

AN
ADDRESS,

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN DELIVERED (IN SUBSTANCE)
AT THE LATE

TOWN MEETING,

IN

NEW-HAVEN;

IN REPLY

TO THE REASONS URGED FOR REQUESTING HIS EXCELLENCY THE
GOVERNOR TO CONVENE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE
ALARMING SITUATION OF

Public Affairs;

*BUT PREVENTED FROM BEING DELIVERED BY CAUSES HEREIN
EXPLAINED.*

TOGETHER WITH

A Short Account of that Extraordinary Meeting.

BY WILLIAM BRISTOLL, ESQ.

NEW-HAVEN,
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PREFACE.

A SHORT time since, a meeting of some gentlemen of New-Haven was holden at Mr. Clark's tavern, at which it was agreed, to request the Selectmen to call a Town Meeting on Saturday the 28th of January, at 2 o'clock, P. M. The day agreed on at this meeting, and appointed by the Selectmen, did not afford sufficient time for full discussion. It was about 3 o'clock, P. M. before the citizens collected at the Brick Meeting-House. The Resolutions reported by the Committee, appointed at Clark's, were read, separately considered, and, after some debate, adopted by an "overwhelming majority."

When the resolution was read, requesting the Governor to convene the Assembly for the purpose of taking into consideration the "alarming state of public affairs," and "adopting such measures" for "protecting our rights" as should be deemed advisable; one gentleman intimated a doubt of its propriety, and read the answer of our State Legislature in the year 1798, disclaiming any right, "as a Legislature, to interfere with the affairs of the General Government." After hearing the reasons assigned for convening the Legislature, the following reply in substance was attempted to be made. Before the speaker had uttered two sentences, coughing, and other unusual noises, rendered it impossible to be heard, if not dangerous to proceed. The question was then called for, and the resolution passed with the same majority as upon former questions.

When the resolutions had been separately passed, and the question taken on the whole collectively, (though the majority it is believed had not diminished) a motion was made by "a person friendly to the resolutions" to divide the house. It was asked, Who questions the vote? The motion was persisted in, and "the house divided;"—to remove all doubt of the vote, it is presumed, and not from *any other motive*.

When this division had taken place, a scene of tumult succeeded, rather uncommon in a meeting-house. After the Chairman (who behaved with the most perfect candor through the whole proceedings) had restored some small degree of order in the meeting, the following resolutions were introduced, taken from the Farewell Address of Gen. WASHINGTON—viz.

Resolved, as the sense of this meeting, "That it is of infinite moment, we should properly estimate the immense value of our national union, to our individual and national happiness; that we should cherish a cordial, habitual and immovable attachment to it; accustoming ourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of our political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety, and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts."

Resolved, "That all obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the *real design* to direct, control, counteract or awe the regular deliberations and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency."

These resolutions produced some *sensibility*, if nothing more. Some moved to adjourn the meeting; others seconded the motion. Some were willing to vote an approbation of the whole of Washington's farewell address; till finally there occurred the lucky thought of moving the previous question; and thus the resolutions were disposed of, by the same "overwhelming majority;" and a house of public worship left with sentiments ill suited to the services of the succeeding day.

AN
ADDRESS, &c.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

WAS it proposed to convene the Legislature to deliberate on our national wrongs, and express a firm resolution to defend our country from the hostility of foreign nations, no one could more cordially approve the object than myself. In such design I should cheerfully unite: and, though the management of our national concerns is entrusted to the general government, it might not be deemed unwise at this perilous crisis of affairs, to strengthen the administration by expressing a firm and unalterable determination to protect our common country; and maintain its insulted and violated rights. Upon a subject of this nature, all distinctions of party might be discarded; and the resolution to stand or fall in support of the sacred rights of national honor and independence could not be less acceptable, though offered by men not agreeing in every article of their political creed. A patriotic determination to resist encroachments on our maritime rights, is justly due to our government: it would strengthen the public confidence; reflect honor on ourselves: justly elevate the character of our state; and have a tendency to disarm Britain of her hostility.

But, unhappily Sir, no such object for convening the Legislature is suggested. While foreign nations are aiming their destructive weapons at the vitals of our country, instead of rallying around the Constitution and constituted authorities, party animosity has usurped the place of national feeling; the citizens are inflamed from one degree of animosity to another; and too many seem determined to push every measure which can distress their opponents, though it may at the same time pierce the vitals of their own country.

In reply to some observations defending a provision of the Law in question, which authorizes the Collector to call on the Militia for the purpose of "preventing the illegal departure

of vessels, suppressing riotous assemblages of people to oppose the law," &c. a certain gentleman has observed, "that whatever might be said in defence of other parts of the law, he really hoped and did believe that no one could be found who would have the hardihood to defend the constitutionality of this section." As I was the only person who had delivered sentiments in favor of the section in question, I suppose the gentleman alluded personally to me; and intended to insinuate, that I had passed the sacred barrier, which his judgment had prescribed for my remarks.

