

But it is said that war is demanded by honour. Is national honour a principle which thirsts after vengeance, and is appeased only by blood; which, trampling on the hopes of man, and spurning the law of God, untaught by what is past and careless of what is to come, precipitates itself into any folly or madness, to gratify a selfish vanity, or to satiate some unhallowed rage? If honour demands a war with England, what lulls that honour to sleep over the wrongs done us by France? On land, robberies, seizures, imprisonments, by French authority; at sea, pillage, sinkings, burnings, under French orders. These are notorious. Are they unfelt because they are French? Is any alleviation to be found in the correspondence and humiliations of the present Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at the French court? In his communications to our government, as before the public, where is the cause for now selecting France as the friend of our country, and England as the enemy?

If no illusions of personal feeling, and no solicitude for elevation of place, should be permitted to misguide the public councils; if it is indeed honourable for the true statesman to consult the public welfare, to provide in truth for the public defence, and impose no yoke of bondage; with full knowledge of the wrongs inflicted by the French, ought the government of this country to aid the French cause, by engaging in war against the enemy of France? To supply the waste of such a war, and to meet the appropriations of millions extraordinary for the war expenditures, must our fellow-citizens throughout the Union be doomed to sustain the burden of war-taxes, in various forms of direct and indirect imposition? For official information, respecting the millions deemed requisite for charges of the war; for like information, respecting the nature and amount of taxes, deemed requisite for drawing those millions from the community, it is here sufficient to refer to estimates and reports made by the Secretary of the Treasury and the Committee of Ways and Means, and to the body of resolutions, passed in March last in the House of Representatives.

It would be some relief to our anxiety, if amends were likely to be made, for the weakness and wildness of the project by the prudence of the preparation. But in no aspect of this anomalous affair can we trace the great and distinctive properties of wisdom. There is seen a headlong rushing into difficulties, with little calculation about the means and little concern about the consequences. With a navy comparatively nominal, we are about to enter into the lists against the greatest marine on the globe. With a commerce unprotected and spread over every ocean, we propose to make profit by privateering, and for this endanger the wealth of which we are honest proprietors. An invasion is threatened of the colonies of a power, which, without putting a new ship into commission, or taking another soldier into pay, can spread alarm or desolation along the extensive range of our seaboard. The resources of our country, in their natural state, great beyond our wants or our hopes, are impaired by the effect of artificial restraints. Before adequate fortifications are prepared for domestic defence, before men or money are provided for a war of attack, why