

of; to provide for the defence of the ports and harbours of the United States; to authorize a detachment from the militia, and to provide a naval armament.

France did refuse to treat, and rejected our ministers. What was the result? *not long, detailed diplomatic correspondences, further remonstrances, and paper resolutions*: a negotiation of a different nature commenced; we spoke a language not to be misunderstood: we spoke from the mouth of the cannon. Our treaties with her were annulled; all intercourse prohibited; our merchant vessels authorized to arm, and defend themselves against French privateers; an army was raised; and our little navy equipped, manned, and sent out to protect our commerce, and capture the armed vessels of France. A war, not of *offence*, but *defence*, was commenced. Naval conflicts soon ensued, and a French frigate was taken, after a hard fought battle, by an American frigate commanded by the gallant Truxton. The French privateers and piratical boats, which had annoyed our trade, were swept from the ocean; our commerce resumed its wonted activity, and our vessels again navigated in safety every sea. What was the conduct of France? a declaration of war? far from it. Though she had before treated us with indignity, the manly attitude we assumed, in defence of our rights and national honor, commanded her respect; and she proposed and entered into a negotiation, which ended in a treaty, that was ratified by both governments, and was finally promulgated by a proclamation of the president of the United States, on the 21st of December, 1801. At this period the American flag was *respected* in every sea, and the American name and character were *honored* by all nations.

Since that period, unfortunately for our country, a different policy has prevailed in its public councils, founded no doubt on the idea "that a just nation is trusted on its word; while wars are only necessary to nations of an opposite character." A policy calculated on to save the necessity of ships of war, and exactly comporting with some of the *modern ideas of economy*. In pursuance of this policy, our navy has been suffered to decline; and some of our ships have, for years, been moored to rot in the mud of the Eastern Branch of the Potomac.

Many efforts have been made, but in vain, for removing our little fleet into the *salt water*, to protect our commerce, at least on our coast; and to secure us from being insulted, within our own jurisdiction, by the armed vessels of the belligerents. We were told that if our ships went out, and should meet with foreign vessels depredating on our commerce, or insulting our government, they would *fight*, and we should have *war*. That our ships would fight, on proper occasions, I have no doubt.

Though the discouragements which have been thrown in the way of our naval prosperity have greatly tended to depress the martial spirit, it still exists, and if an opportunity presents will be drawn forth into action. Believing this, I confidently rely on our being