

men. The simplest rule will be, that the vessel being American, shall be evidence that the seamen on board her are such. If they apprehend that our vessels might thus become assylums for the fugitives of their own nation from impress gangs, the number of men to be protected by a vessel may be limited by her tonnage, and one or two officers only be permitted to enter the vessel in order to examine the number on board ; but no press gang should be allowed ever to go on board an American vessel, till after it shall be found that there are more than their stipulated number on board nor till after the the master shall have refused to deliver the supernumeraries (to be named by himself) to the press officer who has come on board, for that purpose ; and even then the American consul shall be called in. In order to urge a settlement of this point before a new occasion may arise, it may not be amiss to draw their attention to the *peculiar irritation excited on the last occasion, and the difficulty of avoiding our making immediate reprisals on their seamen here.* You will be so good as to communicate to me what shall pass on this subject, and it may be made an article of convention to be entered into either there or here."

*Extract of a letter from Thomas Jefferson, Esq. when secretary of state, under the direction of George Washington, president of the United States, to Thomas Pinckney, minister plenipotentiary of the United States at London, dated October 12, 1792.*

" I enclose you a copy of a letter from Messrs. Blow & Melhaddo, merchants of Virginia, complaining of the taking away of their sailors, on the coast of Africa, by the commander of a British armed vessel. So many instances of this kind have happened, that it is quite necessary that their government should explain themselves on the subject, and be led to disavow and punish such conduct. I leave to your discretion to endeavour to obtain this satisfaction by such friendly discussions as may be most likely to produce the desired effect, and secure to our commerce that protection against British violence which it has never experienced from any other nation. No law forbids the