

plain terms. In Monroe's letter of June 23rd, 1814, to the envoys at Ghent it was still considered imperative that impressment, an "essential cause of the war . . . should be removed." But the letters of Bayard and Gallatin, as well as other information from Europe, induced the President, with the approval of his Cabinet, Monroe, Campbell, Armstrong, Jones (Rush was absent), to decide, four days thereafter, to authorize a treaty of peace silent on the subject; and the Commissioners were so advised immediately.

An American writer says of this step, "Madison's Administration humbled itself to an abandonment of the claim for exemption from impressment" (Steven's "Life of Gallatin," p. 329). If this is intended as a rebuke I cannot assent. It is good statesmanship as it is good politics to abandon anything one cannot get, unless that abandonment be dishonourable or the thing necessary. (It is at least possible that other Presidents would have been well advised had they not insisted upon an empty formality which they had been refused.) No one but a fool keeps running his head against a stone wall. Britain in her existing state of mind would as soon have given up her national integrity as the right to impress for her navy. The downfall of Napoleon had made it very improbable that there would soon again arise a necessity for impressment; and Madison was wise not to continue a war for a form.

There met at Ghent, John Quincy Adams, an introspective Puritan sincerely a lover of peace, and Henry Clay a card-playing, pleasure-loving Cavalier who hated England and all her works and honestly believed that a few more years of war would bring her to her knees; with these were Bayard *le Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche* as his namesake of old, and Albert Gallatin, to my mind the ablest, most devoted, least selfish American of his time, one who has never received his due meed of praise. All these were men of very great ability; and with them was associated Jonathan Russell who was by no means a fool, though his inexplicable conduct a few years later in the episode of the "Duplicate Letters,"