

The demoralizing Effects of Party Politics.

Commodore Rodgers assailed.

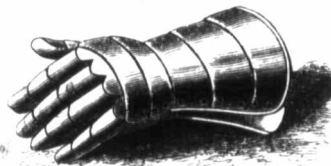
Rodgers vindicated.

The Indiana Territor

Britain, or making efficient preparations for such resistance and resentment, circulated a report, with the fiercest denunciations, that Rodgers had sailed with orders from Washington to rescue by force the young man lately impressed from a Portland brig.¹ They exultingly drew a comparison between the late and present Democratic administration, the former denying the right of the *Leopard* to take a seaman by force from the *Chesapeake*, the latter ordering Rodgers to do what Captain Humphreys had been condemned by the Americans and punished by his own government for doing. Rodgers himself, who had behaved most prudently, gallantly, and magnanimously in the matter, received his full share of personal abuse from the opponents of the administration; and, strange as it may seem, when the question was reduced to one of simple veracity on the part of the two commanders, a large number of his countrymen, even with the overwhelming testimony of all the officers and many of the subordinates of the *President* against that of five officers and two deserters produced by Captain Bingham, were so misled by party zeal as to express their belief that the British commander uttered nothing but truth, and that Rodgers and his people all committed perjury! But these ungenerous and unpatriotic assaults soon lost their chief sustenance when the Secretary of State officially declared that no orders had been given for a forcible rescue of the impressed American; and the satisfaction of Mr. Foster, the British minister at Washington (who had requested an inquiry into the conduct of Rodgers), that the statements of that commander were substantially true, was manifested by the fact that the subject was dropped in diplomatic circles, was never revived there, and the affair of the *Chesapeake* was settled in accordance with the demands of the government of the United States.

But while the two governments tacitly agreed to bury the matter in official oblivion, the people of the respective countries, highly excited by the event, would not let it drop. It increased the feeling of mutual animosity which had been growing rapidly of late, and widened the gulf of separation, which every day became more and more difficult of passage by kindly international sentiments; and when the Twelfth Congress assembled, a month earlier than usual,^a the administration party in and out of that body was found to be decidedly a war party, while the Federalists, growing weaker in numbers every day, were as decidedly opposed to war.

¹ The charge was apparently justified by the tenor of a letter, already referred to, purporting to have been written by an officer on board the *President* on the 14th of May, but whose name was never given. He wrote: "By the officers who came from Washington we learn that we are sent in pursuit of the British frigate who had impressed a passenger from a coaster. Yesterday, while beating down the bay, we spoke a brig coming up, who informed us that she saw the British frigate the day before off the very place where we now are; but she is not now in sight. We have made the most complete preparations for battle. Every one wishes it. She is exactly our force, but we have the *Argus* with us, which none of us are pleased with, as we wish a fair trial of courage and skill. Should we see her, I have not the least doubt of an engagement. The commodore will demand the person impressed; the demand will doubtless be refused, and the battle will instantly commence. . . . The commodore has called in the boatswain, gunner, and carpenter, informed them of all circumstances, and asked if they were ready for action. Ready was the reply of each."—*New York Herald*, June 3, 1811.



son, then an energetic man. He had been in the legislature for a few years; his legislative organ was the *Indiana*, and Vincennes, a man named Harrison was popularly managed the publication of many difficulties, and the main contention against the white people, especially the Indians. By a succession of things, the Indian population was diminished. Every thing that had the government had caused to have had cause to in many cases, the Indians, were intense beasts of the forest and treated them as an old chief to Ha-

¹ "I do not believe," wrote and yet the quantity of wh-