I observed on this section, that the President, being not only entrusted with the execution of the laws, but enjoined to see them faithfully executed, and Congress having by the Constitution, "the power to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws;" some method of applying for military assistance must of necessity be adopted. The power of applying force to execute the laws, if necessary, is vested in Congress: and without a power to define the mode in which the military should be brought in aid of executive officers, this power is but a dead letter. And the method actually adopted in the law in question for calling the militia to the assistance of a Collector, is "necessary and proper" to carry the power into effect.

The Constitution of the United States, not having specified any mode of obtaining military assistance, nor prescribed any application to the civil authority as the only rule of conduct, it necessarily results that Congress, in their discretion, must select the method of obtaining military assistance in aid of a legitimate object: especially when no mode of obtaining military assistance in any case, is either pointed out or prohibited by the Constitution.

It being indispensable in many cases to obtain the assistance of the military before any resort can be had to the civil authority, the Constitution of the United States has given Congress the power of calling forth the militia to carry the laws into effect; but has wisely omitted to embarrass the exercise of this power with any express limitations. It prescribes no mode in which the power shall be carried into effect, or applied to its proper and legitimate object. It results of course that Congress may, in their discretion, select the mode of executing the power in question: or in the language of the Constitution, use the means "necessary and proper for carrying the power into effect."

Yet this plain and undoubted exposition of the LAW and CONSTITUTION is represented as a "*hardihood*" hitherto unknown. The gentleman sighs at the prospect of MILITARY DESPOTISM; starts at phantoms of imaginary danger; and in

solemn accents calls upon his "fellow citizens" to resist the very "*beginning of evil*"—though *he* has, more than 40 years, lived under a law pregnant with more alarming authority.* Nor hath an enemy done this thing: else could I have borne it: "*Et tu Brute?*" The administration was wounded "*in the House of its Friend.*"

"Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!
 "Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets;
 "Some to the common Pulpits, and cry out,
 "Liberty, freedom and enfranchisement."

Permit me, once for all, to ask those who have so industriously opposed the late act of Congress, to look into their own hearts and enquire, whether their opposition to the law proceeds from a fear of real danger, or other causes. Let it be remembered that the application of physical force, if necessary, to carry the laws into execution, must be the ultimate resort of all human governments.

Another gentleman, if rightly understood, described "the vessel of state as foundered upon shoals, unable to proceed; and ascribed this condition of the vessel to the indiscretion and mismanagement of the pilot."

Was this true, the course now pursued would be perilous indeed. With a vessel in the condition described, the gentleman to whom we are indebted for this figure would never advise systematic opposition to the captain, or desertion from the ship. No: The captain would form his judgment from the best sources: he would critically examine the shoals on which he was driven; the dangers which surrounded him; the course of the wind and tide; and the strength of his crew. If great and unprecedented difficulties occurred, he would call a council of his officers—agree upon the best means of escape, and pursue them with a firmness and zeal equal to the danger. If in the council called to his assistance there should exist a difference of opinion, he would probably listen to the majority; especially if the majority was large. Least of all would he advise a mutiny among the crew, or suffer any to take the long boat; leaving both vessel and cargo to inevitable destruction.

The course proposed would be highly alarming even if the "simile" of the gentleman was applicable, and the dangers of the vessel had arisen from the unskilful navigation of the pilot. But I cannot for a moment admit that the privations and distress of our citizens are to be ascribed to the indiscretion or wickedness of our own government.

In sympathetic sensibility for the poorer classes of our citizens, suffer us also to unite, and we pledge ourselves so far

* Statutes, 384-5....5th and 9th Sec.

as our ability may extend, not to be behind any portion of our citizens in charitable exertion.

Fellow Citizens, your own government is not to blame for your privations. Hear me with candor and decide without prejudice. Reflect; think over the subject again and again. "Pause, for heaven's sake pause." Banish party spirit, the curse of Republics: If you have feelings not American, discard them from your breasts; suffer them not to enter the sacred habitation. Reflect and determine for yourselves, not with feelings inflamed by revolutionary addresses—but from the cool and dispassionate reflections of your own minds.

Fellow Citizens—The Embargo is not the principal and efficient cause of your distress—apply to any merchant of candor and honor, and the fact will be acknowledged. When the mind is inflamed, individuals may be found who have the assurance to declare it: but when they retire to their pillows and sleep away the passions of the day, they will awake to reason and candidly ascribe our sufferings to their real causes. Causes fully adequate to the ruinous effects. Yet one gentleman, who has done much to excite an overflowing passion against the late embargo act in this meeting, takes it for granted that all the embargo laws before the present session of Congress were unnecessary, ruinous and oppressive. On this point he does not even condescend to argue; but takes it for granted as an established truth.

