

Ever since the United States have been a nation, this subject has been a matter of complaint and negotiation; and every former administration have treated it, according to its obvious nature, as a subject rather for arrangement than for war. It existed in the time of Washington, yet this father of his country recommended no such resort. It existed in the time of Adams, yet, notwithstanding the zeal in support of our maritime rights, which distinguished his administration, war was never suggested by him as the remedy. During the eight years Mr. Jefferson stood at the helm of affairs, it still continued a subject of controversy and negotiation; but it was never made a cause for war. It was reserved for the present administration to press this topic to the extreme and most dreadful resort of nations; although England has officially disavowed the right of impressment, as it respects native citizens, and an arrangement might well be made consistent with the fair pretensions of such as are naturalized.

That the real state of this question may be understood, the undersigned recur to the following facts as supported by official documents. Mr. King, when minister in England, obtained a disavowal of the British government of the right to impress "American seamen," naturalized as well as native, on the high seas. An arrangement had advanced nearly to a conclusion, upon this basis, and was broken off only because Great Britain insisted to retain the right on "the narrow seas." What, however, was the opinion of the American minister, on the probability of an arrangement, appears from the public documents, communicated to congress in the session of 1808, as stated by Mr. Madison in these words, "at the moment the articles were expected to be signed, an exception of 'the narrow seas' was urged and insisted on by Lord St. Vincents, and being utterly inadmissible on our part, the negotiation was abandoned."

Mr. King seems to be of opinion, however, "that, with more time than was left him for the experiment, the objection might have been overcome." What time was left Mr. King for the experiment, or whether any was ever made, has not been disclosed to the public. Mr. King, soon after returned to America: It is manifest from Mr. King's expression that he was limited in point of time, and it is equally clear that his opinion was, that an adjustment could take place. That Mr. Madison was also of the same opinion is demonstrated by his letters to Messrs. Monroe and Pinkney, dated the 3d of February, 1807, in which he uses these expressions. "I take it for granted that you have not failed to make due use of the arrangement concerted by Mr. King with Lord Hawksbury, in the year 1802, for settling the question of impressment. On that occasion and under that administration the British principle was fairly renounced in favor of the right of our flag, Lord Hawksbury having agreed to prohibit impressments on the high seas," and Lord St. Vincents requiring nothing more than an exception of the narrow seas, an exception resting on the obsolete claim of Great Britain to some peculiar dominion over them." Here then we have a full acknowledgment that Great Britain was willing to renounce the