

SPEECH

JOHN A. QUITMAN, OF MISSISSIPPI,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

NEUTRALITY LAWS:

DELIVERED

IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION

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Mr. Cobb, of Georgia, in the chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Since the opening of this session of Congress, the public mind has been almost exclusively absorbed by the slavery question—that great issue which distracts the entire country, and seems to menace with danger the integrity of the Union. Had it not been for the excitement produced by that paramount question, a high sense of duty would have impelled me, during even the first week of this session, to present to the consideration of the House, and of the country, a matter of deep and permanent interest to both. As I shall be necessarily absent for several weeks, I will avail myself of this opportunity, so kindly furnished by my friend from Florida, [Mr. MAXWELL,] to present my views on the subject of certain laws which now encumber our statute book; those laws which seek to enforce our supposed neutral obligations to other nations; those laws which, though acquiesced in for some years, are, in my opinion, injurious to the best interests of our country, and fatal to its hopes of future development. The peculiar condition of many neighboring States and colonies, and the influence which their condition must exercise upon our own prosperity, render it highly important, at the present time, that we should review this branch of our national policy. A radical change is required. For the purpose of effecting this, I yesterday gave notice that I would introduce a bill to repeal the objectionable provisions of the existing neutrality law. This bill proposes to repeal the first, second, third, fifth, sixth, eighth, tenth, and eleventh sections of "An act in addition to the act for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States, and to repeal the acts therein mentioned," approved April 20, 1818. I frankly admit, on the threshold, that my bill contemplates an entire alteration of policy; it advocates a complete abandonment of that extraordinary system of legislative restriction by which the free action and enterprising spirit of our people are crippled, and to which it is a matter of surprise that they have so long submitted. But, Mr. Chairman, we live in an Age of Progress. Changes are constantly going on around us; and to them we must adapt our course. It is not to the past alone that we must look to learn our present duties, or our future obligations. The conduct of other nations, the aspect of adjacent States, the circumstances of each teeming hour—all these must be taken into consideration. That which might, twenty years since, have been morally and

politically right, may now be, not only morally wrong, but politically suicidal. When one set of legislators may, by one act, bind down immutably the energies of unborn millions, liberty ceases to exist.

Our government, in its theory, is purely representative. It should, in reality, be the reflex of public sentiment; but it too often lags behind the march of opinion, and endeavors to control and direct that power, from which it should properly take its color, as it does always take its being. But when the full tide of popular principle is aroused, the government *must* ultimately be carried with it.

While I believe that public opinion demands the change of policy which I propose by this bill, I still approach the argument with diffidence, doubting whether the short space of time allowed me will suffice to render the conclusions as clearly forcible to the minds of others, as they are to my own. But, Mr. Chairman, I act with a firm reliance upon the strong American intellect, and with a conviction that my proposition is founded on reason, justice, and sound policy.

"The law of nations," so called, does not profess to establish fixed and invariable rules, applicable to all cases. Its object is, to define the moral relations that mutually exist between independent States; and the character of those relations is necessarily modified by the course of circumstances. To understand the obligations that we owe both to ourselves and to other nations, we must first survey the position of the political communities around us. A distant and cursory glance is all that I can now bestow upon this instructive picture.

Of Canada, and the vast British possessions that skirt our northern frontier, I will not speak. Under the mild rule to which they are now subjected by the mother-government, the people of those colonies wear the appearance of content; and it *may* be that they are preparing, quietly and without violence, to take their place, at the proper time, in the family of separate nations.

Turning to Mexico, our neighbor on the south and west, we shall find her in a state of disintegration. Since 1820, when her mixed population banished the Spanish tyrants, she has been rapidly sinking in every moral and physical element; and, during the last eight years, she has preserved a state of sickly existence, by selling portions of her territory to the United States. This method alone has sufficed to prop the tottering foundations of her nationality; and this is, indeed, a sign that she is rapidly hastening to her final dissolution. The whole history of man shows that the career of nations is upward or downward: there is no level on which to rest, no halting-point for repose. Mexico, with her delightful climate, her fertile soil, her jewelled mountains, and her rich valleys, holding in her possession the commercial "philosopher's stone"—the power to tax the commerce of the world by the junction of the two oceans—Mexico, I repeat, is convulsed with annual revolutions, is approaching a state of anarchy, and soon, wasted, plundered, and depopulated, will become derelict, and liable to be seized upon as a waif by some stronger power. She can be saved only by the advancing flood of our enterprising citizens.

