is wholly unconnected with the case of the Leopard and the Chesapeake, and which can only tend to complicate and embarrass a discussion, in itself of sufficient delicacy and importance.

In stating the grounds upon which your government expect with confidence that "the whole subject of impressment shall be taken up at this time," and that in making the reparation which is claimed for the particular injury alledged to have been sustained by the U. States, in the late unfortunate transaction off the capes of Virginia, "a remedy shall be provided for the whole evil," you appear to have been directed to assume that this act of violence (such as you describe it) is the natural and almost necessary result of the practice of impressment of British seamen from merchant vessels of other states; and to represent the particular transaction and the general question of impressment, as "identified in the feelings and sympathies of your nation, was well as in the sentiment of your government."

With every attention due to the feelings of the people of the United States, I am sure you will readily allow that those feelings cannot properly be considered as affecting the merits of the case.

The first ebullitions of national sensibility may very naturally have communicated an impulse to the proceedings of the American government; but it cannot be expected, that they should guide the deliberate opinions & conduct of the government with which you have to treat. I would farther observe to you, that your government cannot reasonably claim any advantage in argument from the expressed sense of its own people, unless it be prepared at the same time to take upon itself a responsibility (which there is no desire of attributing to it) for the outrage & indecency, with which upon the late occasion, that expression has in too many instances been accompanied. It is better for temperate reasoning, and assuredly it is more advantageous for the government of the U. States, that the consideration of popular feeling should be wholly omitted in this discussion.

The right and the practice of which you are instructed to complain, as irreconcileable with justice, and intolerable in all their parts, have been exercised by G. Britain from the earliest ages of the British naval power, even without any qualification or exception in favor of national ships of war.

The grounds upon which such a distinction has been admitted in later times, and upon which, for the course of nearly a century, the crown has forborne to instruct the commanders of its ships of war, to search foreign ships of war for deserters, I have already had the honor to explain to you—And you will have perceived that those grounds are wholly inapplicable to ships in the merchant service.

That a foreign power will not, knowingly, retain in its national service, mariners the natural born subjects of his majesty, who have been recalled by public proclamation, may be regarded as a presumption arising out of the hostile nature of the act & out of the probable consequences to which such an act of hostility must lead.

But with respect to merchant vessels, there is no such presumption.

When mariners, subjects of his majesty, are employed in the private service of foreign individuals, under private civil contracts, the king's subjects, and the foreign individuals with whom they serve, enter into engagements inconsistent with the duty of his majesty's subjects towards him; but to those engagements the government of the foreign nation has not made itself a party.

In such cases, the species of redress which the practice of all times has admitted and sanctioned, is that of taking those subjects at sea out of the service of such foreign individuals; and recalling them to the discharge of that previous and paramount duty which they owe to their sovereign and to their country.

That the exercise of this right, involves some of the dearest interests of G. B. your government is ready to acknowledge, & has accordingly authorised you to propose certain regulations which you apprehend would be equivalent in their effect for the preservation of the interests concerned.

There will be no indisposition here to entertain, at a proper time, the discussion of such proposed regulations. But when you recollect that many proposals to this effect have already been brought forward, and have been found wholly inadmissible; when you have, yourself, recently had occasion to experience the difficulty of framing any satisfactory arrangement upon the subject; with all the anxiety which is properly felt by both governments for the speedy adjustment of the difference between them, and for the "healing of that deep wound which you state to have been inflicted on the national honor of the U. States:" attempt, which has already been made so often, and which has hitherto uniformly failed.

Your own reasoning shews that you are aware of the more than ordinary difficulty which must attend any arrangement for the prevention of desertion, between two nations, whose similarity of manners and habits, and whose identity of language, interpose so many impediments to the discrimination of "national character."

To these circumstances, and not (as you almost seem to insinuate) to any peculiar harshness towards the United States, it is owing, that the exercise of this right, as with respect to them, is necessarily more frequent, than with respect to any other nation: and is felt by them to be more rigid and vexatious. But these circumstances cannot furnish an argument for the suspension of the exercise of the right with respect to America; unless it be contended, that multiplicity of frauds and difficulty of detection are reasons against suspicion or motives for acquiescence.

As little foundation is there for the complaint that the practice has grown out of the recognition of American independence; and that the character of that event is affected by its continuance.

