

England and France refuse to be just.

Friendly Proposition of the United States unheeded.

were playing such a desperate game, that they not only rightfully suspected each other of duplicity continually, but doubted the sincerity of the United States; although that government had never, in the smallest degree, broken its faith with either. England refused to recall her orders in Council; Bonaparte refused to make any indemnity for the seizures under the Bayonne and Rambouillet Decrees, and American commerce was left in a state of the most painful suspense.

Having exhausted all arguments in endeavoring to convince the British ministry of the reality of the French revocation,¹ and to effect a recall of the orders, Mr. Pinkney left England and returned home, satisfied that, while she could sustain herself in the prosecution of the war, she would never yield an iota of her power to oppress the weak. At this very time, spurned as they had been, the United States proceeded to open another door of reconciliation, by an act of Congress providing that, in case at any time "Great Britain should revoke or modify her edicts, as that they shall cease to violate the neutral commerce of the United States, the President of the United States should declare the fact by proclamation, and that the restrictions previously imposed should, from the date of such proclamation, cease and be discontinued."²

To this friendly proposition England was deaf. She would listen to no appeals to her justice or her magnanimity. For long years she had been the aggressor and the oppressor, and yet she refused to heed the kindly voice of her best friend when it pleaded for simple justice. At that very time she was exercising, by the might of her navy, the most despotic sway upon the ocean, and committing incessant injuries upon a friendly power. She had, at that time, impressed from the crews of American merchant vessels, peaceably navigating the high seas, not less than SIX THOUSAND MARINERS who claimed to be citizens of the United States, and who were denied all opportunity to verify their claims. She had seized and confiscated the commercial property of American citizens to an incalculable amount. She had united in the enormities of France in declaring a great proportion of the terraqueous globe in a state of blockade, effectually chasing the American merchant from the ocean. She had contemptuously disregarded the neutrality of the American territory, and the jurisdiction of the American laws within the waters and harbors of the United States. She was enjoying the emoluments of a surreptitious trade, stained with every species of fraud and corruption, which gave to the belligerent powers the advantage of a peace, while the neutral powers were involved in the evils of war. She had, in short, usurped and exercised on the water a tyranny similar to that which her great antagonist had usurped and exercised on the land. And, amid all these proofs of ambition and avarice, she demanded that the victims of her usurpations and her violence should revere her as the sole defender of the rights and liberties of mankind!³

At about the time when Mr. Pinkney left England, Augustus J. Foster, who had been secretary to the British legation at Washington, was appointed⁴ February 15, 1811, envoy extraordinary to the United States, charged with the settlement of the affair of the *Chesapeake* and other matters in dispute between the two governments.⁵ He had just fairly entered upon the duties of his peaceful mission, when an event occurred that produced great complications and ill feelings.

¹ The British ministry, in their refusal to rescind the orders, made a strong point of the fact that one of the conditions in Champagny's letter was the renouncing by the English what were called the "new British principles of blockade," namely, the blockading of all commercial unfortified towns, coasts, harbors, and mouths of rivers. Bonaparte claimed that it ought to be confined to fortified places. Great Britain would not relax an iota of her pretensions in this matter.

² Act of Congress, passed 2d of March, 1811.

³ See Dallas's *Exposition of the Causes and Character of the late War*.

⁴ In announcing this appointment, the British ministry assured Mr. Pinkney of the most pacific feelings of their government toward that of his own, and that the delay in filling the place caused by the recall of Jackson was not because of any indisposition to keep up friendly diplomatic relations, but from a desire to make a satisfactory appointment, and also from late interruptions to official business owing to the mental disability of the king and the establishment of a regency. The king had shown signs of insanity in 1788, and a Regency Bill was submitted to Parliament in December of that year. The king recovered, and in February following it was withdrawn. In 1810 the physicians of the king announced his confirmed insanity, and on the 5th of February, 1811, his son, the Prince of Wales, afterward George the

Outrage by a Brit

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bearing the br The commodor President's sail lain were at W on board the fri in the afternoon sloop-of-war *At* tant, sailing at flying, denoting ter-deck. He h in search of the

Fourth, went before th until the death of his t

¹ Hildreth, Second 8

² Although the sea w the frigate, and assured was, "All that may be

³ The American navy ex, 32; John Adams, 24 and a large flotilla of g els. Cooper, II., 118.

⁴ The present Fort of the same name, erected were strengthened at ti military work, its princ fence of the naval arsen on the breaking out of t ing the conflict) was to beautiful, and delight th are others, both elegant The residence of Coi November, 1861. It stor lar. It was a two-story page. It will be referre

⁵ Letter from an office