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FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

EXPOSITION
OF
THE CONDUCT OF THE HONORABLE FRANCIS JAMES JACKSON,
IN
HIS CORRESPONDENCE
WITH ROBERT SMITH, ESQ.
SECRETARY OF STATE.

THE American government, and the nation at large, confidently relied upon the fulfilment of the arrangement of the 19th April, 1809, propoſed by Mr. Erſkine in the name of his Sovereign, and accepted by Mr. Smith in behalf of the Preſident. This reliance was juſtified by the official form of the compact and the ſolemnity of its promulgation at Waſhington. It was, therefore, with extreme ſurpriſe that the American adminiſtration, and the people of the United States in general, received information that hi Britannic Majeſty had refuſed,—not to ratify the proviſional agreement, for it was ſuppoſed to have been ratified already,—but to *complete* the ſtipulations which the arrangement clearly required.

The agitation which it might be imagined would naturally ariſe from the unexpected avulſion of national faith and hope, by the diſavowal of the compact on the part of the Britiſh monarch, was conſiderably aſſuaged and repreſſed by the implied promiſe of atonement and the pleaſing idea of approaching amity, in ſome form or other, ſuggeſted by the prompt appointment of a new envoy to ſucceed Mr. Erſkine. The delay between the period of his annunciation as the ſucceſſor of the miniſter whoſe act had been diſavowed, and that of his arrival in America had, indeed, occaſioned ſuſpicions that the Britiſh cabinet was influenced by a ſpirit of inſincerity; but the Preſident and the people were ſtill cheerfully diſpoſed to receive the new miſſionary with undiminiſhed cordiality, and to promote, by every honorable means, an harmonious temper and a perfectly good underſtanding between the two countries.

The choice of Mr. Jackſon was certainly not a happy one for the occaſion. England had thirty gentlemen of the diplomatic corps unemployed at the time he was ſelected; and it was conſidered as a ſingular election, that *he alone*, among ſo many miniſterial agents diſengaged, ſhould be conſidered the *ſuitable individual* to *conciliate* America. The ſeizure of the Daniſh fleet was an act of enormous atrocity in the eye of a neutral power; and whether Mr. Jackſon was an official agent in that affair or not, he was, with hue and cry, purſued by the reputation of it. A good and lawful objection to Mr. Jackſon alſo was, the offence which Denmark, a power in amity with the United States, might juſtly take at the reception of a man in the capacity of miniſter, who had been inſtrumental in wounding her ſenſibility and invading her rights. Of courſe, he could not be the moſt pleaſing of all poſſible characters to treat with a government, whoſe pride and whoſe boaſt it had been, under three ſucceſſive Preſidents, to preſerve the nation in a poſture ſo ſtrictly neutral, that the ſovereigns of Europe could not reproach it with a ſolitary departure from the reſpectable ſtand which it had taken under General Waſhington. The moment of Mr. Jackſon's arrival, nevertheleſs, was auſpicious to reconciliation: the citizens of the United States were reluctant to engage in war until urged to it in the laſt extremity; the adminiſtration had no prejudices againſt Great Britain; and in every quarter of the republic the people were wearied by hope continually deferred, and ſighed for the reſtoration of a permanent ſtate of things, which ſhould admit of certainty in the purſuits of life, and put an end to the prolonged anxiety of the nation. The univerſal ſentiment was in favor of peace and friendſhip with the Britiſh.

Mr. Jackſon came, and the Secretary of State haſtened from Baltimore to Waſhington to meet him. The fact is notorious: there was not the delay of an hour interpoſed by the adminiſtration to his immediate reception. The Preſident, as ſoon as decency would permit, (and at a much earlier day than uſual,) repaired from his reſidence in Virginia to the ſeat of government, and received, in the uſual and official mode, the repreſentative of the king of Great Britain, who approached in the ſemblance of a miniſter of peace.

From the tenor of Mr. Smith's letter of the 9th of October, addreſſed to Mr Jackſon, it appears that the Secretary of State had ſeveral conferences with the new envoy previous to that date. In reciting the point which had been the topics of their diſcuſſion, he ſtates the reſult to be:

1. That Mr. Jackſon had no inſtructions to explain the reaſons for diſavowing Mr. Erſkine's arrangement.

2. That on the ſubject of the Cheſapeake only he was authoriſed to tender reparation, the official form of which ſhould be ſubject to his reviſion and ultimate approbation before fulfilment.

