

THE

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A HISTORY OF THE WAR
BETWEEN
GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA,
DURING THE YEARS 1812, 1813, & 1814.

"Ferrum quo graves Persæ melius perirent."

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS ON THE CAUSES OF THE
WAR.

CHAPTER I.

*From the Berlin Decree to the close of Mr.
Jefferson's Second Administration.*
21st Nov., 1806. 3rd March, 1809.

Preliminary remarks. AN historical narrative which wilfully offends against truth, or distorts it to serve party purposes, is an imposture; and one that is devoid of feeling is a skeleton: the one, unprincipled; the other, spiritless and forbidding. We, in the discharge of our humble office, will strive to eschew both; keeping clear, to the best of our ability, of the lively, but prejudiced and disingenuous political pamphlet, on the one hand; and of the dry and meagre outline of the mere analyst, on the other. We write, jealously observant of truth, so far as we can discern it; but, at the same time, we are not ashamed to confess that we write with emotion,—as from the heart,—and a heart too, which, to its last pulsation, will remain true, we hope, to the glorious British constitution. To tell of gradual estrangement and final collision, where nature herself, no less than interest, urged to close alliance; to recite the afflicting details of war,

where peace, to either side, was in an eminent degree prosperity, happiness, and wisdom;—this is our undertaking, and the occasion of it we well may, as we do, most conscientiously deplore. In such a strife of brothers, victory, even on our own side, is not recorded without pain,—the pain which a man feels when he discovers that the errors of human conduct have given him an enemy where, in the ties of common language and race, Divine Providence, he might argue, had designed that he should find a friend. The late war with the United States, is not the only contest in the world's history, which warns us that the permanent peace of nations, is not to be implicitly trusted to the mere physical circumstance of their being "*gentes unius labii*;" yet the consciousness that we have fought, even in self-defence, with those who speak the same tongue and claim the same lineage with ourselves, will be felt to damp the ardor of triumph in the moment of victory, and to cloud its remembrance afterwards. To this feeling we are not insensible; yet, at the same time, it would be affectation in us to disguise the satisfaction we derive from the conviction that the War of 1812 was attended with, at least, one good result. It shewed that Canada, as to her deliberate preference of British connection, and her devotion to the British throne, was sound to the heart's core. By declaimers in Congress—who refused to hear the voice of reason from the just and sensible minority in that Legislature—the loyalty of Canada was impeached,—spoken of as a thing of nought, to be corrupted