

most humiliating protection) is now interposed between us and a calamity which even those who are doing their best to bring it on us, would almost fear to name.

You perhaps think that because the Americans have already a war upon their hands, they will tamely see their ships burned and their commerce destroyed by vessels cruising from the ports of an ally. If the Commonwealth has men of spirit, and men who know their duty, at her head, rather than see her suffer such dishonour, they will see her in an honourable grave. But, judging from experience, I think you much miscalculate the habits of nations when they are once roused to a certain pitch of frenzy by a desperate struggle for existence. The French Republic, when we attacked her, had two great military powers already on her hands. She was besides bankrupt and torn by civil war. Yet she was ready to fly at the throat of another enemy. And the victory over the revolutionary levies of a nation driven to despair, which seemed so sure and easy, cost us, as we know, twenty years of war.

Let me first tell you why it is that I feel the interest which I do not wish to disguise in the fortunes of the Commonwealth which you are so anxious to break up. It is not from a fanatical love of what are commonly called Republican institutions, or from a desire precipitately to "Americanize" any country which is not yet ripe for the largest measure of self government. A man must have read history to very little purpose if he has not learned that political institutions must vary