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TRUTH AND ELOQUENCE.

FROM THE BOSTON PATRIOT.

Speech of the Hon Mr HOLMES *in the Senate of Massachusetts, June 8, 1814. during the debate on the answer to the Governor's Speech.*

MR. PRESIDENT,

WHEN I considered the pernicious and unprofitable measures adopted by the Legislature last year, it was to have been expected that gentlemen would have taken a course somewhat different from that embraced in the answer to his Excellency's address. Taught by the errors of the past, it was to be expected that they would have been careful of the future. Finding that they had neither provoked the people to opposition, driven the government from their ground, nor obtained the grace and favor of the enemy, it was reasonable to hope that gentlemen would have been cured of their frenzy—that his Excellency would have confined his observations to the business of the State, and that the answer of the Senate would have been of the same description. But we find that gentlemen are not yet discouraged. Though their inflammatory course was utterly discountenanced by the people, still they persist. We have another manifesto to be published in British papers, as evidence that Massachusetts had seceded from the Union: and yet we find you in this very answer, boasting of the forbearances of the Legislature of Massachusetts. Forbearance sir! What is the forbearance which you boast of? All that could be done *was* done to excite the people to opposition. Letters and emissaries were sent from this town to the remote parts of the State, informing the people that they were oppressed, urging them to get up meetings, and to pledge themselves to support the opposition which the Legislature had projeceted. And what was the success? Some twenty or thirty towns, out of more than five hundred, and many of those totally disconnected with commerce were induced to complain. And how did you obtain even these? Sir, the people were imposed on. Even the poor fishermen were ashamed of the business, and signed a recantation.

This was the forbearance so full of merit! You *forbore*, to be sure, but it was because you were afraid to do otherwise. The last Legislature missed their aim.—The people were not dissatisfied with the embargo. It was a measure approved by both parties at the time. Speculators were purchasing provisions for the enemy; the country was about to be drained; this temporary check was salutary. But it disappointed two descriptions of people. The *contractors*, because they could not get the money, and the *British*, because they could not get the provisions: and these were the authors of all the complaints.

But we find it again repeated, that the rulers of the nation have discovered an inveterate hostility to commerce. By this charge coming so often from *this state*, we should be led to conclude that *Massachusetts* was the grand mart of the trade of the world, and that *Boston* was the commercial centre. And we should further conclude, from the modest assurance of her merchants, that mercantile knowledge was exclusively confined to the people of Boston. Sir, it is with much diffidence, I confess, that I attempt a subject of which, if you take these gentlemen at their words, they are such complete masters. However, if these exclusive gentlemen will pardon me, I will call the attention of the board to an enquiry into the relative commercial importance of the different sections of the United States. If the *southern* or *middle divisions* of the *United States* have an interest to destroy commerce, if they view *New England* as their competitor, there may be good ground for this charge. It will scarcely be believed that they will destroy commerce, when their manifest and immediate interest requires its preservation; nor will it do for gentlemen to pretend that the rulers of the nation are opposed to the interest of the people in this thing. An administration, surely, which has discovered a uniform hostility to commerce for more than twelve years, must, it is presumed, act conformably to the wishes of the people who created them. The question returns, what are the interests of the southern and middle divisions of the United States, in regard to commerce? Let us look at their exports. I take the year 1805, because, if I remember rightly, that year was peculiarly favorable to the *New England states*. The exports from New England were about twenty four millions; of the middle states, forty nine millions; of the southern states, twenty one millions. I give millions entire, though there were fractions of a million to each division; the largest fraction, if I mistake not, was in the southern division. But in this period, the exports of domestic growth and manufacture were, in the south, *double* those of the N. England states. What portion of these northern exports were the products of the southern and middle states, I leave to the merchants to determine. Further: In the year ending 30th September, 1813, the exports from *Maryland* were doubly those from *Massachusetts*; and this too in time of war, when the Chesapeake was infested by the enemy, and *Massachusetts* was the object of special grace and royal favor.

In 1811, *Baltimore* exported about ten, and *Boston* eleven millions; perhaps three out of the eleven were brought coastwise from *Baltimore*——yet Baltimore is inimical to commerce; a mere *mob town*; and Boston is the prop of the commerce of the world.——The back-woods State of *Louisiana*, this intruder into the Union, which does not contain 60,000 inhabitants, during the year 1813 exported but one third less than *Massachusetts*; and if you take into consideration what is carried coastwise, this back-woods State exports more than *Massachusetts*.

