

ried. If it be proposed to vindicate any right by war, wisdom demands that it should be of a nature by war to be obtained. The interests connected with the subject of impressment are unquestionably great to both nations; and in the full extent of abstract right as asserted by each, perhaps irreconcilable.

The government of the United States asserts the broad principle that the flag of their merchant vessels shall protect the mariners. This privilege is claimed, although every person on board, except the captain, may be an alien.

The British government asserts that the allegiance of their subjects is inalienable in time of war, and that their seamen, found on the sea, the common highway of nations, shall not be protected by the flag of private merchant vessels.

The undersigned deem it unnecessary here to discuss the question of the American claim, for the immunity of their flag. But they cannot refrain from viewing it as a principle, of a nature very broad and comprehensive; to the abuse of which the temptations are strong and numerous. And they do maintain, that before the calamities of war in vindication of such a principle be incurred, all the means of negotiation should be exhausted, and that also every practicable attempt should be made to regulate the exercise of the right; so that the acknowledged injury, resulting to other nations, should be checked, if not prevented. They are clearly of opinion that the peace of this happy and rising community should not be abandoned for the sake of affording facilities to cover French property; or to employ British seamen.

The claim of Great Britain to the services of her seamen is neither novel, nor peculiar. The doctrine of allegiance for which she contends is common to all the governments of Europe. France, as well as England, has maintained it for centuries. Both nations claim, in time of war, the services of their subjects. Both by decrees forbid their entering into foreign employ. Both recall them by proclamation.

No man can doubt that, in the present state of the French marine, if American merchant vessels were met at sea, having French seamen on board, France would take them. Will any man believe that the United States would go to war against France on this account?

For very obvious reasons, this principle occasions little collision with France, or with any other nation, except England. With the English nation, the people of the United States are closely assimilated, in blood, language, intercourse, habits, dress, manners and character. When Britain is at war and the United States neutral, the merchant service of the United States holds out to British seamen temptations almost irresistible;—high wages and peaceful employ, instead of low wages and war-service;—safety in lieu of hazard;—entire independence, in the place of qualified servitude.

That England, whose situation is insular, who is engaged in a war apparently for existence, whose seamen are her bulwark, should look upon the effect of our principle upon her safety with jealousy, is inevitable; and that she will not hazard the practical consequences