It requires no extensive research into the history of Republics to discover, that the great body of the people in any community, however enlightened, are too prone to attribute the evils and privations they experience, to their immediate and proximate causes: and had the government of the U. States consulted that prudence which seeks popularity by adopting any measures, whether hostile or friendly to the public interests, it would not improbably have repealed the Embargo before this; and suffered the vessels of New-England to encounter the hostility of both Britain and France: Nations which, under pretence of mutual retaliation, have (with "Orders in Council and Decrees," instead of the honorable weapons of common hostility,) waged implacable war against the rights of neutral commerce. The government of the United States, instead of seeking to please the people for the moment, at the expense of their future and permanent interests, determined to make an experiment; even at the hazard of that popularity which had abundantly rewarded their past services.

While the general government is vindicated from the charge of creating our distress, it cannot be denied that a removal of

the Embargo, even in the present state of our foreign relations, would give business an immediate, though temporary spring. The laboring man would find for a time better employment—the farmer would have a vent for some part of the surplus productions of his farm: and the merchant, rather than view his ships perishing at the wharves, would suffer some of them to encounter the hostility of belligerent decrees.

But this state of things would be of short duration. The Decrees of France and Orders of the British Council must, in a very short time, destroy our commerce. The wings of the American Eagle would soon be clipped, and the “last expiring groans” of American trade resound from one extremity of the union to the other.

England, with her ships spread over every sea, river or bay in the commercial world, with her Orders in Council written in letters of blood on every sail of her polluted canvas, waves her triumphant flag; boldly attacks the freedom of the seas; and threatens on one side inevitable destruction to “legitimate trade.” On the other hand the Emperor of France, waving not only the sceptre of the Bourbon dynasty, but controlling the energies of the European Continent, has waged an unrelenting war against our commerce to the British Isles or their dependencies.

Nay, he has declared in a voice of thunder, a voice, which, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, changes not, that every vessel of the United States, which has been visited by a British ship, touched at a British port, or has on board a yard of English manufacture, has become *denationalized* and subject to capture.—Will gentlemen say, that the decrees of Bonaparte are to be despised as an empty menace, incapable, from the circumscribed naval power of France, to injure our commerce? This has been frequently said: Yet, let it be remembered that France, whenever she has attempted it, has inflicted very serious injury on the commerce of the United States. Nor is there much reason to hope, that when the subjects of the French Emperor find the same inducement to plunder as formerly, in the unprotected trade of our country, that the same exertions on their part will not be attended with the same success. Let us also remember, that not improbably before this, Bonaparte has planted his victorious standard in the capital of Spain, and placed his brother on the throne of one of the finest countries in Europe; a country possessing a considerable marine power, which will also serve to enrich the conquest of this Monarch, and consequently the means of *our annoyance*, unless the *august Ally* of the Spaniards should

condescend to take the Spanish navy into her *guardian custody*.

Can a trade be carried on in opposition to these decrees, which would not terminate in the bankruptcy of the adventurers? Apply to our Insurance Offices, and they will inform you that insurance from America to France, or any ports in the Mediterranean, could not be obtained under thirty, and probably not under forty per cent. The insurance from America to the British Islands, against French capture, would probably begin at about ten, and increase to 15 a 20 per cent. with the increasing exertions of French picaroons. Can commerce be successfully carried on under discouragements like these? Every person of common honesty and candor, and with a tolerable share of commercial knowledge, must declare that legitimate trade can be attempted with little hopes of success; and that the opposition to the Embargo from the northern leaders, proceeds from other causes than the *ruin* of trade. The specie of the country will never be employed in commerce, while subject to such vexatious oppression.

But, fellow-citizens, there is one description of commerce which may be attempted: and in this channel, and this only, can any be successfully carried on to the continent of Europe. Our vessels may clear for England, pay the insurance against French capture, proceed to an English port, pay the enormous *tribute*, under the name of "*transit duty*," together with Custom-House expences, pilotage, &c.;* again clear out, obtain *false* and *forged* papers, as from America, proceed to France, and, by the aid of corrupt and wilful *perjury*, stand a *chance* of escaping condemnation. But this

* The following list shows the amount of transit duties, established by an act of the British Parliament. Upon paying these duties as specified in the following list, the articles may be reshipped, and carried to the continent, and false papers furnished, to facilitate escape from condemnation.

