

THOUGHTS, &c.

THE Proclamation, excluding British men of war from American waters, is a self-assumed remedy, aimed against a nation, for the unauthorized act of *one of its officers*. Mr. Madison allows, that the President conceived the act of this officer unauthorized, from the first ; that dates seemed to shew this ; that the British had before disavowed an act of this sort, in the case of the United States' vessel, Baltimore ; that had general hostilities been meditated, they would have commenced them in a different form ; and that the British, as having a large navy, had no interest in establishing a principle of this sort, since it would authorize inferiour powers to search her ships of war. The British government, on the other hand, has disavowed both the act and the principle, before it was asked to do it ; and has continued to disavow both, in every channel it could employ ; namely, by the conferences of its secretary of state for foreign affairs ; by speeches in Parliament ; by a speech from the throne ; by a publick proclamation ; by a special minister ; and by a crowd of official letters. This too it has done, not on present and temporary principles, but on the past principles of nearly a century, now therefore become habitual. The British nation is therefore made to suffer, in the place of an individual, who, however rash and unjustifiable, did nothing more than Commodore PREBLE would have done in the same situation, and nothing more than the officers of other powers have done substantially to some of our national vessels, *or their crews*, who yet have not been noticed. In the mean time, the great offending *individual*, Admiral BERKLEY, by the manner in which things are conducted, stands a chance of escaping an adequate punishment whatever. If the acts of this officer, however, were those of an *individual*, the acts of Mr. JEFFERSON are those of a *government* ; and having been deliberately adopted and continued, will be considered as such, by the British and by posterity.