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EMBARGO.

The old story of French influence is again resuscitated, in the vain hope of enlisting popular clamor against the embargo and the administration. This fiction has been so often propagated, and to so little purpose, that we would not have imagined that any rational being would have resorted to it on this occasion. Yet, if there be a man out of the strictest impartiality within the power of our government, the embargo is his pressure. Being one intended too chiefly for our own security, even if it should have an unequal operation on the different powers of Europe, should we be under the less obligation to adopt it? Let our plain question be sincerely answered, and we shall be content. Supposing it merely probable that our whole trade is at this moment exposed to the most imminent perils, was there any other measure of equal safety that could have been adopted? If there was not, could any one expect us to omit protecting ourselves because in so doing we might injure others?

If an injury is inflicted on others it is not our fault; and if that injury operates unequally, the inequality arises from circumstances over which we have no control. For, is it owing to us that Britain is the mistress of the ocean, and that her enemies are few ships upon it? Is it owing to us that her power is *there* as irresistible as that of France on the continent? Did we, by any conduct of ours, give rise to the new principles introduced by Britain into the laws of nations, or to the retaliations of her enemy, which, unfortunately, affect us in this instance more even than her? No. These are things in the existence of which we had no agency, and over the duration of which we have no direct control.

But we are, by no means, satisfied that the embargo will operate so unequally as some profess to think, or, perhaps, profess to wish by their friends. We do think, Admit that England will greatly suffer, will not the French and Spanish colonies, of whose productions we are the great carriers, suffer also? England carries on more by the whole of her trade; consequently our withdrawing from the ocean will have on this trade but an incidental effect; while it will have on the trade between France and Spain and their colonies a direct and vast effect.

We repeat then that the embargo is a measure of strict impartiality, neither justly imputable in motive or effect to any foreign influence.

In addition to this reasoning, which we hereby presume conclusive, there are two extrinsic considerations, both of great weight.

The embargo is the measure proposed by the executive; by Thomas Jefferson. Has this man ever abused the confidence of his fellow-citizens? Has he ever crouched to foreign influence? Has he ever recommended a national measure, which has not promoted his public interest? It is true, that he has been charged ten thousand times, and in language of the most unbounded contempt, with yielding to French influence; but we defend his proofs? He has not; it seems, yielding cloud. In such a crisis then is this, we say Thomas Jefferson has a right to the confidence of his nation. We rejoice that he possesses it; and we know that this confidence will, if possible, be augmented by the angry invective of his enemies. Let us not be misunderstood. We are not the friends of a blind confidence in any executive; but we do say that at a period like this, when the whole world is convulsed, when justice is unknown by those nations with whom we have intercourse; when we have every reason to dread an explosion peculiarly fatal to us; when from the organization of the executive powers he alone knows the precise ground on which we stand, and that on which, in future negotiations, it is meant to place us; when this executive too has uniformly manifested a love of peace; under all these circumstances we hesitate not to ever that confidence is the best of virtues, and that it is such a virtue as a true republican will not blush to own.

The other consideration, to which we have alluded, is, that if, in consequence of the existence of equal danger, the embargo of 1794 was laid under the approbation of Washington, and by a federal Congress.

The circumstances which gave rise to that act were these. Great Britain, in violation of justice, issued orders to seize all the vessels destined to France with provisions.

To obtain security or redress, various propositions were submitted to Congress. One of which was a non-importation from G. B. and another a sequestration of British debts. These were not adopted. An embargo was preferred.

The danger evidently was not then so imminent as it now is, as France, well refuted some share of the dominion of the seas. Yet the same measure was adopted, by a vote probably unanimous, in the year 1794, and we appear to have been called, by a federal Congress, in which we perceive no federal leaders, (Goodhue, Sedgwick, Tracy, Dayton, Fitzimons, Ames and William Smith, and on the same day that Jefferson was proposed.

And yet we heard nothing in those days of French influence! we heard nothing of *treeiphance*, although the embargo was passed at the same time with the non-importation. Now, in the present instance, four days were consumed, and there was so much delay in preparing the bill, in the ordinary way of ordinary discussion, and although the enemies of the measure, as we have been informed exclusively indulged with the floor.

We further find by the journals of Congress, that the embargo was laid on the 25th of March, 1794; for thirty days it was extended, on the 17th of the ensuing month, for thirty additional days. The merchants then begged to have acquiesced, not seeing in it them, as some individuals now see for them, their complete destruction. Indeed, they did not merely acquiesce in it as a measure of security, but we find the merchants of the respectable town of Salem and Marblehead were so sensible of its wisdom that they memorialized Congress for its further continuance.

One word more. In 1794 an embargo will at least prevent a war. We hope in 1807 it will avert it. If in this, however, we shall be disappointed, it will at least prevent us the means of waging it to better effect.

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

(Proceedings of Thursday concluded.)

Mr. Thomas moved that the resolution moved by Mr. Randolph should be on the table.

But a motion made to consider, was agreed to.

Mr. Randolph said as it appeared by the declaration of the gentleman from New Orleans, that he did possess the papers, and as the House had a right to it, he wished the Speaker or some other gentleman to inform him of the contents of which it might be obtained.

