

into an offensive war, not only before we were duly prepared for it, but when, from recent events in Great-Britain, it is apparent, that it might and ought to have been avoided, will agree with me, that it is at least possible, that the same administration, urged by the same motive, may have made a *shew* of pacifick proposals, without any sincere design to have them accepted. I ask not for your jealousy, my fellow-citizens, I only request your candid and impartial inquiry into the pretended offers for peace.

You will then agree with me, that it is necessary to make a marked discrimination between the *written proposals*, and the *written answers*, and any verbal and oral communications, which may have been misunderstood, and most easily misconstrued and misrepresented.

I shall, however, examine *both*, and I feel the most unlimited confidence that both of them will result in a conviction that no peace was expected or wished for on the part of our administration.

First, then, we will examine the *written* correspondence between Mr. Russell and Lord Castlereagh, after the former had received his last, and as he calls them, most liberal instructions from Mr. Monroe.

Mr. Russell's *only* letter containing proposals after he received his last instructions, is dated the 12th of September, in which he proposes, "A convention for the cessation of hostilities, to take effect at such a time as shall be mutually agreed upon, and stipulating that commissioners shall be appointed with full powers to form a treaty, which shall provide by reciprocal arrangements, for the security of their seamen from being taken or employed in the service of the other power."

These are the precise words, and we admit that this part of the letter does not seem to imply that Great-Britain should yield the right as a *preliminary*. If this had stood alone, Great-Britain could not have refused the offer justly, except on the ground that Russell was not only not authorized by the instructions which he communicated to Lord Castlereagh in *extenso*, but he was explicitly restrained from such an offer—Such an objection, if made, would have been *unanswerable*, and it is the very answer which Lord Castlereagh did make.

Peruse, my fellow-citizens, these instructions, and take with you, the fact that Russell's diplomatick powers had wholly ceased, and then see whether the refusal of Great-Britain is any proof of her being unwilling to adjust this question with any person duly authorized to treat with unlimited powers.

But this is only a small part of the case—Russell did not dare to violate in so open a manner his instructions—He therefore added, "In proposing to your Lordship *these terms*, I am instructed to come to an understanding with his Majesty's government, without requiring it to be *formal* concerning impressments *comprising* in it the discharge of the citizens of the United States already impressed."

What were the commissioners then to consider? Whether Great-Britain should relinquish the right? No—*That* she was to agree to do by a clear but informal understanding.