

their own seamen from our merchant service, so conformable to the law and usages of nations, that we can only respond your sentiments upon these subjects.

By the correspondence between the French and American Ministers, lately submitted to Congress, it is most evident that the nation has been drawn into a war, either by a disgusting imposition practised upon our Government by the French Emperor, which it comports not with their policy to represent in its true colors ; or by the concealment of a most important fact by our government, which it was their duty to disclose to the American People.

While many of the most upright and intelligent men have uniformly believed and maintained that the British Orders in Council afforded to our country no just cause of war, the doubts of others have probably arisen from divesting them of their declared character of measures of retaliation upon the conduct of her enemy ; all dispassionate persons will admit that this was a question of international law, which it was not *incumbent* upon Government to decide, whatever were the sentiments of its individual members. It should have sufficed for the practical Statesman to enquire, whether under existing circumstances, the interest or honor of the Country rendered war inevitable, and whether on supposition of the affirmative, justice or expediency demanded the selection of Great Britain for an enemy.

But the authors of the war appear to have confined their attention to the first of these questions. They admit, that as the injuries inflicted upon our commerce were professedly incidental to their state of hostility with each other, and were not justified as acts of direct aggression upon the flag of the United States, it was at least optional with this Government