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SENATE UNITED STATES.

DECEMBER 15.

Mr. Mitchill from the committee appointed on the 5th inst. to take into consideration that part of the message of the President of the U. S. of December 2d, 1806, which relates to the protection of the seaports, harbors, and waters of the U. States, made a report, as follows:

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IT appears from the communication of the secretary at war, made to Congress on the 18th February, 1806, that several of the public works erected in different parts of the nation, for the purposes of defence, stood in need of finishing or repairs. The condition of the fortifications at fort Sumner, in Maine, fort Constitution, in New Hampshire, fort independence, in Massachusetts, forts Adams and Wolcot, in Rhode Island, fort Trumbull, in Connecticut, fort Jay, in New York, fort Mifflin in Pennsylvania, fort M'Henry, in Maryland, fort Nelson, in Virginia, fort Johnson, in North Carolina, forts Moultrie, Pinckney, and Johnson, in South Carolina, fort Green, in Georgia, and of forts St. Louis, St. Charles, and St. Philip, in Orleans, and of the various other forts and military stations, is well known to the war department, and only requires appropriations of money from year to year, to enable the needful additions to be made.

It is therefore deemed unnecessary to enter into a detailed enumeration of their respective wants. But the committee cannot forbear to make mention of New York, Charleston, and New Orleans.

They are fully sensible of the great and growing importance of New York; its exposed situation is a subject of public and general concern. It is agreed that the national power ought to be employed in its protection. The attention of the executive was therefore turned to that object during the summer and autumn of 1806; and upwards of 25,000 dollars were expended in repairing and enlarging in the most substantial manner the works on Governor's Island. These are progressing with all convenient speed; and though at this moment suspended on account of the rigor of the season, the committee has had the satisfaction to learn that the labor will be resumed with the cessation of the cold, and be steadily continued until both the city and harbor shall be put into a respectable state of defence. By the fortifications which it is intended to construct upon the different favorable positions which the land affords both above and below Governor's Island, skilful engineers conceive that so much will be done as to repel every ordinary assault of ships, and of all other force less than an invading army. The intended substitution of permanent structures of solid masonry, instead of wood and sand, will indeed require more time for their completion; but an ample compensation for this will be found eventually in their greater strength and durability.

The fortifications at Charleston, South Carolina, having been almost totally ruined by the severe hurricane of 1804, measures have been already adopted to rebuild them in the best manner that the situation of the ground admits.

Preparations are also making for the protection of New Orleans, and the mouth of the Mississippi, and evince a similar attention to the public interests in that quarter.

The committee, however, has not judged it necessary to particularize the specific sums which it may be needful to apply to each of these important objects. There would be considerable difficulty in this, for want of circumstantial and minute information. They therefore believe it will be sufficient to recommend an ample appropriation in gross, for the repair of existing fortifications, and the erection of such new new ones as may be required; and to leave the expenditure of the same, where the general safety or local welfare shall demand it, to the ample information and sound discretion of the executive.

Under these considerations the committee ask leave to report a bill, making further appropriations for fortifying the ports and harbors of the United States, and for building gun boats.

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THURSDAY, DEC. 11.

SPEECH of MR. CLOPTON, on the amendment proposed by him to the Constitution, on the 11th of December.

(CONCLUDED.)

Many, sir, and truly deserved, are the eulogiums which have been bestowed upon the federal government. Beautiful is its structure; admirable are its component parts; justly may it be likened in its symmetry to whatever partakes of wisdom, to whatever is excellent in the contrivances of man; and if among other objects of admiration to which it may be rightly compared; it may be said that this government and those of the particular states, taken in conjunction form a system in the political hemisphere not unlike that, which in the natural hemisphere is exhibited by a grand primary planet and its surrounding satellites; this comparison should nevertheless be drawn with some exception. For these states do not, like those satellites, shine with borrowed reflected light emanating from a great central planet. No, sir; they display a radiance solely their own. Their splendors issue from their own bodies. They are so many original sources of light and heat to the spheres within which they respectively act, illuminating and vivifying every thing therein; whilst the federal government by its influences duly dispensed unites the members of this constellation together in harmonious intercourse, and produces to the system the benefits of their collective energies. But suppose the federal government should extinguish the essence of the individual members to make up one entire body, it cannot impart their natural qualities to that single immense body. Their light, their heat—the glories, the excellencies of the whole system, I fear, would be forever gone! Indeed, sir, to my mind the very idea of consolidation is truly terrible—and should I be so unhappy as ever to see the time arrive when state institutions shall be done away, or when their energies shall be lost, I should expect soon afterwards to behold the dawn of that melancholy day, which in its meridian will blast the liberties of America, whose evening will close perhaps with their utter and eternal destruction—and be succeeded by a long, a dreary, a dismal, a tremendous night of despotism. I pray God that such a dreadful day may never be permitted to dawn!—that the American people, true to the memorable and glorious principles for which they fought, for which they bled, for which their fathers, their brothers died, may ever cherish, cultivate and guard them, as well against the secret approaches of corruption as against the open assaults of violence, and effectually guard them against both!—that the arm of usurpation may never reach the state institutions, so essential to the preservation of American liberty!—that co-extensively with the duration of time itself such institutions may continue to exist, retaining their full portions of energy in this grand and beautiful system; howsoever other systems, founded in erroneous principles, may shrink before the flame of ambition, or be shaken down by the storms of party; howsoever those which have arisen on the ruins of liberty may in their turn be subjected to other changes—howsoever they may experience a train of vicissitudes in the fluctuating course of human affairs!