	DOL.	CENTS.	
Indigo,	0	45	per lb.
Tar and Pitch,	0	95	per bbl.
Turpentine,	0	78	per cwt.
Rice,	0	45	per cwt.
Tobacco,	3	00	per cwt.
Cotton,	0	16	per lb.
Corn,	0	15	per bushel.
Wheat,	0	28	per do.
Flour,	2	00	per bbl.
Fish,	0	90	per cwt.
Pork,	6	66	per bbl.
Beef,	3	33	per bbl.

Timber, staves and lumber, are not allowed to be re-shipped. The duty on a usual ship cargo of cotton amounts to 50,000 dollars: Yet, the United States, it is said, "have little or no real cause of complaint against England"—nothing but "pretences"!—"Millions for defence, but not a cent for tribute."

must be a *chance* after all; for, if the *fact* is discovered, by misplaced confidence in a sailor, or any other cause, the vessel will be seized and condemned in the French port.

But this is impossible: *American honor* will spurn the mercenary inducement, held out to reward a wounded *conscience*, the dishonor of their God, and *perfidy* to their COUNTRY. *Americans* have sworn to live FREE OR DIE—The OATH is recorded in the *registry of Heaven*; and the *wretch* who refuses to ratify it on the altar of our country, is worthy of the CHAINS forged by our enemies.—Yes, I again repeat it, the Embargo is not the efficient and principal cause of our distress. The decrees of France, and orders of Britain, have placed the commerce of the United States in the most imminent danger—A commerce extended over every sea, and incapable of *adequate protection*.

Yet, the gentleman who last addressed the meeting, considered the Embargo as a measure so ruinous, oppressive, and unnecessary, that it was *useless* to *argue* upon the subject.

If the Embargo is removed in the existing state of things, without efficient measures of defence and reprisal, it is true business will *apparently revive*. Our streets may be again crowded, and renew the *buzz* of business—A small portion of the specie, treasured by our citizens, would be again called into circulation, and the price of labor a little increased. This, however, instead of affording a happy presage of returning health, would be nothing more than the *hectic glow*, which precedes a lingering but certain death. Our vessels would be captured and condemned. New efforts to retrieve past losses would be made, and with no better success; till finally, loss upon loss, capture after capture, and condemnation after condemnation, would terminate in the irretrievable and hopeless bankruptcy of our merchants. The farmer, who had trusted his produce to the merchant, must lose his dues; and, instead of receiving a *diminished* price for the product of his farm, would *lose* the reward promised to faithful and persevering industry. Yes, I will again repeat it, our misfortunes are not to be ascribed to the Embargo. But from suffering our vessels to encounter the hostile decrees of the belligerents, a new and more complicated scene of calamities would ensue, terminating in WAR, with both England and France—or, in an alliance with ONE of those powers, not less to be deplored in its remote effects upon the prosperity of the nation.

Time will not permit an examination of the Embargo either as a measure of precaution, to save our property from destruction, or as a mean of annoyance to our enemies.

Omniscience is not an attribute of man, nor can absolute certainty be attained in any speculations on political *causes* and *effects*: because the operation of the *cause* may be defeated, or retarded, by events which human foresight cannot discover. Politicians who are *Americans* at heart, and who are not less enlightened and virtuous than the most arrogant *pretender* of our *Eastern Leaders*, have declared, on the best consideration, and without any ambitious views, that the Embargo was the most *prudent* measure in our power to adopt; and that the failure of its effect is chiefly to be ascribed to the numerous violations of the law, which have disgraced our country—violations, *invited* by the unprincipled proclamation of the British Monarch, allowing American vessels to enter his ports without papers;* though treated as pirates by the ancient and acknowledged usages of civilized nations.

Though we have passed sentence on this law in town meeting legally assembled, yet gentlemen will suffer me to remind them, that they formerly rejected, as inadmissible, conventions of the people (whether in town meeting or otherwise) for the purpose of deciding on the constitutionality of laws. It was formerly said that "Judges" should be men of experience and learning, derived from the "*viginti annorum lucubrations*;" that the seat of judgment should be placed on a rock, far above the "rage of fighting elements;" filled with calm and temperate wisdom, and inaccessible by "the fury of human passions." These sentiments suit not the spirit of the people, and ill accord with the conduct or designs of the *eastern leaders*.

Whether the law under consideration is oppressive or not, is a question distinct from its unconstitutionality; though unhappily confounded in the present resolutions. This question must depend upon our judgment of the relative importance of the object to be accomplished, when compared with the means used to accomplish it. A law, operating inconvenience or oppression, may from mistaken views, but with the most upright intentions, receive the sanction of the Legislature. But when we reflect on the numerous violations of the embargo, encouraged by some of our own citizens, and invited by the interference of England, the late act enforcing the embargo stands chargeable with no unnecessary severity.

