characters were implicated in their misconduct, that those errors should be freely and promptly exposed. Silence, in such a case, is equivalent to a sanction of the measure in question. These are principles equally rational, and fit for Americans to act upon.

Let us now examine the "important facts" stated in the Enquirer of the 24th of Oct. last.

1st. The explanation of Decius is not "incorrect," in the "two material points" therein mentioned. It is true "that our ministers proposed to surrender our claims for spoliations," in the sense intended and expressed by Decius. Granting "that they were instructed to make no treaty in which those Spanish claims were not provided for," yet, if their ultimate payment was to be assumed by the U. S. (which was the fact) it was fairly equivalent to a surrender of them. The claimants indeed would be provided for, and yet the claim upon the Spanish government, by the same act, relinquished. The distinction between abandoning that for French Spoliations and being silent with respect to it, is one of those nice refinements about which I shall not dispute, but will leave the author to the undisturbed enjoyment of this "important fact."

2d. It is true, that, in their correspondence with the Spanish ministry, our ministers stated, "that, in consenting to establish the Colorado as the Western boundary of Louisiana, they had exceeded their instructions." If such were not the fact, is it probable that those ministers would have so stated it to the government from whom they received those instructions; or that those dispatches would have been laid by that government before Congress, without rectifying the error?

If the complete abortion of the negociation at Madrid, did not (as the author of "important facts," would seem to contend) preclude the propriety of recurring to fresh negociations; if that failure of pacific measures created no necessity for resorting to others of a different complexion towards Spain, will he, or will any other man, assert the expediency of using coercive measures towards Great Britain, with whom we had a negociation at that time pending? Surely if the state of affairs with Great Britain called for strong measures on our part, our situation with Spain demanded still stronger. And if our relations with Spain did not warrant any such measures, much less could they be justified by the existing circumstances between us and Great Britain. If we went far enough with Spain, we went too far with Great Britain; if we did not go too far with Great Britain, we did not go far enough with Spain.

Decius has no where positively asserted, that the Louisiana treaty was antedated. The information which he had upon that subject induced him to believe that such was the fact. That belief is not at all impaired by the observations in the Enquirer. The only evidence of the existence of the "contract" is the signature of the parties to it. If the treaty was "signed" subsequently to the date expressed on the face of it, it was "antedated."

The question of "breach of neutrality" was stated merely hypothetically. It cannot be affected by the connivance of the British minister, at a transaction which he might deem beneficial to his country. Nothing is more common than such concessions from the government of a trading people, to the commercial interests of its subjects. Mr. Pitt might not only wish to enrich the banking houses of London, but gladly lend his aid to any measure that would take Louisiana out of the hands of France; and yet his acquiescence remain unknown at the time of signing the treaty. The "principle" is at least disputable. Suppose the U. S. at war with Great Britain; and France, in consideration of the cession of Labrador were to supply her with troops, or even money? Might it not be deemed a departure from her neutrality? But to have stated the argument fairly, the fact ought to have been taken in connection with our passive conduct under Spanish aggression on the one hand, and our menacing tone towards G. Britain, on the other. From this combination of circumstances, might she not infer a disposition on our side to depart from our neutrality? But was not one chief objection to the procedure, that such tameness on our part would inspire Great Britain with contempt for any resistance which we might make to her pretensions? When it shall be established, that aggression upon our maritime rights is a grosser violation of the national honor, than the actual invasion of our territory, then, and not till then, may the remarks quoted in the Enquirer be deemed applicable to this subject. The traders in our sea ports may estimate the capture of their vessels as of more consequence, than the invasion, or conquest, of one of the western states; but they will scarcely persuade the nation to be of their opinion.

3d. and 4th. The third and fourth of the "important facts" might be past over in silence. The messages speak for themselves. That the public message breathed an indignant and hostile language against foreign aggressions is to be found in the spirited resolutions of several large and respectable states consequent upon it; in the general understanding of the members of both houses of Congress; and that such was the sense of the nation, at large, may readily be seen by a recurrence to the newspapers of the day of both parties, and among them (it is presumed) the Enquirer itself. As to the private message, I am afraid, that those who cannot comprehend its drift from the context, will be little aided in their apprehension by the comments in the Enquirer.

5. When Mr. Monroe's dispatches of the 18th and 25th of October, were laid before the house of representatives, several of the best informed members (who had voted with the majority) declared, that they served to convince them that the course persued towards Spain was wrong; whilst others affirmed that the effect on their minds was exactly the reverse; confirming them in the propriety of the measures which had been adopted. How they should produce these important effects, and at the same time have little bearing on Spanish relations, is left to the author of "Important facts" to explain. Would the opinon, or information of doctor Franklin on the subject of our concerns with Great Britain, be less entitled to weight because he was minister at the court of Versailles; more especially if he had but lately left the court of St. James's, in that capacity? Would such an opinion or such information be less official or less "documented" than if it came from a minister at London?

