

power like Great Britain, must always be terribly severe.

In this Congress (the twelfth) the celebrated Henry Clay, then a young and ardent man, made his first entrance on the great world of politics. He was a fervent advocate for war; and his remarkable talents,

combined with his sanguine and impetuous spirit, soon enabled him to outstrip the old champions of war, who raised him to the Speakership of the House of Representatives, and tacitly acknowledged him for their leader.

### CHAPTER III.

Papers relating to Henry's Mission communicated to Congress by the President, on the 5th March.

In the year 1809, about the time of the first embargo, Mr. Madison told the British Minister at Washington that, in his estimation, such had been the conduct of Great Britain, that the United States would be justified in declaring war at any moment, and without further notice. The newspapers, at that time, were boiling over with invective against Great Britain, and the invasion of her North American Colonies was, even at that early period of the dispute, publicly talked of and discussed as a very feasible and very effectual measure of retaliation. Halifax and Quebec were both mentioned as points on which the attack might be advantageously commenced. As the President's language, taken in conjunction with the popular animosity, seemed to threaten an immediate assault, intelligence was despatched to Sir James Craig, the Governor of Canada, who, lest the Province under his command should be taken by surprise, sent an embassy into the Eastern States, for the purpose of procuring information. The instructions given to that agent were not inconsistent with the Governor's honourable character. All that he contemplated was,—to ascertain the real state of affairs in the

United States; how far the war-spirit had spread; with what amount of success the resistance of the federal party would probably be attended; and, generally, to acquire such information as might assist him in putting the Province under his charge into a proper state of defence. Sir James Craig, however, was unfortunate, as it proved, in his choice of the person employed. This person was a Captain John Henry, a clever and active, but, as circumstances afterwards showed, a purely mercenary and unprincipled man. He was an Irishman by birth; had come to the United States as an adventurer; became a captain in the army of 1798; and ultimately settled on an estate in Vermont, close to the frontier. According to his own account, the attention of Sir James Craig was drawn to him by essays which he had written in newspapers against republican government, which he professed to hold in utter detestation. By some means or other, however, the Governor of Canada had heard of him, invited him to Montreal, and from thence despatched him to Boston early in 1809, for the purpose we have already described. After remaining in Boston about three months, during which period he wrote Sir James Craig's secretary fourteen letters, embodying information of no

commerce, the same, after due notice, shall be null and of no effect.

Mr. Brougham, on this occurrence, declared the full satisfaction of himself and his friends with the frank and manly conduct of government in the mode it had adopted; and both sides of the house seemed happy in the prospect of the amicable intercourse which this proceeding would restore between the two countries.

We cannot, however, refrain from expressing our astonishment, that during the debates there appeared so little consciousness that the question of repealing or continuing the Orders in Council, was a real question of peace or war with America; and that deferring the decision so long, was rendering it altogether unimportant. In fact, before the news of the repeal reached the United States, *they were actually at war with Great Britain.*