It is needless to repeat that these rights existed in their fullest force, for ages previous to the establishment of the U. States of America as an independent government: and it would be difficult to contend that the recognition of that independence can have operated any change in this respect; unless it can be shewn that in acknowledging the government of the United States, Great Britain virtually abdicated her own rights as a naval power; or unless there were any express stipulations, by which the ancient and prescriptive usages of Great Britain, founded in the soundest principles of natural law, though still enforced against other independent nations of the world, were to be suspended whenever they might come in contact with the interests or the feelings of the American people.

I would now recall your attention to the consideration of the question respecting the late transaction between the Leopard and the Chesapeake; which till the receipt of your letter, I imagined to be the only question actually in discussion between us, and in consideration of the delicacy and pressing importance of which, we had, by common consent, waved the consideration of all other matters pending between our two governments.

Into the discussion of this question I am prepared to enter; with what disposition, on the part of his majesty's government, to consult the feelings and the honor of the government of the United States, it is not necessary for me here to declare—for you have yourself done justice to the sincerity of that disposition.

The difficulties in the way of such adjustment are already smoothed, by the disavowal, voluntarily offered, at the very outset of the discussion, of the general and unqualified pretension to search ships of war for deserters. There remained only to ascertain the facts of the particular case, and to proportion the reparation to the wrong.

Is the British government now to understand, that you, sir, are not authorized to enter into this question separately and distinctly; without having obtained, as a preliminary concession, the consent of this country to enter into discussion with respect to the practice of searching merchant vessels for deserters?

Whether any arrangement can be devised, by which this practice may admit of modification, without prejudice to the essential rights and interests of Great Britain, is a question, which as I have already said the British government may, at a proper season, be ready to entertain: but, whether the consent of Great Britain to the entering into such discussion, shall be extorted as the price of an amicable adjustment, as the condition of being admitted to make honorable reparation for an injury, is a question of quite a different sort, and one which can be answered no otherwise than by an unqualified refusal.

I earnestly recommend to you, therefore, to consider whether the instructions which you have received from your government, may not leave you at liberty to come to an adjustment of the case of the Leopard and Chesapeake, independently of the other question, with which it appears to have been unnecessarily connected.

If your instructions leave you no discretion, I cannot press you to act in contradiction to them. In that case there can be no advantage in pursuing a discussion which you are not authorised to conclude: and I shall have only to regret that the disposition of his majesty to terminate that difference amicably and satisfactorily, is for the present rendered unavailing.

In that case, his majesty in pursuance of the disposition of which

for bringing this unfortunate dispute to a conclusion consistent with the harmony subsisting between Great Britain and the United States. But, in order to avoid the inconvenience which has arisen, from the mixt nature of your instructions, that minister will not be empowered to entertain, as connected with this subject, any proposition respecting the search of merchant vessels.

It will, however, be far more satisfactory to his majesty to learn, that upon re-consideration, you think yourself authorised to separate the two questions.

I hope you will allow me to express, at the same time, the sincere pleasure which I should feel in having to treat with you, sir, personally for the re-establishment of a good understanding between our two countries.

I have the honor to be, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE CANNING.

Portland Place, Sept. 29, 1807.

Sir—I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 23d of this month, and shall transmit it without delay to my government.

I perceive by it, with great regret, that his Britannic majesty's government is not disposed to enter into an arrangement at this time, of all the differences that have arisen between our governments, respecting the impressment of seamen from American vessels by British cruizers; that it is willing to look to one object only, the late aggression, and provide for it, while the other is left to depend on future adjustment. My government had presumed that his majesty's government would have seen in the recent and greater injury, a strong motive for bringing the whole subject into one view, and providing for it at the same time. The excess of the latter outrage could not fail to revive in the mind of the suffering party, a high sense of former injuries, and it was reasonable to infer that the great injustice inseparable from the practice, of which the incident furnished so striking an example, would have produced between our governments the most prompt and friendly co-operation in the means of suppressing it. That the United States have suffered a greater injury by a recent occurrence, than they had done before, cannot be a good reason, & ought not to be a motive for delaying redress of the others, especially when it is considered that they were already in a train of amicable accommodation and arrangement. Since, however, you inform me that his majesty's government is unwilling to take up the subject in a combined view, it is unnecessary for me to press it.