This is not all. In the same period, Massachusetts was down to the sixth grade in point of commerce, while she stood the fourth in point of population. Sir, it is insufferable arrogance for this section of the Union to boast of their commerce. I am aware that gentlemen will attempt to get rid of this reasoning by recurring to the imports. But this will not avail them.——What are the sources of importations? The products of your *soil*, the products of your *waters*, your *manufactures*, the *labor* of your *seamen*, the *use* of your *vessels*, and the speculations of your *merchants*. These I believe are all the sources of importations. Money is a medium, but not a source of commerce. Without your *products* and your *manufactures*, of what avail are the rest? You may, to be sure, *let* your ships and sailors to other nations, and the small pittance of their earnings, may be converted into a return cargo, but this would be a mere trifle. This is an imperfect view of your commercial importance. These are the men who are perpetually babbling of their commerce. A fine figure would the New England states make in the commercial world, were they cut off from the southern market, or even upon a repeal of the tonnage duty. It is not long since your ships were neglected in the southern ports, while foreigners could obtain good freights and a profitable trade. If they punish you as you deserve, you would soon be in the same situation.

Let us look at another charge against the nation. The local aggrandizement of the south and west is to be effected at the expence of N. England. This jealousy of others is a very natural weakness. When a man sees his neighbor growing rich faster than himself, he suspects that consequently *he* is growing poor—and the weak rulers of a State will indulge the same feelings. And yet, sir, I do not perceive any good reason why the south should be hostile to the commerce of New England. They do not want to be your carriers, for you have nothing to carry. They have cargoes and you have ships and sailors. If you will conduct with civility, it will be for their interest to employ you. It is their interest and their wish to cultivate a spirit of commercial enterprize in New England—and why, sir, should the western people be your competitors in commerce?——Have they no interest in commercial prosperity? I very well remember that in 1803, the navigation of the Mississippi was of such importance to the people who inhabited the western waters, that it must be secured by a resort to *force*.—Because Spain had withheld from us the right of deposit at New Orleans, the present *peace party* called out for *war*.——Their dear brethren of the west were to be deprived of their commerce, so lucrative, so important to the nation, and so essential to their existence. We heard nothing then of the anti-commercial spirit of these people; they *must* have commerce; war, immediate, energetic, decisive war was inevitable. It was even disgraceful to wait the issue of a pending negociation. I remember a Mr. Ross of Pennsylvania, a Mr. Morris of New York, and if I do not much mistake, a certain honorable *Senator* from Massachusetts, felt so much sympathy for the western people, that they were willing to spill the blood, even of New England, to preserve their commerce. Louisiana must be ours; she who is now an *intruder*, must be *forced* into the family against her will. Our *national honor* had been insulted, and *national honor* was *national independence*, and one could not exist without the other.

Now, sir, those very commercial people are all at once determined to crush New England by a destruction of commerce. Truly, sir, we indulge in very childish jealousies. Massachusetts is forever exciting some groundless suspicions. I remember that not long since a resolution was offered to Congress by a Mr. Jackson of Virginia, for altering the Constitution so as to authorize Congress to lay an export duty: Massachusetts took the alarm, and resolved that the object was to destroy the New England commerce, and make her tributary to the southern states! when these same southern states furnished five dollars for exportation where New England furnishes one. But we are told, and I admit with some truth, that the influence of the northern states is annihilated. But how? Are we not represented agreeably to the Constitution? Sir, our representation in the Senate and House is more than equal to our *free population*——we have not one fourth of the free population, and yet we have ten Senators of thirty six—all this excess will more than compensate for the loss by the slave representation in the House. This is capable of demonstration. Why is our influence destroyed? It is your wayward, contracted, inconsistent policy, which has done this; your groundless complaints against the administration of the general government, your attempting to excite local jealousies & animosities; your pertinacious adherence to the enemies of your country, have brought your State into that disrepute and contempt of which she now complains. Massachusetts has been, and of right ought to be a powerful and influential member of the Union—but this influence is destroyed.——The disgraceful proceedings of last winter roused the people in the neighboring States. New York, a State which you boasted would join the cabal, rose, and in the majesty of her strength hurled defiance in your teeth and instead of discovering our error and our follies, and profiting by them, we are now publishing to England other evidences of our disposition to *secede*; and probably Admiral Cochrane will, in consequence, have another proclamation to the oppressed people of Massachusetts, to abandon their tyrannical government and come and partake the sweets of monarchy. Were he here, and probably he has some agent or representative not far off, he would discover in you a total disrelish and contempt for republican institutions. He would hear gentlemen openly express their preference for the government of G. Britain, *monarchy and all*; and he would, from motives of compassion, to be sure, relieve them from the burdens, turmoils and cabals of democracy. I do not hesitate to express my *belief* that this proclamation, this invitation to revolt, was issued in consequence of the complaints of a restless, ambitious, and daring faction among us. And, sir, we have enjoyed the honorable distinction of being the object of the enemy's grace and forbearance; and consequently we have excited the suspicions and detestation of the friends of our country. No wonder, sir, our influence is annihilated—it ought to be. The people have discovered that you, who boast of all the commerce, talents, integrity and patriotism, have none of either *to spare*. The proceedings of last winter are viewed with detestation & abhorrence. Massachusetts is become a bye word, and is despised by her own political friends. It is perceived that we are ready to barter away the essential rights of the people for profit. The gentleman from Suffolk, (Mr. Thorndike) endeavored to prove the injustice of the war by a calculation of debit and credit. The gentleman professes to be a merchant, and he would settle the rights of the nation as he would the proceeds of a voyage? He says, if I understand him, that we have spilt more blood, or lost more men, in this war, than we should ever lose by impressment. And his inference would be, I suppose, that we should *submit*. If G. Britain should, in time of peace, wantonly butcher a hundred Americans, and it would be likely to cost two hundred to punish her, we ought to pocket the outrage. This is the degrading course adopted by some of our commercial politicians. If we can make money, no matter how. Sell your fellow citizen, sell your rights, your honor, your independence—any thing for *the profit*. Suppose the south and west should take you at your words; you say impressment is a British right, & ought not to be resisted; agreed. That no indemnity is due for the operations of her orders in council; very well. That free ships did not make free goods; no matter; let that go. That it is national law to prohibit neutral trade between an enemy's country & her colonies; very well. That the allegiance of a British subject is perpetual and unalienable—but that an American is not; we will not contend. *Now, sir, I have heard every one of these concessions advocated at this board*—and gentlemen would have no reason to complain if a peace is made upon their own terms; and if you wish it, the U. States will abandon the tonnage duty and the fisheries.—The south and west can as well buy British fish, and employ British ships, as to confine themselves to your custom. These concessions would not injure them—but how would you like them? And what encouragement have the people of the south and west to waste their blood and treasure for you while you are cursing them for it?