As to its constitutionality, after the most diligent attention in my power to bestow on the subject, the provisions of the law appear wisely framed, with a sacred regard to the consti-

* Our citizens are requested to examine this proclamation, and reflect upon the dangerous interference of England in our LOCAL CONCERNS.

stitution, and in perfect accordance with the obvious sense and spirit of that instrument. The President is not, in the language of the resolutions, authorized to give a Collector "secret instructions," having the effect of "statute laws," and binding on such Collector. The instructions of the President, so far from constituting a new law, binding on the Collectors, are enjoined to be made "in pursuance of the law." Can that "instruction," which (to be legal) must necessarily be made "in pursuance of the law," vest new powers in a Collector, or have, from its inherent nature, the force of law? No, Sir. The instructions of the President cannot augment the powers of a Collector: But, by having the instructions of the President "general," a uniformity of practice is produced; and instead of the petty Collector of some small district, you have the high responsibility of the Executive Magistrate as a pledge for the impartial exercise of discretionary power. But if the power of giving instructions, agreeable to the present law, were of a less doubtful character, gentlemen would do well to consult a precedent in 1794, under the administration of a man revered by the people; in which Congress not only authorized President Washington "to lay an embargo," but to give such instructions to Collectors, as would enable them to carry it into effect. An exercise of power in its nature unconstitutional, is not the less so, though the effect of such power may continue only six months in the year. The character of tyranny and oppression is the same, whether that tyranny continue for a moment or a century.

When I reflect, that the power of a Collector to seize property on board of any vessel, "on suspicion," has been contained in the revenue laws of our country for many years, and that no one has complained of this power; that no new power in point of principle is given to Collectors in the present law, but the same power, extended to carts, waggons, sleighs, &c. on their way to a foreign country; when I find all regulation of the coasting trade between different parts of the same State utterly denied to the present Congress, though exercised under the administrations of Washington and Adams; when I consider that the power of regulating coasting between different parts of the same State is not excluded by the words of the Constitution, and is necessarily incident to the exercise of delegated powers; and when it is further considered, that a tribunal of justice has the power under this law, to reinstate the owner in the possession of property seized without sufficient cause, I cannot but think our alarms have been unfounded; and really hope gentlemen will recover that composure of thought, so necessary to detect the fallacy of such precipitate conclusions.

But Sir, why, let me ask, should we request his Excellency to convene the General Assembly? Why put the State to the expence, and the members to the personal inconvenience, of attending an extraordinary session of that body? Why not postpone the meeting of the Legislature till their semi-annual session in May next? especially as the sentiments of the present Legislature have been recently expressed on the subject which now claims such imperious attention? If the Legislature ought to be convened, as has been said, for serious deliberation, at this momentous crisis of our affairs, why not suffer them to convene free from the passions excited by our interference? Why do not gentlemen, so much accustomed to think for themselves as the advocates of these resolutions, tell us what system of measures is to be pursued by the General Assembly, instead of requiring us to vote without reasons, and act from motives not openly avowed? Proper reasons, publicly explained, would not fail to unite all hearts in the measure.

In the dearth of reasons urged for this measure, permit me to pay some attention to the only one openly avowed. It has been urged by several gentlemen, that convening the Legislature may prevent those "irregular oppositions to the execution of the law," which have appeared in some parts of New-England, and especially in the State of Rhode-Island. Yet the gentleman last up has openly disclaimed his belief, that any "irregular opposition" would be made in a State, so distinguished for the peaceable habits of her citizens, and obedience to public and private order. To such inconsistencies are gentlemen driven, from a design to conceal the real motives of the measure, and induce us to follow blindfold, such rash and dangerous counsels.

Must we be compelled to distrust the reality of this motive? God forbid! "For Brutus is an honorable man; so are they all, all honorable men:" Yet we must be permitted to enquire, if the real intention of gentlemen who advocate this measure, is to prevent "irregular opposition to the law," why have we witnessed the printing and circulation in this city, of a *seditious handbill*, announcing the death of the Constitution, and calling upon the people not to submit to the act of Congress; containing garbled extracts from the law in question; leaving out its most important provisions against the abuse of power; misrepresenting other parts of the law; and *adding* some *entirely new*—yet asserting, falsely asserting, that this was a true abstract of the law as it passed both Houses of Congress, and received the assent of the President. Compare the law in question with this libellous and seditious Abstract, and nothing can be more unlike.

But on this subject there is one consolation: this audacious libel, which, in England, would have received the most exemplary punishment, was not written in our own city, but taken hot from the BOSTON mint of forgery and lies.