You ask whether I am authorised to separate this latter incident from the general practice, and to treat it as a distinct topic? On this point I have to state, that my instructions, which are explicit, enjoin me to consider the whole of this class of injuries as an entire subject; and indeed so intimately are they connected in their nature, that it seems to be difficult, if not impossible, to separate them for any useful purpose to either party. My government being sincerely desirous to place the relations of the two powers, on the solid basis of permanent friendship, is satisfied, as well by what has occurred in the general practice, as by the more awful admonition derived from the late incident, that that can only be done with effect, by mounting to the source of the evil, and providing an adequate remedy for it. In pursuing this great object, it is my duty to repeat, that my government does not seek to confine the remedy proposed to the injuries which the United States have suffered, and continue to suffer, but is desirous to extend it to those also which are complained of by Great Britain. Experience has shewn that both parties complain of injuries, though certainly of a very different character and less urgent nature. How much more advisable then is it not, in every view, for them to enter into an arrangement which shall provide an adequate remedy for their respective injuries; which shall bind the honor of each government to do what is just and right in respect to the other, and enlist the feelings of each nation on its side, than to suffer things to remain longer in their present state? How much more advantageous would not such an arrangement be likely to prove to Great Britain, in the particular object which she has in view, than her adherence to a practice which rejects a mean which could not fail to be more productive; a practice which cannot be maintained in principle; which leads by immutable causes, that ought to inspire different sentiments in the parties to each other, to great and constant abuse, and which is also considered by the United States as subversive of their rights, and degrading to their character as an independent power.

So much I have thought it proper to state, in order to place in a just light the conduct of my government on the present occasion, on this great [illegible] very interesting subject of impressment; but I should deem it highly improper that any doubt should be suffered to exist on that point.

You inform me that his majesty has determined, in case my instructions do not permit me to separate the late aggression from the general practice of impressment, to transfer the business to the United States, by committing it to a minister who shall be sent there with full powers to conclude it. To that measure I am far from being disposed to raise any obstacle, and shall immediately apprise my government of the decision to adopt it. Under such circumstances, I perfectly agree with you in the opinion, that it would be useless to pursue a discussion, which it would be impossible for me to bring to a satisfactory conclusion.

It is still my duty to give the explanation which you have desired, of the motives which induced the President to adopt the measures announced in his proclamation of the 2d July last. However great the injury which the United States had received by the aggression complained of, it is just that it should be shewn that the President did not lose sight in those measures of the friendly relations subsisting between the two powers. When the hostile nature of the attack on the Chesapeake, is taken into view, and the general conduct of the British squadron within the waters of the United States, before and after the attack, I am persuaded that there was no limit to which the President would not have been justified in going, which he might have thought essential to the honor and safety of the nation. Before the attack, the British squadron had violated the jurisdiction of the United States, by the impressment of men within it, whom the commander had refused to surrender; and after the attack the attitude which he assumed continued to be of a very menacing and hostile character. An act of hostility, it must be admitted, justifies any act of a like nature towards the party who commits it. The President, however, did not believe that his majesty's government had authorised the conduct of the British squadron, and his measures were evidently founded on that belief. They were marked by no circumstance of hostility, or of retaliation towards Great Britain; but were intended simply to preserve order within the jurisdiction of the United States, to which end the removal of the British squadron without their limits became indispensible. After the acts of violence which had been committed by that squadron, it was impossible that it should remain longer there without increasing the irritation and widening the breach between the two nations, which it was the earnest object of the President to prevent. There certainly existed no desire of giving a preference in favor of the ships of war of one belligerent party to those of another. Before this aggression, it is well known, that his Britannic majesty's ships lay within the waters of the Chesapeake, and enjoyed all the advantages of the most favored nation; it cannot therefore be doubted that my government will be ready to restore them to the same situation, as soon as it can be done consistently with the honor and rights of the United States.

I cannot conclude this communication without expressing my earnest hope, that the differences which have unhappily arisen between our governments, may soon be settled, on conditions honorable and satisfactory to both the parties. To have co-operated with you in the accomplishment of so great and useful a work, would have been highly gratifying to me. The disposition which you have brought to the discussion, and the sentiments which you communicated on the principal transaction, when the first intelligence of it was received, inspired me with great confidence, that we should soon have been able to bring it to such a conclusion. To have been a party to it, would have terminated my mission to his majesty in the mode which I have long and sincerely desired.

I have the honor to be, &c.
(Signed) JAMES MONROE.