The gentlemen in the next place tell us, that amidst all these operations and distresses, the people turned their eyes towards the state legislature for relief.—This, sir, is amusing. The people turned their eyes towards *you!* No sir, you turned your eyes towards *them*; but they refused to look towards you.——They would not engage in the project—they were alarmed lest you should attempt, for them, a relief which they did not need. And after all your artificial excitements and theatrical exhibition of distress, how many memorials did you get up? You got back *with as good a grace as you could, and call it forbearance!*

We are next brought to the war and its objects. We are told it is founded *in falsehood*. This, I confess, I do not understand. That it is *unjust*—This I do understand. That its objects are the extension of territory by conquest, and aiding the tyrant of Europe. I am not much alarmed at these charges, for I think, if I mistake not, I have heard them before.

The objects of the war are a release of our own citizens from confinement, an indemnity for past injuries, and a suitable pledge for future security. The war is *not* unjust; its objects are *not* conquest or aid to a tyrant. We want no more British subjects or refugees to be added to the nation; we have too many already; their deleterious influence has well nigh prostrated the liberties of our country.—I know very well that the British are dangerous neighbours, and I regret as much as any one, that the line of 1783, gave them a territory which will give them not only an influence over the northern states, but enable them to urge the Indians to barbarous massacre. I perceive that the northern states are embraced by British power. The ocean, you say, is her exclusive domain: she is on the east, the north and the west; and to increase the danger, she is in the midst of us. Her partizans are numerous and powerful. I think she will make peace—for she will see, that in a few short years, she can obtain that without fighting, which may now cost her a little blood. These ties of blood, and habits of friendship, which are not broken off in time of war, will do much to effect the future subjugation of this country to British dominion; and these dear friends of Britain, these boasters British fraternity, have the presumption to charge the people of America with French influence, and with waging war to aid the tyrant who lately governed France. But had this tyrant been the ally of England, we should have heard nothing of French influence. Now that he is fallen, we hear gentlemen expressing a wonderful attachment to the French people and Talleyrand, because, forsooth, they are the friends of England. The French influence seems to have gotten on the other side of the house; but there is no danger that it will continue longer than France is ruled by British policy. This charge of French influence comes with an excellent grace from gentlemen who are the incessant advocates of British rights, the servile eulogists of British justice and British magnanimity. You, who are boasting of your ties of blood, and habits of friendship with the enemies of the nation, dare to charge that nation with French partialities. Sir, there are none of these partialities. Had the *secret connexion*, which you affirm produced the war, existed, this very war would have divulged it. Not a French public ship has entered our ports, not a French officer has been appointed to the army, and our dispute with France remains in the same state of suspense as before; and yet those very men who stand on British ground, and have become the champions of British rights, and the apologists and justifiers of British wrongs, most arrogantly and insolently charge the government and people of America with French influence. Sir, it is an old artifice to become the *accuser*, in order to screen yourselves from the *accusation*. Look back upon Europe for twenty years past, and shew me the nation on which you have not alternately condemned and justified, as that nation has been the enemy or friend of England.—The Russians, while fighting England, were barbarians; the moment they are her *ally*, they are all at once the most civilized people upon earth.

