

OF the various topics embraced in the Olive Branch, there is none on which so great a diversity of opinion prevails, as impressment. The official documents of two secretaries of state, Timothy Pickens, esq. and Judge Marshal; of a minister at the court of London, Rufus King, esq.; of Silas Talbot, and William Lyman, esqrs. agents for the relief of impressed seamen; and of commodore Rodgers, establish beyond contradiction the horrible enormity of the practice. Evidence, however, of a variety of persons of respectability, examined on oath, by the legislature of Massachusetts, is as contrary to these documents, as light is to darkness.

The subject is immensely important. Our future welfare may depend on it. It certainly demands the most serious and solemn consideration. The public mind ought to be fully and completely informed upon it. I have, therefore, judged it advisable to submit to the reader, a tabular view of it, collected from the official returns made by George W. Irving, and colonel Lyman, agents of the United States in London.

This table has been kindly furnished by Dr. Adam Seybert, who has devoted a large portion of his leisure hours to the investigation of American statistics.

It commences with the second war between France and England, after the short lived peace of Amiens, and terminates with the 30th of September, 1810, which is seven and a half years. A chasm from September 1, 1804, till March 31, 1806, reduces the time to less than six years. This chasm the extreme and unaccountable difficulty of procuring documents from Washington has prevented me from filling, notwithstanding I made a variety of efforts to procure materials.

During six years, therefore, it appears that the number of persons impressed on board American vessels was, - - - - - 4579  
Of whom, acknowledged to be Americans, were discharged, - - - 1361  
There were detained merely for want of documents, - - - - - 534  
On board of ships on foreign stations, - - - - - 263  
There were applications unanswered, - - - - - 493  
Of the whole number retained, there were claimed as British subjects, 209  
Having voluntarily entered, - - - - - 209  
The other particulars are of minor moment.

Each of these items would afford subject for a separate chapter. But I merely recommend them to the most serious consideration of the reader

*An Abstract of Returns or Lists of American Seamen and Citizens who have been impressed and held on board his Britannic Majesty's Ships of War, during the time specified, according to the Returns made by George W. Irving, and William Lyman, to the Department of State.*

| REASON WHY REFUSED TO BE DISCHARGED.                                                            | Impressments from March 11, 1803, to Aug. 31, 1804.* | .. | Impressments from April 1, 1806, to Sept. 30, 1807.† | Impressments from Oct. 1, 1807, to Mar. 31, 1809.‡ | Impressments from April 1, 1809, to Sept. 30, 1810.¶ |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                 |                                                      |    |                                                      |                                                    |                                                      |
| (Having no documents to prove their citizenship, Said to be born in Great Britain, &c. &c. &c.) | 383                                                  | +  | 33                                                   | 11                                                 | 107                                                  |
|                                                                                                 | —                                                    |    | —                                                    | 01                                                 | 230                                                  |
|                                                                                                 |                                                      |    |                                                      | 36                                                 | 9                                                    |
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