Central America, though more distant, is brought into closer contact with us, by the command which she exercises over an important route

of travel between portions of our own country. She has now not even the pretence of nationality. Her petty States, assuming each a separate independence, torn by internal dissensions, and pillaged by the avarice of rival chiefs, afford a fitting theatre for the display of those European intrigues which *do* annoy our trade, and *would* check our extension. The only hope of redeeming this beautiful country, by the establishment of good government, rests in that patriotic band which has lately transplanted the principles of democracy from the United States to Nicaraguan soil. Although the extreme caution of our government has left this new republic to sustain herself alone, against the opposition of her prejudiced neighbors, still she has American energy to guide her advancement, and the sympathies of countless American breasts, to cheer her in the hour of her perilous ordeal; and, with these, she must finally triumph; she cannot fail to fulfil her glorious mission, and cultivate the growth of civil and religious liberty in Central America.

I now pass to Cuba—well termed, from her position, her fertility, her genial temperature, her lovely scenery, her noble harbors, and her natural wealth, the "GEM OF THE ANTILLES." She is the solitary remnant of that gigantic despotism, which, stretching its arm across the broad ocean, shattered the empires of Montezuma and the Incas, and attempted to grasp and hold the fairest portions of this continent. Of all her vast colonial possessions, Spain retains only this island. And how does she retain it? To keep in subjection an unarmed white population of little more than half a million of souls, she places on guard a standing army of twenty thousand mercenaries—an army larger in proportion than that with which Great Britain, in the revolutionary war, endeavored to subjugate these American States, with their three millions of inhabitants. The records of tyranny cannot show, in any other land, a military force so proportionately great. It is kept in readiness to maintain a despotic colonial government; and this species of government is, at best, but a fraud, because it perverts, by its very nature, the true purposes for which government is constituted. Its object, instead of being to promote the prosperity of the governed, is to enchain and rob them, for the benefit of foreign rulers, disconnected with them as well in feeling as in location. The *people* of Cuba, belonging to the pure white Caucasian race, and descended from the best blood of the old Hidalgos, have displayed, in their hostility to Spanish misrule, a unanimity unequalled in the annals of revolution. They have attempted, again and again, to assert their independence. Were it possible for them to do so, they would vindicate their rights by open rebellion; but, stripped of arms, and deprived, by a tyranny that penetrates to their very hearths, of the means of combining their efforts, they are subdued by the mere force of the bayonet. It seems, indeed, as though Spanish oppression, driven out from its hundred provinces, has centralized and intensified all its powers in this unhappy isle. And yet this iron system is protected, not only by the moral influence, but even by the active interference of England and France; and, sir, I regret to add, that the schemes of our enemies are, to some extent, aided by the ill-advised course of our own authorities—

that course of action which prevents the generous and noble emotions of the American heart from bursting forth, and encouraging the people of Cuba to strike for justice and freedom.

In glancing at San Domingo we see a strange and grotesque power, under whose stupid sway that fair island, holding, with her commodious ports, the same relation to the Caribbean sea that Cuba holds to the Gulf of Mexico, is fast relapsing into barbarism. This caricature of government is sustained by mighty European influences in its attempts to exterminate the small white Dominican republic which still retains a portion of the island. All the rest of insular America is European or African.

Now, Mr. Chairman, standing here among the statesmen of America, I point to the surrounding scene. Behold it as it is; and then look forward a few years and contemplate what it will be. What reflections does it not present? A world-startling drama is to be enacted, and are we, the guardians of our country's weal, to have no part in the performance? Do we not know that the development, the greatness, and the safety, even, of our beloved land, are deeply concerned? Is it not our evident duty to aid in the accomplishment of that high DESTINY which Providence has assigned to our republic of States? Does not the splendor of that DESTINY already tinge the present with a glorious promise of the future? And is it not time now, if ever, to act boldly and vigorously?

There is no statesman, no writer on the law of nations, no political casuist, even, who will deny that it is the right and duty of every independent nation, not only to adopt all measures necessary for her self-preservation, but also to remove all obstructions from the path of her just prosperity. Kent, whose opinions are extremely conservative, says, in his Commentaries:

"Every nation has an undoubted right to provide for its own safety, and to take due precaution against *distant* as well as impending danger. The right of self-preservation is paramount to all other considerations. A rational fear of an imminent danger is said to be a justifiable cause of war." Vol. 1, p. 23.