6. Does the author of "*important facts*" certainly know that Mr. R. did *not* amicable consult the President on the truth of the "vague insinuations of his *cautious* friend," as this writer is pleased to term the secretary of the treasury? A few words will put this subject in its proper light. "Mr. Randolph stated to the house that he had been informed," (by two of their members) "that certain propositions had been made to the treasury, to sound the disposition of the secretary of that department on the subject of advancing the money, voted for extraordinary purposes of foreign intercourse, before the bill had passed through all the forms of a law." But at the same time he declared, that if the secretary of the treasury would disavow the fact, he should have no hesitation in disbelieving it. Now, if Mr. Randolph had derived his information from that officer, how could he give credit to his denial of the fact. And yet because some person undertook to say that such a disavowal had been made to him, a miserable attempt was made in the public prints, under color of a speech which was never delivered, to impeach the veracity of Mr. Randolph. The letter of the secretary of the treasury must speak for itself.—Every man will draw his own conclusions from it. But every man must see, that, whether such an occurrence did, or did not, take place, the veracity of Mr. Randolph is in no wise implicated.

Having nearly tired my own patience, and I fear more than exhausted that of the reader, I shall reserve for a subsequent communication the disclosure of such other facts and opinions as I deem material to a proper understanding of the events of the last session of congress. In that number I shall go to the root of all the republican schisms—pledging myself to demonstrate to every impartial and thinking man that the minority are not in the slightest degree tinctured with federalism; that so far from having any bias towards that party, upon every question in which *principle* was involved, they had to encounter the joint opposition of the federalists, and that portion of the republican majority who have been denominated third party men.

DECIUS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ENQUIRER.

On Wednesday the 4th of December, Mr. Nicholson moved that "so much of the message of the President of the United States, as related to the conduct of the belligerent powers towards the United States, and to the unjustifiable construction lately given by some of them to the laws of nations as it regards the rights of neutrals, be referred to the committee of ways and means, with instruction to enquire in what respect and to what extent our neutral rights had been violated, and what legislative measures the true interest of the United States required to counteract such violations." This reference was made, not without pertinacious opposition on the part of Mr. Bidwell, who moved to refer the subject to a select committee, of which, consequently, he would have been the chairman. On the ensuing Saturday, the committee of ways and means took the matter into consideration, and instructed their Chairman to address the following letter to the secretary of state.

"*Committee Room, December 11th*, 1805.

"Sir,

"The committee of ways and means have instructed me to request that you will cause to be laid before them such information on the subject of the enclosed resolution, as the department of state can furnish:

"The peculiar objects of our research are—1. What new principles, or constructions of the law of nations have been adopted by the belligerent powers of Europe, to the prejudice of neutral rights? 2. The governments asserting those principles or constructions? 3. The extent to which the commerce of the United States has been thereby injured?

"I am with very great respect,

"Sir,

"Yours,

"JOHN RANDOLPH."

A considerable time having elapsed, and no answer having been received, the chairman waited on the secretary of state to know when the committee might expect one. He was informed, by that officer, that he had been so much occupied in preparing a laborious report upon that subject, to be laid before the President, that he had not had time to reply to the letter of the committee: and it was not until the 26th of January (more than six weeks subsequent to the requisition of the committee) that the secretary's communication was made to them. It consisted of a copy of his report to the President, on the new and injurious principles interpolated into the laws of of nations by foreign powers, and contained no answer whatsoever to some of the most importat points, to which the committee had directed the attention, and on which they had requested the opinion of the secretary of state. This communication was scarcely received, when (on the 29th of January) the committee were discharged from all further consideration of the subject, which, with Mr. Gregg's resolution, brought forward on that day, was referred to a committee of the whole house on the state of the union. On this occasion, insinuations of tardiness and neglect of duty on the part of the committee of ways and means were thrown out by some members. The chairman was then absent from indisposition. On the next day, however, he laid on the table his letter to the secretary of state, with the answer, the dates of which clearly exculpated the committee from every imputation of remissness; rendering it self-evident that they could not possibly have reported previous to the time of their discharge.