(No order was taken on this point.)

Mr. Taylor moved that the resolution be committed to a committee of five, to consider and report thereon, but at a distant day, that time might be afforded for consideration.

After debate, Mr. Taylor withdrew his motion.

Mr. Gardenier moved that it be referred to a committee of nine, with power to send for persons, papers, &c.

Mr. Marion, moved to strike out the words, "with power giving power to a select committee to send for persons, papers &c.

Mr. Nelson made a motion to adjourn, which was negatived.

Mr. Smith moved to postpone further proceedings on this subject till Monday; on which motion the yeas and nays were called for by Mr. Randolph, were 68 to 40.

On the foregoing motions a very lengthy & somewhat desultory debate ensued of about 5 hours. The debate turned on many incidental questions, among which, whether Congress had a constitutional right to request the President to cause the proposed enquiry to be made? To this it was answered that Congress had as much right to make this request as to request the President to lay before them public papers, either of which requests he might refuse. It was also said, that in making this request, the House could not command more attention than was due to a respectable individual.

It was doubted whether a member could be called upon to give information in his seat, or at the bar of the House? In answer precedents were produced of cases in which persons of the House had been interrogated at the bar.

It was also contended, that if delivered in his place, the communication would be liable to commentary or reply by any gentleman who might think proper to discuss it in the same manner as any other speech.

It was made a question whether this information could be more properly received by a committee of the whole, or a select committee, or by the House? It was said on this that it had been the invariable practice of conduct to empower chairmen of committees in such cases to administer oaths; that the House is competent to be compelled to give information if the House thought fit; but in committee of the whole he could not be compelled; that if information or evidence were to be received in the House, it would perplex their proceedings, by loading the table and journals with the documents. Hence

It was questioned whether it were proper to decide it now, to refer it, or to postpone it? On a question which appeared to be a great diversity of opinion, it was thinking that the evidence which they had received was sufficient to induce them to pass the resolution without further consideration, being a mere request to the President to enquire; others wished further time and more ample consideration, to giving their vote on the subject, considering it of great importance; others were in favour of a reference to a committee, to consider all the foregoing points as well as the propriety of the resolution; others were for giving this committee to have power to send for persons and papers, and to inform House their opinion on the subject, together with evidence, believing that business was thus conducted, it would be produced before they adopted this resolution, and as it was impossible to understand precisely the evidence now produced from the mere reading of it; other gentlemen wished the matter to a committee without power to send for persons, papers, &c. as they conceived the House did not possess power to enforce their orders in such case, General Wilkinson being a military and not a civil officer, whom the President alone had power to remove.

The sum of these points were decided either directly or by implication.

In the course of this desious discussion, the accusations of conspiracy on the main subject were made by different gentlemen.

Mr. M'Kee had heard nothing in the documents read to-day implicating the character of Gen. Wilkinson more than what the newspapers throughout the Union had teemed with for two years, except mention of a letter from Mr. Power; and who was Mr. Power, or what credibility could be given to the letter, he could not learn from him? Every person in the United States who could read knew his character. He was convinced by evidence on considering a resolution proposing an enquiry, even if he were in favor of the enquiry.

Mr. Smith thought the debate which had already taken place on a reference totally improper. He had issued sufficient evidence on this subject to convince the House that the enquiry was necessary; he did not think that there could be any further doubt on the subject. He was perfectly satisfied not by Gen. Wilkinson, but must be tried by another tribunal. They owed it to the public and to Gen. Wilkinson himself to request an enquiry, and he hoped there would not be a dissentient vote on the question of agreeing to the resolution. He could not give an opinion as to the guilt or innocence of Gen. Wilkinson, but he thought it absolutely necessary that an enquiry should be had.

Mr. Gardenier was satisfied of the impropriety of proceeding on the consideration of any question of importance too hastily; more especially in a case so materially affecting an officer of high rank in the United States. He wished to have time to consider fully before he could vote on a subject of so much magnitude as this; they should not act from first impressions. If the subject were referred to a committee with power to send for persons, papers, &c. the testimony on the subject would come before them in a proper shape, and not with the inaccuracy which must always attend information given in this manner, but in a condensed form in which its force might be fully felt. He did not wish to be precipitated into an enquiry too soon; neither did he wish an enquiry to be made because it was due to Gen. Wilkinson. If this enquiry was carried by, and this motion intended as a favor to Gen. Wilkinson, he was astonished that it had not been brought forward before. There certainly had been ground enough shewn for an enquiry into his conduct; but if Gen. W's. conduct had so far evinced his purity as not to call for the attendance even of a suspicion against his character, if no enquiry had been made on the charges which had resounded through every part of the union. Mr. G. did not wish now, merely for the sake of doing justice to that officer, to give an enquiry which the Executive had not thought proper to make. Neither did he wish ready to decide on this question, because in doing this they would add the weight of their account to the cries of the whole nation: the united force of which an individual alone could resist.

