

INTRODUCTION.

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of the 6th of November was silently circulated among the British cruisers, consigning to legal adjudication, "all vessels laden with goods the produce of any colony of France, or carrying provisions or supplies for the use of any such colony." A great number of American vessels became the victims of this perfidious order. The popular indignation in the U. S. was violently excited. War was, for a while, considered the only alternative. Finally, the pacific system of policy was preferred. Mr. Jay was dispatched on a special mission to Great Britain—the result was a treaty of amity, commerce and navigation. Nevertheless, the commerce of the United States continued to be the prey of British cruisers and privateers.

The accursed practice of impressment, had in the meanwhile become a serious cause of complaint. Even as early as 1793 the British government was apprized of the "irritation that it had excited; and of the difficulty of avoiding to make immediate reprisals on their seamen in the United States." It was told that "so many instances of the kind had happened, that it was quite necessary they should explain themselves on the subject, and be led to disavow and punish such violence, which had never been experienced from any other nation." Again it was told "that unless it would come to some accommodation which might ensure the American seamen against this oppression, measures would be taken to cause the inconvenience to be equally felt on both sides." On the 30th of July, 1794, Mr. Jay wrote to Lord Grenville, "that the impressment of American citizens to serve on board British armed vessels, was not only an injury to the unfortunate individual, but it naturally excited certain emotions in the breasts