The resolution of Mr. Gregg begot a brood of others, of which it is not my purpose to notice any but the motion of Mr. Nicholson, which was introduced, not so much from a conviction on the mind of its author, that the step was in itself advisable, as from a belief that it might prove the means of preventing the House from precipitating itself into more ruinous measures. Accordingly we find that Mr. Nicholson himself, voted to postpone its consideration, and that he declined being a member of the committee which brought in the bill in pursuance of it; to which he eventually gave a feeble and reluctant assent. And yet this bill has been called throughout the continent "Mr. Nicholson's bill." It is equally notorious, that, in regard to the course to be pursued towards Great Britain, no opinion was expressed by the members of the minority, in their collective or individual capacities. On the contrary, the President frequently declared, without reserve, that he had no opinion on the subject. Similar declarations were made by other influential and leading persons presiding over the different executive departments; and it is a fact, that no consultation was held between them from the meeting of congress until some time in March. This want of concert and decision in the administration might easily have been inferred (even if there were no other proof of it) from the various, discordant, and undigested projects, which were brought forward in the legislature; and to this want of system must be referred much of the mischief which then resulted from this subject, as well as the embarrassments which have since ensued, and are yet likely to grow out of it.

The aggressions of Great-Britain naturally divided themselves into two classes:—Impressment of our seamen, and depredations upon our commerce. To the first we have been subjected under three successive administrations, from the year 1793 to the present time. But this grievance, to which the United States had so long submitted, and to which Congress had heretofore been content to apply palliatives, was now enlarged and dwelt upon by certain persons, because they saw in it a theme which would touch most sensibly the American feeling. Mr. Nicholson did not scruple to reproach them with a feigned zeal, and to charge them with having opposed at a former session, a bill which he had introduced for remedying the evil. Mr. John Randolph was of opinion that the impressment of our seamen furnished just cause of indignant resentment on our part: but he saw no reason for pushing that matter to extremity at this time, which had not existed in as full force, for the last five, or even twelve years: Our government, in consideration of the great number of British seamen in our employment, and of the identity of language and manners between that class of their subjects, and the same description of our citizens, but above all, from motives of sound policy (too obvious to need recapitulation,) had hitherto deemed it expedient to temporize on this interesting and delicate topic: he could see no just ground at present, for departing from this system—more especially pending an actual negotiation between the two governments, on the point of dispute. He was of opinion that nothing should be left undone to accommodate our differences amicably, and that no step should be taken which might interrupt or defeat such a settlement that even if we should resort to war, it must eventuate in a treaty of peace by which the points of controversy would be adjusted, or left in *statu quo ante Bellum*: and that after incurring the incalculable mischiefs of war—the derangement of our finances and the augmentation of the public debt, to an extent which could not now be foreseen; to say nothing of its baneful effects upon our political institutions, and of the danger which must accrue from throwing our weight at this juncture, into the preponderating scale of Europe; there was no prospect that we should obtain better terms at any future pacification, than were attainable at present: at any rate he was disposed to give fair play to the fair experiment of negociation. But if any active measures were to be taken against Great Britain, they should be of the most efficient and decisive nature. He deprecated half measures, as the most injurious to ourselves, which could be adopted.

Whilst the bill was yet under discussion, the news of the death of Mr. Pitt, and of the consequent change of ministry, reached the U. States. No circumstance could have afforded a fairer or more honorable pretext, or a more powerful motive for suspending our measures against G. Britain than this. The late premier was known to be decidedly hostile to the institutions, the interests, and the very people of America. No administration, not even that of lord North himself, had been, or could be more inimical to the U. S. than that of Mr. Pitt. His power was moreover connected with, and depended upon the continuation and duration of the war. He was succeeded by Mr. Fox, unquestionably the most liberal, and enlightened statesman of Europe; the man, above all others, beyond the Atlantic the best affected towards the principles of our government, and the illustrious character by whom it was administered. Never did a fairer occasion present itself to any nation, for changing, without any imputation of versatility, or any loss of honor, the course which they had chosen to prescribe to themselves: The excitement of public sentiment, and the measures consequent upon that excitement, might fairly and honorably have been referred to the known character of the late premier, the pupil of Dundass, and the disciple of Charles Jenkinson; and the U. States might have awaited, in a dignified and imposing inactivity, the manifestation of a different sentiment by the new ministry. But the new leaders of the House of Representatives were men who soared above, or skimmed below all consideration of time, place, and circumstance; they gloried in their ignorance of men and things in Europe, and boasted that their policy should not be modified, by any change in the aspect of affairs at home or abroad; and in the pursuit of an abstract metaphysical *ignis fatuus*, they did not hesitate to embark the best interests of the union.

Against these measures Mr. J. Ran-