Mr. Chandler said this was a subject which had been long before the Nation, and with which they were all sufficiently acquainted: if that officer were innocent it was due to himself and his friends, that an enquiry should be had if he were guilty it was due to the United States. The evidence produced was sufficient on which to proceed to enquiry, and he was ready to decide without further time.

Mr. Nicholas had no doubt but an enquiry ought to be made; after what had been heard, it would be a Wilkinson were the lowest officer of the United States, he should be of opinion that an enquiry ought to be made, but he doubted whether this was a question on which they were now prepared to decide. For this reason he had seconded the motion for referring the resolution to a select committee who could consider whether it was proper properly came under cognizance of the House; he considered the House as a mere legislative body except in the single case of impeachment. He was not prepared to say what was proper to be done with this resolution, but his first impression was against acting on it. It would open doors for receiving complaints of the misconduct of any officer; he did not think this proper to be done in the House, and he had no wish to assume powers which did not pertain to them. As to the question whether there should be an enquiry or not, no man could doubt. An enquiry must be made. Would it be said that an officer of this importance should be suffered to be retained by a man who had received a pension from a foreign government? He thought it could not; and therefore he wished an enquiry to be made into the truth of this charge.

Mr. Burwell was decidedly opposed to reference to a committee of nine. It seemed to be the universal opinion that an enquiry ought to be had, and it should be conducted impartially. If the nation was (as appeared probable) to be marched in war, it was necessary that the commander in chief should possess the confidence of the army, the people, and the government.

Mr. Johnson said the good people of Kentucky were interested in this subject. Many reports to the prejudice of Gen. Wilkinson existed there; and the contents of the letter read stated him, but the people entertained doubts on the subject, there were circumstances which had appeared to be investigated; if nothing could be found against the character of a man who was known the better. Knowing this he should not hesitate to give his vote in such a manner as to discover of the subject most specifully. The second motion was due to the people, and to the man himself.

Mr. Nelson said if ever there had been a time since the year 1783, in which it was particularly necessary that those persons in office should have the confidence of the government and of the people, that time had arrived. Could it be expected after such and the information which had been produced that the people would have confidence in General Wilkinson? It was so important that the commander in chief should be free from suspicion that the President or House of Representatives should be unsuspected. The commander in chief during the American revolution was irreproachable; calumny never assailed him, and he of course enjoyed the full confidence of the people. The evidence which had been this day read, they were satisfied neither been before the grand jury or the court at Richmond, and there was certainly sufficient on which to ground an enquiry.

Mr. Taylor observed, that he was confident with those gentlemen who had asserted, that in this important crisis it would be the highest importance, that the character of the commander in chief of the armies should stand fair and unimpeached; that on the first view he had taken of the subject, it had appeared a sufficient motive for enquiry, that it was the President, as expressed in the resolution; but from the cases expressed from different quarters, it appeared that it had been led to consider the proposed measure in a new and different point of view. The Legislature of Virginia had given the House certain information, and on that information had proceeded. He was sorry to say that this resolution contained nothing which would impeach not with the person than the General; but gentlemen had called on the delegate from Orleans for information concerning the statement of facts he had given; and the delegate had stated that he had in his hands given information to the Executive, and at other times endeavored to give it to the Executive, but that department had turned a deaf ear to his communications or the subject was of a nature which he was not at liberty to disclose. He was sorry that this executive had turned a deaf ear to the subject, matched with the people, and requested to do this; that as you have not heretofore done your duty, we the representatives of the people have requested you to do it. Was the House prepared then to publish to the nation their want of confidence in the President, upon the separate testimony which is now before them? Were they prepared now to interfere with what is a prerogative of the government, which in this instance they had not constitutionally a right to control—and to say, as the department had not done its duty, they would assume to themselves the important charge of taking care that the republic shall suffer no injury? He hoped not. He hoped they would be the important crisis alluded to by gentlemen, on the necessity of the case the House would be forced to assume the gentleman accused, could draw from the nation a commitment of themselves in opinion, by the declared sentiments of a great majority of the nation, who had recently declared that this Executive had deserved well of its country.

Mr. Wickliffe said he was guilty or he might be innocent. Mr. T. had his own opinions, perhaps prejudices on this subject. He was not in a situation to the mandate of a tribunal which had competent authority to compel the nation, who had recently declared that this Executive had deserved well of its country.

Mr. Wickliffe said he was guilty or he might be innocent. Mr. T. had his own opinions, perhaps prejudices on this subject. He was not in a situation to give them a fair, like the Delegate from Orleans, he would not vouchsafe the affirmative vote of this House. For if such a vote should be taken, it would be voluntarily; it should not vote with them, he referred the Secretary of State, and he was by the constitution free of their control in respect to the proposed measure. They might, and he hoped would send the papers or documents, in the hands of the movement the executive, without any decision on the subject. When they had given the information, they had fulfilled their duty. But, he not thought the Secretary himself would be glad the same chance of acquitted by the evidence of guilty, as he would by executive secrecy, when the price and weight of an accusation from this House was set against him? He was for giving this subject delicacy and the advantages of a fair and impartial trial.

Mr. Randolph said the gentleman was serious mistaken in supposing that the evidence of guilty or innocence of the House had been referred to the President of the U. S. and requested