If the real cause of convening the Legislature is to prevent irregular opposition to the law, why are the papers of New-England arrayed in mourning for the DEATH of the CONSTITUTION, representing the FUNERAL PROCESSION; and who would believe it? *Mr. Pickering*, as PALL BEARER, and *Massachusetts* one of the MOURNERS!! From the same poetic licence, to say no more, the EASTERN LEADERS might be represented with the *Constitution* on their shoulders, carrying that instrument of the people's rights on their way to CANADA, for the purpose of transporting them to the CABINET of ST. JAMES, and there offering them, as a *tribute*, at the footstool of the BRITISH MONARCH!

What say you fellow citizens? Might not a *Collector* be authorized to "*seize upon suspicion?*"

If Sir, the above is the real object, why have we heard read the Declaration of Independence, representing the wrongs of our Country, inflicted by the British Parlliament? Legislation and taxation are inseparable. But what code authorizes rebellion against laws made by our own consent? If the above is the real object, why call on the legislature to protect us against the general Government, when our own legislature have declared, that they are not permitted to interfere with national affairs? Must we be compelled to say, in the language of the gentleman who has just sit down, "actions speak louder than words?"

But there is *one mode* and only *one*, in which gentlemen's conduct can be reconciled with their professions, and "irregular opposition to the laws" prevented by the interference of our legislature. It is by converting "*irregular*" into *regular* "*opposition*" to the laws. *May Heaven avert the evils of such an attempt!*

Would to God I could here stop. But duty, a duty which does, or ought to bind every man to his country, impels me to a different conduct. On the subject to which I allude, every American should disdain a middle course. Even to be silent is a misprison of moral treason. He should even court the front ranks of danger, when that danger is incurred in support of the constitution and laws of his country. Nay, he should disdain to provide a retreat, but perish in the last ditch, in support of the "union" of the States. The real American of whatever party, can say with Lord Mansfield, "The last end that can happen to any man, never comes too soon, if he falls in support of the law and liberty of

“his country. I would not do that which my conscience tells me is wrong on this occasion to gain the huzzas of thousands, or the daily praise of all the papers which come from the press. I would not avoid doing what I think is right, though it should draw on me the whole artillery of libels, all that falsehood and malice can invent, or the credulity of a deluded populace can swallow.”

Shall I be accused of sounding the tocsin of alarm for party purposes? God forbid! Would to heaven my fears were unfounded, and that no real cause of alarm existed for the safety of the union and the future prosperity of Connecticut. Believe not, fellow citizens, I would derive any serious argument to evince hostility to the union, from the apparently indignant rejection of the two resolutions proposed to you at the close of the late meeting; resolutions taken from the farewell address of Washington; resolutions, containing no party feelings or sentiments, and merely expressing an unalterable attachment to the union of the states, and an abhorrence of all attempts to divide them. The human passions may, in certain cases, be entitled to respect; and the citizens who refused to approve the continued union of the states, might at another time treat the subject with more favorable regard. To those persons who insulted the house of God with conduct unprecedented in Connecticut, the same generous allowance ought not to be extended.

No: to facts widely different from a sudden ebullition of popular feelings must we resort to learn the existence of a sentiment, extensively embraced in Connecticut and Massachusetts; a sentiment which has received no inconsiderable strength from the factitious clamors of leaders against the late measures of our government. Shortly after the first election of Mr. Jefferson, an opinion favorable to disunion was sometimes maintained, but the great and increasing popularity of his measures in the New-England states, deprived its advocates of all hope of immediate success. The present crisis of difficulty and danger has been selected to gain proselytes to the unhallowed project.

Shall we seek evidence of a tendency to the dismemberment of our country? I would refer you to the revolutionary meetings in Massachusetts; the proceedings of this day, and the resolutions reported to this meeting. The framer of these resolutions feels himself constrained to declare with revolutionary fervor, in the language of the first congress to the inhabitants of Canada—

“That when the plighted faith of government ceases to give protection to dutiful subjects, and when the insidious stratagems of peace become more terrible than the san-

“guinary operations of war, it is high time for them to assert those rights given by the Almighty, and with honest indignation oppose the torrent of oppression rushing in upon them;” and thus inflamed with party zeal, is prepared to act his part on the theatre of new tumults, and rock the cradle* of a second revolution. Thus he erects the standard of opposition, asserts that “avenues have been cut through the most solemn compacts,” and invites the people to assert the rights given by the Almighty!!! Many who voted for this resolution would tremble at a compliance with the invitation held out by it.

