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## SKETCHES FROM CANADIAN HISTORY.

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On the 18th of June, 1812, President Madison gave his assent to the declaration of war embodied in a bill passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States. It is only fair to add that the measure had been forced by the lowest class of American politicians, and was exceedingly distasteful to the better class of citizens. But even at that early date, the power of the mob had become irresistible, and though American politicians and American politicians had not as yet reached the present low ebb, still even then the more respectable and better educated citizens were made to feel that in a democracy so complete as that of the States, the most worthless carries as much weight as the most worthy, and the will of the *hoi polloi* must rule. Madison, driven by his insatiable hatred of everything English, had placed himself at the head of the demagogues and war faction. The excuse given for the war was the passing of the celebrated Orders in Council of 1809, declaring France and her allies and their colonies in state of blockade. This measure was an answer to the Berlin and Milan decrees, and could not

be considered more hostile to the United States than they were. That the Orders in Council were a mere excuse was moreover fully demonstrated by the fact that though the decrees were revoked in as far as they regarded the United States, on the 23rd June, five days after the President's assent to the declaration of war, and before either hostilities had commenced, or the declaration had reached England, the Americans insisted upon continuing the contest, having availed themselves of an armistice weakly granted them by Sir George Prevost to consider the matter, in order to bring to the front reinforcements and supplies. In fact, peace was only obtained when, after several humiliating defeats, great loss and the taking of their capital, the Americans felt that England, at peace on the Continent, was free to turn her whole strength upon America. To use a favorite American expression, having been handsomely whipped and feeling they were going to be more so, the Americans became reasonable and came to terms.

It seems to have always been, and probably still is a fixed idea in the