

has it happened, that with these superior advantages and more powerful means, all the negotiations of the present administration with England (one excepted of local rather than general application, and which I need not explain) have failed? Had they been conducted with equal candour, ability and dignity, must they not have produced as early, and at least as advantageous results? Was this a cause of their failure, *that points of questionable right*, because not settled by the universally acknowledged law of nations, *and therefore of doubtful, or hopeless attainment, were pertinaciously insisted on?*

Mr. President—To find a remedy for evils, as well in the body politic as in the natural body, it is necessary to investigate their causes.

Nearly eight years have elapsed since we were told, by the highest authority in the nation, that under the auspices of the federal government, the United States were then “in the full tide of successful experiment.” And the report on our tables, to which I have before alluded, declares, in grave and solemn language, that during a period of five-and-twenty years, which brings us down to the embargo, the United States have enjoyed a “prosperity unexampled in the history of nations.” Yet during the whole of this period of unequalled prosperity, *arising from the active pursuits of commerce and agriculture, each giving life and vigor to the other*, that commerce has been exposed to the aggressions of the belligerent nations. For those of Great Britain, up to near the close of 1794, compensation was made, pursuant to the provisions of Mr. Jay’s treaty. For the like aggressions by Spain, the like indemnity was given by virtue of the treaty with that power, concluded in October 1795. For French spoliations during the whole period of her revolutionary war (spoliations which have been estimated at not less than millions of dollars) we have received *nothing!* Nor have we obtained any reimbursement from Spain for the spoliations committed by her cruizers, *after she became the ally of France.*

Captures and condemnations, however, more or less extended, have never ceased: notwithstanding all which, and the continued impressment of seamen from our merchant vessels, the same unexampled prosperity has attended us; until suddenly, and to the astonishment of the nation, this flowing tide of successful commerce and agriculture, was stopped by that fatal measure, the embargo. The shock was aggravated by the concealment of its real cause. Sir, I hazard nothing in asserting, that to this day that cause has not been satisfactorily declared. Allow me time to justify this assertion. I will bring together facts and circumstances, and then gentlemen will judge whether my conclusion be erroneous or just.

On the 14th of December 1807, the dispatches brought by the *Revenge*, from our minister in Paris, were delivered to the secretary of state. On her arrival at New York, reports brought by her stated, that the French emperor had declared *that there should be no neutrals*. The sources of information, and the character of the emperor, rendered those reports worthy of credit; and though after-