

impression of necessary self-defence, right in the first instance, but subsequently, by the angry legislation of the United States, rendered delusive; there is, at least, no moral turpitude in such a charge. The lust of conquest, however, involving, as it does, moral guilt, provokes a censure and fixes a stain which the honour of a nation, and of a Christian nation especially, is deeply concerned in repelling, if it can. For this offence against national integrity and good faith the government of the United States are answerable, in prosecuting the war from motives clearly distinct from those which they avowed; motives not at all consistent with the position in which they desired to place themselves before the world,—that of an aggrieved people contending for rights which had been infringed: motives, in short, arising wholly from popular feelings at once covetous of the possessions of another nation, and exasperated for the time by passions beyond control. In a word, the war of 1812 was a war of AGGRESSION; and its fate was that with which it is the usual Providence of God to visit, sooner or later, all aggressive wars: it was a failure; and a failure, though brightened by occasional triumph, involving, on the whole, a large amount of retributive calamity. It is, too, a remarkable; we might say, providential circumstance, that the failure was mainly brought about through the gallant and the unexpected resistance of the very colony which was regarded by its invaders as likely to prove an easy conquest, in consequence, more particularly, of the disloyalty to the British Crown vainly imagined to lurk in its heart. That very colony which, to the war-party in Congress, was the object of cupidity, and by a “strong delusion” afforded them their highest hopes of success, became largely instrumental to their discomfiture. This looks like a judicial disappointment of schemes not merely visionary and inconsiderate; but—what is far worse—violent and unjust.

The War Declared
simultaneously with the
Invasion of Russia.

Six days after the declaration of war by the United States, Buonaparte passed the Niemen, with the vast and

brilliant armament which, in the purpose of its imperial leader, was to bring down Russia as low as the rest of the Continent; but was destined, in the designs of Providence, to afford in modern history, a parallel to Pharaoh and Sennacherib. Had the United States awaited the issue of that expedition it is possible that their war against Great Britain would not have been declared. Even if the flames of Moscow had proved as ineffectual as the woes of Spain to exasperate them against the scourge and the oppressor of Europe, still destruction, in one campaign of half a million of his veterans, was too evident and too serious a blow to his military strength, not to impair the prestige of his alliance, and to shake that faith in his destiny which may have extended from Europe to his Transatlantic allies; for in that false position our Anglo-Saxon brethren had, on the 18th June, 1812, unhappily placed themselves. A little more patience on the part of the United States would have set all right, without war, which remedied nothing, and produced no settlement but what would have been made, had peace continued, two years before; and that on terms more explicit and more advantageous to the Republic than the treaty of Ghent, which closed the unprofitable contest. Their troubles were the troubles of the age; caused by the convulsion and the disorganization of the civilized world, not by any ill will harboured by Great Britain against them. Tyrants aiming at universal dominion cannot send their whirlwinds of men and steel over the earth without causing general suffering—and the United States suffered. With the breaking of the oppressor's rod, their sufferings would have ceased. The tide of French invasion once driven back, the ancient landmarks would have reappeared; the rights of nations, the renewal of intercourse, the revival of commerce; everything, in short, worth contending for would have followed the fall of Buonaparte, since it was by his conquests and decrees alone that the order and the happiness of the world had been interrupted. The United States, by throwing themselves into the contest, only delayed that happy consummation.