3. That he had no inſtructions to make propoſitions in relation to the revocation of the orders in Council.

4. That at all vents Great Britain was determined not to reſcind her orders in Council in favor of America, unleſs the U. States would enter into a compact to continue the non-intercourſe act with reſpect to France, permit the Engliſh navy to enforce that law, and entirely relinquiſh all trade with enemies colonies during the preſent war.

Mr. Smith concludes his letter of the 9th of October by inviting Mr. Jackſon to correct any error which might occur to the latter in the preceding recapitulation, and by repreſenting to him the deſire of the Preſident that the correſpondence between them ſhould in future be conducted in a written form.

The anſwer of Mr. Jackſon to Mr. Smith, which bears date the 11th of Oct. is remarkable for one thing; it neither admits nor denies, ſpecifically, the arithmetical enumeration of the points reſulting from their perſonal interviews. A rigid examination of the language and ſpirit of Mr. Jackſon's letters, however, will evince that the recapitulation of the Secretary of State is ſubſtantially correct. At the ſame time it muſt be admitted, even by the friends of the Engliſh government that, as Mr. Smith had candidly and briefly ſtated his conception of what Mr. Jackſon had ſaid, and ſolicited correction if he was in error, it was Mr. Jackſon's duty, in as brief and as candid a manner, to have replied to the ſtatement. How eaſily might he have ſaid, the 1ſt, or the 2d, or the 3d, or the 4th ſpecification is *true*, or it is *not true*? But, inſtead of this plain and direct method of anſwering the invitation for correction given by the Secretary of State, Mr. Jackſon, like a man endeavoring to avoid a mortal thruſt from the ſword of his antagoniſt, waver from the true poſition, and endeavors to ſhelter himſelf in a multitude of ambiguities. Finally, however, he tells Mr. Smith that he could not have made the ſtatement with the *view* he ſuppoſed. "I could not," ſays he, "have made it with *that view*;" as if it were of the leaſt importance *what* view he made it with: it was ſufficient for the American government to know that the Britiſh cabinet entertained *ſuch* ſentiments towards it in *any* view. It was not the *view*, but the *doctrine*, not the *mode* of avowing the anti-neutral principles, but the *fact* that thoſe anti-neutral principles did exiſt and would be inſiſted on in relation to the United States, that was of the greateſt conſequence for the Preſident to be well acquainted with. The very eager and acrimonious manner in which the new envoy ſeizes upon the circumſtance of the Preſident's requiring written inſtead of oral communications, as a ſubject of *complaint*, does not furniſh the leaſt color for the opinion that his diſpoſition was intrinſically friendly, and it excited more than a doubt of the real object of his miſſion. After the ſurpriſing diſavowal of Mr. Erſkine's arrangement, and before even an explanation had been officially given of the reaſons for it, a miniſter, whoſe true aim was pacification, was evidently departing from the true line of diplomatic policy in aſſuming that tone of haughtineſs which proceeds from offended pride and ſwelling vanity. His *manner*, at the outſet betrayed that there was ſomething rankling at his heart, which would graſp every opportunity, however ungracious, to vent itſelf, and diffuſe the contagion of animoſity through the whole body of the negociation.

