

nations an alternative only between the base surrender of their rights, and a manly vindication of them. Happily for the United States their destiny, under the aid of Heaven, is in their own hands. The crisis is formidable only by their love of peace. As soon as it becomes a duty to relinquish that situation, danger disappears. They have suffered no wrongs, they have received no insults, however great, for which they cannot obtain redress.

More than seven years have elapsed, since the commencement of this system of hostile aggression by the British government, on the rights and interests of the United States. The manner of its commencement was not less hostile than the spirit with which it has been prosecuted. The United States have invariably done every thing in their power to preserve the relations of friendship with Great Britain. Of this disposition they gave a distinguished proof at the moment when they were made the victims of an opposite policy. The wrongs of the last war had not been forgotten at the commencement of the present one. They warned us of dangers, against which it was sought to provide. As early as the year 1804, the minister of the United States at London was instructed to invite the British government to enter into a negotiation on all the points on which a collision might arise between the two countries, in the course of the war, and to propose to it an arrangement of their claims, on fair and reasonable conditions. The invitation was accepted. A negotiation had commenced and was depending, and nothing had occurred to excite a doubt that it would not terminate to the satisfaction of both the parties. It was at this time, and under these circumstances, that an attack was made, by surprise, on an important branch of the American commerce, which affected every part of the United States, and involved many of their citizens in ruin.

The commerce on which this attack was so unexpectedly made, was that between the United States

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