Much, indeed, sir, might be said in favor of this system of federal government, as far surpassing any thing of the sort which has ever yet appeared amongst the productions of men; but being a production of men it cannot be completely perfect. Admirable as it is, it is a system of experiment; and it is from experiment that its defects are to be discovered. Whenever, therefore, any defect is discovered, which threatens to be of dangerous tendency, I think it behoves this nation, as far as practicable, to amend the defective part. I will trouble the House with no farther remarks however upon this subject at present; but with their permission will submit this proposition, as an effort towards bringing about an amendment to that clause in the constitution, which I have read, being thoroughly impressed with the belief that it is materially defective.

I am sensible, sir, of the great difficulty of framing a clause, which may effectually guard at all times against improper construction; and therefore cannot have full confidence that the one about to be submitted is such: yet in the proposition the subject will be introduced to the notice of the House, and if the object of it should be deemed expedient, I have no doubt but that one may be framed so as to answer the important purpose. The proposition which, with leave of the House, I shall have the honor to submit, is in the following words:

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Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, two thirds of both Houses concurring, That the following article be submitted to the legislatures of the several states, which when ratified and confirmed by the legislatures of three fourths of the said states, shall be valid and binding as a part of the constitution of the U. S.

The last clause of the 8th section of the 1st article of the constitution which contains the following words: "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this constitution in the government of the U. S. or in any department or officer thereof," shall be construed so as to comprehend only such laws as shall have a natural connection with and immediate relation to the powers enumerated in the said section, or to such other powers as are expressly vested by this constitution in the government of the U. S. or in any department or officer thereof.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15.

Speech of Mr. ELLIOT, on giving notice of his intention to move certain resolutions upon the subject of National Defence.

I will pursue, Mr. Speaker, for the honor of my country, that but one sentiment has pervaded and agitated the American mind, in relation to what has been called, with more energy indeed than propriety, the blockade of the port of New-York, in April last, by a small British naval force, and the atrocious murder of our fellow citizen, John Pierce, while in the peaceable pursuit of his honest occupation, by the order of the officer commanding that force. At that melancholy moment, when a dark cloud seemed to overshadow our political prospects, the laws of our country were, to borrow one of the bold figures of antiquity, silent amidst arms; they were languid, they were lifeless, when they ought to have been energetic and irresistible. The executive made a prompt and patriotic use of the few and feeble means which the laws had placed in his power; but few and feeble indeed they were, and the most energetic exercise of them could not, in a degree calculated to add lustre to the national character, command the respect of foreign nations.—I have not ascertained whether John Pierce was the father of a family: If such should be found to be the fact, and if some doubts which I have been led to entertain of the constitutionality of the proposition should be dissipated by further investigation, I shall probably deem it my duty to propose that his children shall be educated at the public expence. I am opposed from principle to the erection of monuments, except in cases of a very extraordinary character; and in this case there can be no necessity for any thing of that kind, as Pierce will have sufficient monuments in the memory of his fellow citizens, and in the pages of his country's history.