Mr. Jackson enters very much at large into a train of reaſoning, to ſhew that it had been in the power of his predeceſſor to make the required explanation relative to the diſavowal of the arrangement, he contends that the explanation had, in effect, been made to Mr Pinkney in London, and that, as he had ſeen no complaint on the part of the United States, against the diſavowal, he concluded that the American government was fully ſatiſfied that his Britannic Majeſty had a right to diſavow the act. In this early ſtage of the correſpondence Mr. Jackſon evinces that pertinacity of aſſertions that ſaucy tartneſs of inſinuation which eventually led to the rupture of his communications. He inſiſts that the conditions of Mr. Erſkine's inſtructions had been ſubmitted to Mr. Smith, not indeed *in extenso* but in ſubſtance, and that the Secretary of State laid them before the Preſident for his conſideration, And after alluding to certain reaſons, which he ſays, addreſſing himſelf to Mr. Smith, "induced *you* to think that other conditions might be *ſubſtituted* in lieu of them;" he proceeds to ſay, (ſtill addreſſing himſelf to Mr. Smith,) "it may have been concluded *between you* meaning between Mr. Smith and Mr. Erſkine,) that theſe latter were an equivalent for the original conditions." It certainly required, on the part of the government of the United States, conſiderable forbearance, to peruſe with calmneſs and diſcuſs with compoſure, in an amicable way, the contents of a letter containing ſuch groſs and offenſive alluſions. The meaning of Mr. Jackſon's language is palpable: It propagates the idea that Mr. Smith, with the knowledge and conſent of the Preſident and in behalf of the ſovereign power of the U. S. deſcended to a clandeſtine connivance with Mr. Erſkine, and urged the latter to ſubſtitute conditions of arrangement for which he had no authority, in the place of thoſe contained in his inſtructions, which he was imperatively bound to obey. The introduction of ſuch inſinuations into his correſpondence was an additional proof that Mr. Jackſon's thoughts were not attuned to harmony. It was ſurely unpleaſant enough for the American adminiſtration to learn that the arrangement had been diſavowed, under the pretext that the miniſter had departed from the tenor of his inſtructions; there was no neceſſity to inſult the feelings of Mr. Madiſon and Mr. Smith by charging them with an open departure from the dignity of their ſtations, and with a ſecret and corrupt underſtanding with Mr. Erſkine.

It would be uſeleſs to go extenſively into the expoſure of the equivocation which is manifeſted by Mr. Jackſon, when he ſolemnly declares that Mr. Erſkine had but *one* paper of inſtructions: for the aſſertion that "the deſpatch from Mr. Canning to Mr. Erſkine (of the 23d of January, 1809) is the only deſpatch by which the conditions were *preſcribed* to Mr. Erſkine for the concluſion of an arrangement with this country on the matter to which it relates," does not invalidate the fact, that, although there might have been no other deſpatch which "*preſcribed*" the conditions, there were deſpatche or letters which *modified* them, or gave Mr. Erſkine a *diſcretionary power* in relation to them. Mr. Erſkine officially avows that "Mr Canning's deſpatch of the 23d of January formed but *one part* of his inſtructions," and that he had, in effect on that ſubject "*ſeveral* letters of inſtructions." In point of credibility, Mr Erſkine's evidence is certainly as reſpectable and weighty as that of Mr. Jackſon. There may be thoſe who will think it more ſo. The cunning which endeavors to weaken it betrays its own deſigns. Mr. Erſkine has never yet been known as the voluntary agent of iniquity, or given the world cauſe to call his veracity in queſtion.

In the aſſertion that Mr. Erſkine made known to Mr. Smith the *conditions* of hi instructions, there is alſo a verbal quibble, by which Mr. Jackſon artfully endeavors to perplex the underſtanding. He ſpeaks of the *conditions* as if they were the *deſpatch* itſelf. In *no form whatever* was the *deſpatch* ever communicated by Mr. Erſkine to the American government; and the conditions which it embraces and which were ſubmitted for conſideration to Mr. Smith, were delivered *orally*. This is what the Secretary of State evidently means when he ſays he three conditions were made known to him.

In relation to the principle aſſumed by the orders in counci, Mr. Jackſon is explicit and peremptory. There can be nothing more categorical. He nakedly maintains the right of the Britiſh cabinet to blockade by proclamation the whole coaſts of a belligerent power, to cut off entirely all communication between the colonies and parent country of a nation at war, and in fact, he ſubſtantially and unequivocally aſſerts a prerogative in the Britiſh privy council, to erect itſel into a ſovereign legiſlative body to enact laws for the regulation of the commerce of the world in time o war. This is preciſely the doctrine maintained by Mr. Jackſon, when he ſays, "The *total* and *unqualified interdiction of all trade* with the enemy *is correct in principle*;" and this principle he boldly declares, "however occaſionally mitigated in its application, Great Britain *can never ceaſe to maintain*."

After the impudent avowal of a doctrine ſo utterly ſubverſive of all national law, of all moral obligation to reſpect the rights of a neutral power, it was but natural for Mr. Jackſon to proceed, as he has done, to endeavor to perſuade the American government that the aſſumption of ſo deſpotic and tyrannical a principle was an amelioration of an odious feature of the orders in council of November, 1807. He might, however, have very well ſpared the ſneer which he impertinently puts on when he informs the Secretary of State that "all trade with France and Holland, and the kingdom of Italy, is *ſimply prohibited altogether*," becauſe a ſneer does not come with the leaſt grace in the world from a Briton to an American. Had he conſulted the Burgoynes and the Cornwalliſſes, they would have adviſed him better.