To Mr. Canning.

Portland Place, Oct. 9, 1807.

Mr. Monroe presents his compliments to Mr. Canning, and requests that he will be so good as to inform him, whether it is intended, that the minister whom his majesty proposes to send to the government of the United States, shall be employed in a special mission without having any connection immediate or eventual with the ordinary legation. Mr. Monroe has inferred from Mr. Canning's note, that the mission, will be of the special nature above described, but he will be much obliged to Mr. Canning, to inform him, whether he has taken a correct view of the measure. Mr. Monroe would also be happy to know of Mr. Canning at what time it is expected the minister will sail for the United States. Mr. Canning will be sensible that Mr. Monroe's motive in requesting this information, is, that he may be enabled to communicate it without delay [illegible] to accept the assurance of his high consideration.

The Right Hon. George Canning, &c. &c. &c.

FROM MR. CANNING.

Foreign Office, Oct. 10, 1807.

Mr. Canning presents his compliments to Mr. Monroe: and in acknowledging the honor of his note of yesterday has great pleasure in assuring him that he is at all times ready to answer any enquiries to which Mr. Monroe attaches any importance, and which it is in Mr. Canning's power to answer with precision, without public inconvenience. But it is not in Mr. Canning's power to state with confidence what may be the *eventual* determination of his majesty in respect to the permanent mission in America. The mission of the minister whom his majesty is now about to send will certainly be limited *in the first instance* to the discussion of the question of the Chesapeake.

Triplicate.

London, October 10, 1807.

Sir—I have the honor to transmit you by doctor Bullus, a copy of my correspondence with Mr. Canning on the subject which was committed to my care, by your letter of the 6th of July last. You will find by it that the pressure which has been made on this government, in obedience to the instruction contained in that letter, has terminated in a decision to send a minister to the United States, to adjust the business there. What the powers of that minister will be; whether it is intended to confine them to the sole object of reparation for the special outrage, or to extend them, in case the proposed separation of that from the general topic of impressment is admitted, to the latter object, it is not in my power to state. Mr. Canning has given me no information on that head in conference, and his note is not explicit on it. It states that the minister who shall be sent to the United States, to bring the dispute relative to the attack on the Chesapeake to a conclusion, shall not be empowered to entertain, as connected with that subject, any proposition respecting the search of merchant vessels—a presumption is authorized by those terms, that the minister will have power to treat on the general topic after the special one is arranged. But it is possible that that presumption may have been raised for some other purpose, or that the terms which excited it, were introduced merely to convey the idea that the mission should be confined to the special object.

In the discharge of this delicate and important trust, I thought that I should be able more effectually to promote its object, by opening the subject to Mr. Canning in conference, than by an official note. As the attitude taken by my government, which was evidently supported by the whole nation, was of a very impressive nature, it seemed probable from the feverish state of the public mind here in regard to us, that a tone of conciliation, which should not weaken the pressure, would be more likely to succeed in obtaining the reparation desired, than an official & peremptory demand. Under this impression, I had several conferences with Mr. Canning, the substance of which, in each, I will endeavor to state with precision. A knowledge of what passed in these interviews, in aid of that which is afforded by the correspondence, will enable you to form the most correct idea of the object of the proposed mission, that present circumstances will admit of.

The first interview was on the 3d of September, as soon as it could be obtained, after the receipt of your letter of July the 6th, which was on the 30th of August. I informed Mr. Canning, that as I wished the discussion in which we were about to enter, to terminate amicably and honorably to both our governments, I had asked the interview, for the purpose of promoting that desirable end; that by explaining to each other fully, in friendly conference, the views of our respective governments, relative to the late aggression, I was persuaded that it would be more easy for us to arrange the business, to the satisfaction of both parties, than by any other mode which we could pursue. He expressed his sensibility to that which I had chosen, and his readiness to concur in it; I then stated in detail, in explicit terms, the reparation which my government thought the United States entitled to, and expected that they should receive, for the injury and indignity offered by the late aggression; that the men taken from the frigate should be restored to it; that the officers who had committed the aggression should be exemplarily punished; that the practice of impressment from merchant vessels should be suppressed; and that the reparation consisting of those several acts should be announced to our government, through the medium of a special mission, a solemnity which the extraordinary nature of the aggression particularly required. I observed that as the aggression and the principle on which it was founded had been formally disavowed as soon as known