But it is not my present purpose to compose an epicedium upon Pierce, or to move the erection of his monument. I have objects of more consequence in view.—At the time of the occurrence of the unfortunate event to which I have alluded, and ever since, the question must have been continually inviting public attention, must have been commanding and irresistibly forcing itself, upon public attention, have we not, or do not we pretend to have, a naval armament for the purposes of national defence and protection? We have indeed the shadow of a navy. Economical, excessively economical as we are, we have already wasted millions upon our infant navy to no useful purpose; and we are in a very fair way to waste millions more. The event which I have mentioned has, at least I am greatly mistaken if it has not, prepared the public mind for a discussion and decision upon two important questions, relative to the naval establishment. First, whether it be not proper, under existing circumstances, to augment, in some small degree, that establishment? Secondly, whether, supposing the establishment to be increased or to remain as it is, it be not proper, it be not indispensably necessary, to organise and manage it in a different manner from what has been heretofore practised; to give it more efficiency and more energy? To these questions it is my intention to invite the attention of this House and the American nation.

It is time, however, to think and talk of something else beside our little navy;—that armament, which the wicked wits of our own country, and the still more wicked politicians of the old world, have called a Lilliputian navy; and which the latter description of persons, rather the most important of the two, in point of influence upon human character and human happiness, affect to consider as the disgrace of America, the ridicule of Europe. It is time to extend our views. It is time (if we can elevate our enfeebled optics to a more ample field of political vision) to look over the St. Croix on the one hand, and the Sabine on the other, to behold the course of events in other regions of the world, to reflect upon the influence of those events on our own concerns, and to enquire and understand how our own interests are affected by or involved in them. It is time to explode the narrow, the ridiculous, the all destroying policy, that would dictate to the people of this western world a total unconcernedness about the scenes that are displayed in the other regions of the globe. It is time to know who and where we are, and what will probably be our future destiny. In a word, it is time to change our system. What is the news of the day? Here many will inquire, what have we to do with the news of the day? And some will consider it a species of treason to interest ourselves in the fortunes of other nations. Treason against whom or what? Against the power of France, I suppose; for it can be treason against nothing else. But what is the news, and what is it to us—rumor announces that Prussia——Prussia, one of the first monarchies of Europe, has fallen! Fallen in a war purely defensive, in defence of the integrity of her territory! She has had the singular fate to fall unpitied, and yet covered with imperishable glory: Unconquered by superior courage, or even by superior discipline, but overwhelmed by numbers. And what have the people of republican America to do with the destruction of the monarchy of Prussia? Why, sir, upon every sober and solid principle of human calculation, it is our turn next. I will undertake to demonstrate, on some future day, that except in point of local situation, except in our remoteness from the great scene of European action, we occupy substantially the same ground that Prussia did, *ante bellum*; and that we ought to prepare ourselves to avert the same awful fate. I shall deem it my duty, when I go into this subject, to take a view of the present state of almost all the world; and if I prove not the fact which I have stated, I will instantly descend from this seat. Descend, did I say? No—I am not so fond of going down hill—I will ascend to a place among that most illustrious body, the people.—Prussia was required to give up some provinces of her dominions, or have them taken from her. So are we. It will be said, not by the same power; but it shall be shewn to the satisfaction of this nation (for we ourselves know already) that it ought to be so considered by us. The demand is made by Spain, a power which all the world knows to be subservient to the policy of France, and to be directed and governed by France in her concerns with the United States, in consequence of a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive between the two nations, to say the least of their connections. In proving this important, this solemn fact, not a word shall be said concerning certain documents, which have derived most astonishing celebrity from their impenetrable obscurity. No, Mr. Speaker, I will not disturb the repose of your seat, or that of the chairman of the committee of the whole on a future day, by any transgression of the rules of the House. I will not wander for a moment from the circle of perfect order. Nothing shall be said of the contents of those documents; but much, very much, shall be said of what they do not contain, and much of what the people may have suspected that they do contain, and regret shall again and again be expressed, that our superiors and masters, the sovereign people of this great nation, whom in all things else we delight to honor, are not permitted to see, examine, reflect and decide upon them for themselves. In the mean time, I say, change your system of foreign politics. We must enlarge our views and alter our course of conduct, or we shall deserve the chains that are forging for us. Political life and death are set before you. Choose ye, therefore, whether ye will live or die.