If, as Mr. Jackſon avers in his letter of the 11th of October, "his majeſty is very ſincerely deſirous of maintaining a perfect and cordial underſtanding with the United States," it is very certain that the arrogance diſplayed by his majeſty's repreſentative was not at all calculated to promote the views of the ſovereign. The real diſpoſitions of men are commonly apparent in their *manner* of conducting buſineſs. When it is deſirable to conciliate, a miniſter does not ſuffer trifles to interfere with eſſential points in diſcuſſion; he ſmoothes the way to pacification by mild and gentle language, by amenity of ſtyle, by an unaſſuming temper, and by all thoſe blandiſhments which ſoften the aſperity of conflicting intereſts and greatly aſſiſt in converting rivals or enemies into friends. Mr. Jackſon's demeanor is exactly the reverſe of all this; when he aſſumes right and power for his king he does it with imperiouſneſs; when he ſpeaks of relieving the United States from grievances complained of, he delivers himſelf with a ſneer; and when he would vindicate the rights of ambaſſadors, pretendedly violated in his perſon he is turbulently quarrelous. Whether the new diplomatic ſtyle of diſcuſſion, which ſeeks for peace and friendſhip through ſneers & ſarcaſms, is derived from Mr. Canning, or whoever is the author of it, the world at large muſt lament its introduction into grave political correſpondences. It is a ſtyle peculiarly unfortunate for a Britiſh miniſter, and, as already remarked, eſpecially inapplicable to the United States of America. Of all the nations on the globe, the people of the U. States as well as their government, are the leaſt liable of any to ſatirical reproach. It requires no great degree of hiſtorical knowledge to aſcertain, that in every war in which they have been engaged, the American people have been victorious. Their annals are extremely pure, unſtained by a ſingle act of injuſtice. In the ſight of God and man therefore, in the two great points of equity & ſucceſsful valor, the U. S. are ſuperior to Great Britain. Why, then, ſhould her miniſter taunt them with the ſneer that the Engliſh government has "*ſimply prohibited their trade altogether*?" Some of the Britiſh Lords are well convinced that America in arms is no contemptible foe, and that it is eaſier for Great Britain to *ſay* ſhe will prohibit the trade of this country entirely than for her to *do* it. In truth, it is a ſwaggering boaſt, ſeemingly vindictive; and Britiſh ambaſſadors ſhould be cautious how they indulge in theſe rude ſallies, leſt it might be ſuppoſed that Great Britain has not yet forgiven the Americans for conquering her.

The wide difference, ſo very manifeſt, between what Mr. Jackſon repreſents to be the friendly diſpoſition of his ſovereign, and the unpropitious complexion of his own ſentiments, is either poſitive proof of the unfitneſs of the new envoy for the miſſion, or concluſive evidence of his prevarication. It is ſtill hoped that the feelings of the Britiſh monarchy are in favor of peace: But Mr. Jackſon is certainly involved in a diſgraceful dilemma; for, if the king and his miniſtry are deſirous of reconciliation, then Mr Jackſon is an improper agent to effect it, and the American adminiſtration is completely juſtified in diſcarding him; and, if the Britiſh cabinet is not favorably diſpoſed to an eventual adjuſtment of differences, then Mr. Jackſon has officially averred, in that reſpect, what is not true, and the government of the United States is equally juſtified.

In concluſion, Mr. Jackſon confeſſes in his letter of the 11th of October, that he is not inſtructed "to propoſe to the government of the United States any formal agreement to be ſubſtituted for that which his majeſty had been under the neceſſity of diſavowing;" and that, as to the orders in council, "it is matter of indifference to G. Britain, whether the order in council be continued, or an arrangement by mutual conſent ſubſtituted in its room." This, with his preceding obſervations, furniſhed nearly a complete developement of the nature and tendency of Mr. Jackſon's miſſion. "The *total* and *unqualified* interdiction of *all trade* with the enemy," he contended to be *correct in principle*, declared it to be a doctrine which Great Britain would never ceaſe to maintain, admitted that he had no new propoſitions to make, and that his ſovereign, adhering to the ſpirit of the orders in Council, was totally indifferent as to the *form*, but would by no means relinquiſh the *ſubſtance* of them; or, in other words, if the United States would by compact accede to the proviſions of the orders, then, indeed, he