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HISTORY OF THE WAR  
BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
DURING THE YEARS, 1812, 1813, AND 1814.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Unfortunately, Mr. Madison's proclamation given in our last chapter has been invested with an appearance of justice by the articles which appeared in the *Annual Register*, and by other passages, subsequently, in Mr. Macaulay's works. We confess we cannot regard this affair in the same light, and can only look on the proclamation as an attempt by Mr. Madison to cover his own deficiencies. In the first place, he terms an expedition, which he had been warned, two months previously, would be undertaken, a sudden incursion, and then endeavours to prove the ruthlessness of Sir George Cockburn in carrying out his plans, by the assertion that "buildings having no relation to war were destroyed."

When General Ross was fired at from the Capitol, did not that act render this building an object for legitimate attack? And, in the destruction of the houses of Representatives, and the Treasury, was a worse act committed than when Colonel Campbell, of the United States army, destroyed the dwelling-house and other buildings of a Canadian, and justified the act, as according to the usages of war, because a troop of British dragoons had just fled from them?

Ingersol has made great capital out of an article which appeared in the *Annual Register*,

for 1814, and that our readers may judge of the comments for themselves, we give the extract, taking it, not from Ingersol, but the *Register* itself.

"By the capture of Washington, the American Government not only sustained a severe loss in property, but incurred much reproach from the nation, especially from the party adverse to the war, as having been the occasion of a disgrace which it had taken no effectual measures to prevent. A vulnerable part of the Republic was now exposed, and men's minds were impressed with a sense of imminent danger, where before it had been regarded only as a remote possibility. On the other hand, it cannot be concealed, that the extent of devastation practised by the victors, brought a heavy censure upon the British character, not only in America, but on the continent of Europe. *It is acknowledged, that strict discipline was observed, while the troops were in possession of Washington, and private property was anxiously protected:* but the destruction not only of every establishment connected with war, but of edifices consecrated to the purposes of civil government, and affording specimens of the advance of the fine arts among a rising people, was *thought* an indulgence of animosity more suitable to the times of barbarism, than to an age and nation in which hostility is softened by sentiments of generosity and civilised policy."

It will be seen, in this extract, that the writer distinctly says, not that the attack on Washington really was an act suited to barbarous ages, but only that it was *thought* so.