The honorable member from Suffolk, Mr. Thorndike, would send Mr. Madison to the Island of Elba; this would require a little more *power* than that gentleman and his friends possess; but this sentiment is worthy of that gentleman and his party. We have discovered his drift; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. He probably finds that this business of election is unprofitable; that he and his party are continually subjected to discomfiture and defeat; that there is *now* no way to put down the present administration but in the way it was put down in France, by *foreign force*. *Domestic force* you have tried without success. If this project is original in the gentleman, it is proof of what his patriotism consists; if copied from British newspapers, it is a proof of his fidelity to the British nation. But, sir, I assure that gentleman, that the people of this country will not be intimidated by threats of this kind. Your foreign aid and domestic opposition united, can never destroy the American government.

But we are told, sir, that the manner of carrying on the war, is evidence of its injustice. I confess, sir, that this is to me a new and strange proposition. Suppose, sir, that our operations by land had been, as you say, attended with disaster, defeat and disgrace, is this evidence that the war is unjust? Were our continued disasters and defeats, during the two first years of the revolutionary war, evidence of the injustice of our cause? Sir, it is not true that our operations by land have been so disgraceful as is pretended. There have been instances of skill and valor, never surpassed by any troops in any country. I know very well, and I regret it, that our situation has been unfavorable to successful military enterprize. The cause is to be found, not in the want of native intelligence and bravery of our citizens, but the lack of experience, which thirty years of peace have rendered indispensable.

You had no officers and soldiers, because you had no wars; but we have already nearly surmounted the difficulty, and officers and soldiers will rise up out of the exigencies of the times.—— But one part of our operations must, I presume, be *just*, because it is successful.—Our naval operations, whether on the ocean, where we received the injury, or on the Lakes, for the purpose of reducing the "unoffending" inhabitants of Canada, are all right. Surely, gentlemen would not toast, feast and reward these conquerers of the lake, if they were murderers!

You are remarkably modest, notwithstanding you are wishing, hoping, praying and acting for our disasters, yet the moment we have a little success, you claim it as your own. The gentleman from Hampshire, Mr. Mills, who drew this answer, tells us that the navy is the offspring of a better policy, and insinuates that it was checked and discouraged in its origin by the Jeffersonian policy.—This is not the fact. I have the law before me, & it is signed by John Adams, and was passed by the two houses, each having a majority of the present pretended friends of the navy, by which many of our vessels were ordered to be sold, others to be laid up in ordinary, and six only retained in actual service, as the peace establishment. The same gentleman tells you that the navy has preserved the drowning honor of the country. No such thing—our honor has never been drowning; though that gentleman and his friends have hung like a millstone about its neck, it is not, and I trust will not be drowned.

And how comes it, sir, that after twelve years of anti-naval, anti-commercial policy, we should, at the commencement of this war, have a navy better conditioned, officered and manned, than any navy in the world? The answer states that we have given this war a sanguinary character. Barbarity, sir, is not a trait in the American character. If we have been reduced to the painful necessity of retaliating the cruelties of the British, it has been with much reluctance and regret. But gentlemen have no "bowels of compassion" for an American citizen—they can weep for a Briton, administer comfort, throw open the prison doors, but have no charity to "begin at home."—The barbarities at Havre-De-Grace and Hampton, and elsewhere, the conflagrations, murders, rapes, are looked on in the calm lights of mild philosophy. Britons may burn defenceless villages, murder unresisting citizens, wantonly abuse defenceless females, and defile a church in the name of the bulwark of our religion, and this is all well; but the moment a little retaliation is administered, gentlemen grow wonderfully compassionate, they weep, and in extreme anguish of soul cry out, barbarity!

The old story of the cruelty to the Indians is again told. From the frequent expressions of tenderness of his excellency towards those children of the forest, one would suppose that we were connected with them also "by ties of blood, and habits of friendship." The honourable member from Suffolk, (Mr. Thorndike,) to prove *incontestibly*, that the United States wished to get away their lands, has told us a story, that while he was at Washington, a proposition was made by a member to establish a line of military posts; and when it was objected, that this would deprive them of their lands, this member said (either in or out of Congress) *that this was what he wished*.—The hon. gentleman did not mention this member's name, so that he is in no danger of contradiction, *but the proposition was not adopted*. How wonderfully this gentleman has succeeded in his proof!