But still more alarming symptoms of revolt are to be found in the conversation and sentiments of many citizens. It has become not an uncommon topic of conversation. Merchants, retired from business with splendid fortunes, collected from the freedom of neutral trade, have received the unhallowed sentiment into their minds, and suffered it to become a subject of consideration and calculation; have weighed in their minds the inducements to revolt, and balanced the interests of private AMBITION against PEACE, UNION and INDEPENDENCE. Nay, with such zeal has this sentiment been espoused, that every measure of the opposition seems to have been directed to this ultimate object. Almost every leading measure of the administration has been perverted by party zeal to the accomplishment of this purpose. The purchase of Louisiana, (though at first approved by many federalists) was soon denounced as a weak and wicked measure: for it opened the free navigation of the Mississippi, secured an outlet for the western country, and strengthened the Holy Bond of Union between the Atlantic and western states. The conspiracy of Burr, having in view a separation of the western States, was far from being discouraged by many of the opposition, for this would have enfeebled the ties between the Atlantic states, and prepared the way for a similar dismemberment. And last of all, the Embargo has been seized with intemperate passion, and under pretence of zeal for the people’s rights, been made the stalking horse

* “Second rocking of the cradle of liberty,” a figure taken from the Connecticut Herald, January 31, 1809. As the “infant liberty” will require not only rocking, but nutriment congenial to its nature, the following advertisement is recommended.

“WET NURSES.

“Wanted immediately WET NURSES to rock the cradle of liberty for another revolution in Connecticut. BRITISH MILK would be preferred, and no other recommendation necessary. American Nurses will not be objected to, provided the requisite number of BRITISH cannot be obtained.

“It is supposed New-Haven may furnish three at least. Wages will be given in proportion to the ability and exertion of the nurses, as it is determined to spare no expense in nurturing the infant, now in a sickly state.”

of party views. Hear the language used on this subject, and let the recital astonish the American People !!!

“The embargo is producing great distress: it affects more especially the poorer classes, many suits for debt will be brought during the present winter. This will produce disaffection to the administration and unite the people of the eastern states, and when they are once united, revolt and dismemberment may be attempted without danger.”

The American press, deriving much of its alimnt from foreign merchants, is confessedly subject to the most inauspicious influence, and threatens evils to our country which require the whole wisdom of the nation and virtue of the people to palliate or avert; and it has been conjectured by many that an understanding subsists between certain of the Massachusetts leaders and the British cabinet, having in view the dismemberment of our country, and a union with Canada, under the protection of the English government. But whether any understanding, formal or informal, has or does subsist of the nature alluded to, still a coincidence of conduct between the eastern leaders, and the hostile acts and pretensions of the British cabinet, is not the less certain, nor its consequences less to be deplored.

Nor have the friends to United America less reason to be alarmed at the sentiments of two gentlemen, both high in the public confidence, who have advocated this resolution.

It was suggested by them that the “*rights of Connecticut as an independent State, had, or might have been violated by the general government.*” Neither of the gentlemen attempted to show *what right* had been assailed, in what *manner* it had been done, what right such violation would confer upon this State, or who should decide the momentous question. It was too clear to see that the idea of *disunion* had been suffered to enter the mind, and to discover the *probable ground* on which a *Declaration of Rebellion* might finally be made. Nay, the mind was involuntarily carried forward to a period, when one of the Northern leaders, in a Convention of the people, should raise his voice and with fervor proclaim not only the right, but indispensable *Duty of Revolt!* Before this fatal period arrives, let us learn the almost forgotten creeds of Marat, Condorcet, and Robespierre, and preach lectures on the *piety* of civil war; and let our political orations be entitled, “*The Holy Right of Insurrection against Rulers chosen by the People.*”

The sentiments of Washington, exhorting the people to UNION, and to “discountenance even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; accustoming ourselves to think and speak of it with reverence;” and calling upon us to

“frown indignantly upon the first dawn of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest;” evince an extent of wisdom and patriotism, possessed by few of the Northern Leaders. “Resist the very beginning of evil,” is a maxim equally important in religion and politics.

Bold politicians may think upon the scenes of blood, consequent upon a separation of the States, without regret; believing that they may *personally* be safe, “ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm;” but others will approach them with awful anxiety, and inexpressible alarm.

The respective governments of the United, and individual States, are each independent, in their various spheres. But *no* State is permitted to interfere with the powers confided to the general government. While the States move in their respective spheres, their powers are harmonious—and the irregular motion of planets, passing their respective orbits, and encountering each other with dreadful concussion, would afford no more certain presage of destruction to the planetary bodies, than the like irregularity in the Federal system to the various powers which compose it. The sacred limits of authority being passed by one transgression, the precedent would invite others, till the whole system tumbled into ruins.

The Government of the United States contains, within itself, a salutary and peaceable remedy against the *abuse* of power. An independent Judiciary, under the constitution of the United States, may declare laws unconstitutional and void. But the chief resort, contrived by human wisdom to guard the people against their rulers, consists in freely and peaceably recurring to the Elective franchise. To the Judiciary let those resort, who feel the operation of the law in question, and think it unconstitutional: but let not the citizens be seduced, by syren songs, into *forcible opposition*.

