

It is not one of the least evils of this unnatural and unjust war, that the noblest virtues of the citizen may be converted into the means of favouring the views of the administration, and of prolonging the duration of the war. It is impossible for a generous mind not to view with the highest feelings of approbation, the gallant efforts of our naval officers and seamen. That unconquerable spirit, that self-devotion, that skill and coolness which have rendered the British marine so superior to that of all other nations, have been displayed in the highest degree by our infant NAVY.

But a reflecting man, who is sincerely desirous of seeing peace restored to our country, cannot but perceive, that an artful administration will convert this natural and generous enthusiasm into the means of promoting their own views. Already we are told by Mr. Madison, with a triumphant air, that our naval victories "will dispose Great-Britain to peace, and that our *prosperous* career may be *accelerated*, but cannot be *prevented* by the assaults made upon it." See his last message covering Decatur's letter.

It is because we believe this proposition absolutely false—that the reverse of it is true, to wit, that our naval successes will procrastinate the period of peace, and render all attempts at negotiation, while this state of things continues, abortive. And because we fear, that some men may be led to believe that Great-Britain can be humbled on the ocean, of which there is *as little* prospect as there was when the war was declared, that we deem it a solemn duty to make some remarks upon the subject.

We think it proper to premise that we have never doubted, that our country was capable of producing excellent officers and sailors.

The same causes which have rendered the British marine hitherto so superior, operate as powerfully in our favour.—We have the same hardy courage—the same enterprize—the same skill.

We have been of opinion that a marine force was our natural defence, and ought to have been fostered and encouraged. We have never believed that even British ships, conducted by their ablest officers, would be an over-match for ours, in vessels of equal size, and especially where we should have a decided superiority of force.

But though such are our opinions, we think we are in some danger of falling into two errors on that subject, one of which is disreputable to us as a brave and magnanimous nation, and the other may be of fatal consequence.

The first is, a boastful, sanguine and overbearing temper. The officers of our navy have too much of the true spirit of brave men to fall into this error. They know too well the character of their adversaries to undervalue either their bravery or their skill. You will never hear any of the most experienced among them utter such idle boasts, as that "man for man and gun for gun," we shall