Let me not be misunderstood. I approve the domestic administration of the government of this country, and the general system which the executive is pursuing in relation to our concerns with foreign nations; approve it with all my heart, and will support it with all my powers. And how is all this to be reconciled with the declaration that we must change our system? The easiest thing in the world. The system of national defence and protection is a part of your foreign politics, strictly considered, rather than of domestic politics. And where and what are your arrangements for national defence? Or rather, is not your country almost totally defenceless?—We, we ourselves, not the executive, we, the immediate representatives of the people, hold the purse strings of the nation; and the world has long looked on with astonishment, not unmingled with contempt, at the miserly but convulsive grasp with which we embrace them.—And what is the state of our finances? Is it such as to render necessary this extreme parsimony?—With an overflowing treasury; with an accumulation of revenue, which enables us to purchase empires, and at the same time rapidly reduce a debt, the pressure of which no man feels or ever can feel; with a debt which is but the dust of the balance in which are suspended our national resources; our naval establishment is inferior to that which was possessed by the little state of Ragusa, the last of the republics of the ancient world, previously to its recent destruction by the power of France: Ragusa, which possessed but one considerable port, perhaps twenty or thirty miles of barren sea coast, and a population of from 80,000 to 120,000 souls. Apropos of Ragusa. Who would not mourn for Ragusa? Every republican on earth ought to shed a tear for its fate! Who were the Ragusans? Were they among the conspirators against the liberties and national independence of France, who are said to have held their caucusses at Pilnitz and at Pavia? Were they subsidized by British gold? Were they the enemies of any people on the globe? Ah! No. They were a simple, peaceful, unambitious, industrious, virtuous, republican people. They were so far from being the enemies of any nation, that they were the friends of all the world; that they might enjoy the privilege of managing their own concerns in their own manner, as to their domestic legislation, they always paid tribute to every nation that demanded tribute from them; and on this humiliating condition they were suffered to exist as a republic, through almost all the revolutions of ages. They did exist—they are now slaves! And it is a memorable fact that the Emperor of France has not even pretended that the Ragusans were hostile to his interests. Political necessity alone justifies, or attempts to justify, the seizure of their dominions. And when would their fate be ours, if the means of destruction were at hand? To morrow!

It is certainly time to think and act with more energy. This great and solemn subject has long attracted my attention, and occupied my silent reflections. Our local habitation is our only security. Were it not for the vast waves of the vast ocean, it would be the merest folly that could be imagined, to tie up your roof with those strings that dangle so delightfully over our heads. Were it not for that noble and all-protecting element, why in the name of heaven would you prop up these tottering walls any longer? Let them alone, and crazy as they are, and they are crazy enough in all conscience, they would last ten times as long as the noble structure of your republic itself! At least ten times as long. But many think we are in no danger. They must be very pious men, they must have a confidence in Divine Providence, in which I should not like to be behind them; or they must possess a degree of self confidence, the possession of which I do not envy them. Does any one believe that our army and navy, that our militia, numerous, brave and patriotic as it is, could resist for a moment three millions of European veterans in arms? Could we resist the power of France, if that power could be brought to bear upon us? He who could say so, should wander into the wilderness, he should go at least to the extreme limit of the desert heath that surrounds us, and talk to the woods and to the winds. No human ear could listen for a moment with patience to such idle fanfaronade. One word more upon the subject of our treasury and our debt. It has frequently been said that the present is the age of wonders; and we have another proof of it this very session within these walls. Could you call old Solomon himself from the "vasty deep," and give him a seat among us—and as he would be but a shade, I suppose you would consider him only as a kind of territorial delegate, with a right of debating but not of voting—could you get him here, the very first step of his parliamentary career would be to move to strike out a section of the sacred volume, inserted by his own pen; the words, *there is nothing new under the sun.* In the journal of our proceedings upon the President's message, we have a record of this sort—"Resolved, That so much of the message of the President of the U. States, *as relates to the future appropriation of the surplus revenue,* &c. be referred to a select committee." This is a new kind of committee of Ways and Means. It must be called, I suppose, committee of Ways & Means, No. 2. Committees of this description, organised for the purpose of devising means to carry on the great concerns of nations, are of some antiquity; but this is the first committee that has ever been created for the purpose of devising ways and means to get rid of the surplus monies of a government. I can point the gentlemen of this committee to an object worthy of their attention; THE DEFENCE OF THEIR COUNTRY opens an ample and honorable field for their labors. But it is time to disclose my own system more particularly. I will keep the House in suspense no longer. I would imitate the magnanimous, but at the same time very prudent policy of the Emperor of Austria, approved or at least not censured by the Emperor of France himself, by establishing a powerful armed neutrality. I would organize a general and effectual system of national defence. Here again let me not be misunderstood. I am no friend to large armies & navies, or new & oppressive taxes. The system should be economical as well as energetic.

Upon this subject I have long waited, like Elihu of old, that older men might