If motives of duty were wanting to increase the sacred obligation of an oath already taken to support the constitution of the United States, they would be found in the destruction of national character, and entailing endless wars upon the different confederacies, consequent upon the destruction of the Union; wars which could terminate only by the interference of some *foreign power*, which would be called in to decide the conflict, and erect a *Military Despotism* on the ruins of the Constitution. History is full of lessons on this subject!

The conflict of claims to political duty between the Union and the several States, in case of legislative interference by the latter, in the concerns of the former, is a subject of still more inexpressible horror. Connecticut, on one hand,

claims the duty of its citizens; and on the other, the United States, with *paramount authority*, point to the Constitution, and claim obedience to the exercise of legitimate power.— Shall punishment, and even death itself, await the honest citizen “who poises himself upon his own honor,” and adopts the alternative approved by his conscience? No; the *virtue* of our Legislature will guard against an interference leading to such a crisis!!

Shall I add to this the HORRORS of CIVIL WAR among a people divided into parties nearly equal in physical strength?— Shall I describe the FATHER armed against the SON, and the SON against the FATHER, meeting each other in the BLOODY CONFLICT?— Shall I describe the HELL-HOUNDS of private revenge and party animosity free from legal restraints, let loose upon society? Shall I describe the MOTHER bending to a RUFFIAN SOLDIER, and imploring protection for the husband of her love and offspring of their affection? Shall I refer you to Ireland, La Vendee, or the more remote conflict between the rival houses of “York and Lancaster” for the horrors of CIVIL WAR? Yes; search the records of history; see the small and apparently trifling causes which produced them; and instead of trusting to the EASTERN LEADERS, *reflect and decide for yourselves.* Let not “irregular” be converted into “REGULAR OPPOSITION” to the LAWS!! ORDINARY WAR is pastime compared to the horrors of CIVIL DISCORD! Yet many of our citizens talk as if we were already in a state of revolution, and begin to “rock the cradle” containing the INFANT HERCULES!!

No: The idea of separation is a libel on the virtue of New-England: Nine tenths of the *honest* citizens will indignantly reject the attempt. It is the “GRECIAN HORSE,” ready to fend forth the most dangerous *enemies* to our *peace, liberties* and *Independence.*

“Timeo Danaos et Dona ferentes.”

I need hardly insult the virtue of our citizens by addressing to them motives of *interest* for adhering to the UNION. Happily however motives of interest unite with those of duty on the present question. The pecuniary interest of our state in the funded DEBT, the exposure of the *School funds*, our lucrative commerce with the Southern States, together with the carrying trade now enjoyed by New-England, concur to render DISUNION impossible without a *sacrifice* of VITAL INTERESTS. The Union dissolved, New-York will never join the Northern Confederacy, Her interests as well as principles forbid it: and without New-York, Connecticut and Vermont are Tributary States.

Nor would the future government of the Northern Confederacy be a subject of unconcern. Independent of the speculative notions of government said to be entertained by the Northern

leaders, many causes would concur to produce a frame of government inauspicious to liberty. The momentum of power requisite to secure a government from imbecility and disorder, and enable it to maintain the empire of the laws, is still a subject of political speculation: nor would plausible arguments be wanting to induce a prodigal surrender of power to the new Confederacy. A desire to place the new government beyond any control of the minor party, would be one reason for no inconsiderable energy in the system. Should the British troops in Canada, together with their friends, be called in to accomplish the separation, (a thing more than probable) it would be less difficult to determine the complexion of the future system.

The ordinary collisions of party have been reviewed by myself and many others with no considerable regard. Without wishes to embark in politics, and without leisure to attend to them, I have been reluctantly constrained to express my thoughts through the medium of the press. When the liberty of communicating my sentiments to the Meeting was refused, I saw no alternative between *submission* to injustice or resorting to the present mode of communication with the public. Consistency of political conduct (a subject alluded to in debate) can seldom be obtained by following popular leaders through all the winding paths of ambitious or mistaken policy. An inflexible determination to maintain the authority of laws passed by the Constitutional organ of the public will, would afford the best pledge of political consistency. Let our merchants consider that the arrogant pretensions of our ENEMIES must be resisted *in some mode or other*, or the sources of commercial wealth will be dried up; the RIGHTS of NEUTRAL TRADE annihilated; and AMERICA will be embroiled in the future WARS of EUROPEAN AMBITION. Let us reflect; unite on the best mode of RESISTANCE, and act as one man contending for his most valuable rights.

Should the Legislature of our State ever be *arrayed* against the GENERAL GOVERNMENT, *America* may exclaim with the poet—

“Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness.”

THE END.
