

ties. In reality, the law of nations, like the private interests of individuals, though perpetually referred to, is so vague in its principles, and so varying in its application, that it can never be relied on actually to decide points on which the interests of contending states strongly draw in opposite directions; and no umpire exists to whom appeal can be made. In the present quarrel, both parties boasted of their moderation and forbearance; both alleged the reason and justice of their cause; yet both were in fact determined by motives of state policy, operating exclusively upon themselves. When the particulars of raising the necessary supplies for the war, and equipping an adequate military force, came to be discussed in Congress, the great majorities in favour of the measure proposed by government no longer appeared, and several questions were barely carried. It might now have been hoped that the near prospect of the inevitable burdens consequent upon open hostilities, would have occasioned a pause, during which the friends of peace on both sides might, possibly, discover some expedient to bring matters to an agreement; but just at this juncture an incident occurred, which added new exasperation to the existing ill will. On the 9th of March the President sent a message to both houses, laying before them copies of documents to prove, that at a recent period, the British government had sent a secret agent into the United States, for the purpose of fomenting disaffection against the constituted authorities, and eventually, effecting a separation of the Union. The circumstance to which this complaint referred is not unworthy of some notice. In 1808, a person named Lavater going from Canada to the United States on his own business, of his own accord, opened a correspondence with Sir James Craig the governor of Canada for the purpose of procuring information—a proceeding which we believe to have been justified, from the menacing attitude with respect to the British American possessions then assumed by the United States. In the meantime, John Henry, who had emigrated in his youth from Ireland to the United States, where, either from the interest of his friends, or the genius for intrigue natural to his character, he attained the rank of Captain in the militia, finding matters not succeeding to his wishes, again emigrated from the States to Montreal.* Here, having had the good fortune to engage the attention of men of character and respectability throughout the country, he soon afterwards became a student of law. By these and other means calculated to insure ultimate success, he so far ingratiated himself into the good opinion of Sir James Craig, that he was appointed to carry on the correspondence previously opened by Lavater. Though it is quite certain that the British Government never authorised or approved of the employment of this miscreant, yet it appears evident that Sir James Craig had no other object in view than the preservation of the province committed to his care; and if in his anxiety to do so, he overstepped the limits of strict political discretion, who would blame his memory when his country deemed it inconsistent with delicacy to say any thing which might in the least have reflected upon the character of a man who had returned home from his government under a mortal distemper, and had survived but a few months. But be this as it

* This name was given to the first of our political leaders and
 • Christie's Canada: there is still a tradition preserved in the city of Montreal