Vattel lays down the principle on this subject as follows:

"In vain does nature prescribe to nations, as well as to individuals, the care of their self-preservation, and of advancing their own perfection and happiness, if it does not give them a right to preserve themselves from everything that can render this care ineffectual. * * * Every nation, as well as every man, has a right not to suffer any other to obstruct its preservation, its perfection, and happiness—that is, to preserve itself from all injuries, and this right is perfect, since it is given to satisfy a natural and indispensable obligation; for when we cannot use constraint, in order to cause our right to be respected, the effect is very uncertain. It is this right of preservation from all injury that is called the *right of security*. * * * It is safest to prevent the evil when it can be done. A nation has a right to resist an injurious attempt, and to make use of force and every honest means against the power that is actually engaged in opposition to it, and even to anticipate its machinations," &c., &c., &c. Vattel, b. 2, ch. 4, sec. 49, 50.

I shall now, Mr. Chairman, endeavor to apply these rules to our present position. The isthmus of America is the first point to be considered. A free, safe, and unobstructed passage across that isthmus, either through the Mexican State of Tehuantepec, above the peninsula of Yucatan, or south of the peninsula, and through Central America, is indispensable to intercourse and internal commerce between the Atlantic and Pacific portions of our country. It is now the *only* road; for

many years to come it will be the only *commodious* road of transit. I know that there has been projected a magnificent idea of effecting, at some distant day, a speedy and safe passage across the great plains of the West, and over the rugged mountains that separate the Atlantic and Pacific slopes of our continent. I heartily wish success to this plan; it is a fitting subject for the individual enterprise of our citizens, and for such governmental encouragement as can be properly given; but, even if assisted by all the resources of our government, long years must elapse before this undertaking can furnish a sure and expeditious route across the continent, within our own territory. Until then, and during the period of the greatest emigration, while our infant settlements on the Pacific coast especially require our fostering care and protection, the true and natural route of communication must be across the isthmus of America. The unobstructed passage of the isthmus is, therefore, a *necessity*. It can be secured only by becoming a part of our country—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—or by being held under our immediate protection. Treaties with all the powers of Europe would be insufficient to answer our purpose. At the moment when their use is most needed, treaties may be violated or abrogated. The isthmus must be in friendly hands, or in our own. To delay in seizing or securing it, is to commit an act of moral treason against ourselves. When I speak of a *friendly* power I mean one that is identified with us in common interests, and similar political institutions—a power that, when the mighty struggle between despotism and constitutional liberty shall take place, will be found at our side as a firm and reliable ally.

It is equally necessary that Cuba should be united with us in the ties of a common destiny. Her geographical position proclaims her ours. That magnificent island lies along our southern borders so near, that the sound of the morning gun, booming on the dawn of our great anniversary of independence, awakes an echo among her cliffs.

A single glance at the map is sufficient to show that Cuba, with her numerous deep and commodious harbors, stretching across the mouth of the vast inland sea of America, commands the entire trade of the Gulf of Mexico. It is the commercial and naval strategic key of the richest products of the world. Not a bale, a barrel, or a box, that passes from the valley of the Mississippi, or from the States bordering on the gulf, can reach the high seas through their natural outlet, without being exposed to the cannon that bristle from the fortresses of Cuba. Should this mistress of the gulf ever be in the possession of a declared enemy, we would be effectually cut off from the proper path of our southern and western trade; the best productions of our country, amounting in value to one-half of all its exports, would be at the mercy of the foe. From the Cuban ports, so strongly protected by both nature and art, would sally out, daily, fast war-steamers, swooping down, like kites, upon the white-winged carriers of our commerce, and even threatening our extensive and defenceless coasts.

The communication and transit-commerce between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts being thus dependent upon the disposition of the Cuban authorities, we can easily perceive the necessity for uniting that island

with us by strong and lasting interests. But this is not all. If the considerations were not pressed upon us by the dictates of necessity, there are other vast and paramount reasons little short of absolute necessity—reasons which Vattel, in the quotation already presented, designates as the pursuit of perfection and happiness; reasons in which are involved our peace, our prosperity, and the progress of civilization on this continent; and it is to these reasons that our immediate and earnest attention must be directed.

As early as 1823, Mr. Jefferson, foreseeing the immense advantages, since so fully developed, of uniting our interests with Cuba, wrote to President Monroe as follows:

"I candidly confess, I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States. The control which, with the Florida point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the countries and isthmus bordering on it, as well as those waters which flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-being."

Mr. Stevenson, while minister to England, in a letter to Mr. Forsythe, Secretary of State in 1837, says:

"The possession of Cuba by a great maritime power would be little less than the establishment of a fortification at the mouth of the Mississippi, commanding the Gulf of Mexico and Florida, and consequently the whole trade of the Western States, besides deeply affecting the interests and tranquillity of the southern portions of this Union."

J. Q. Adams, when Secretary of State, in his instructions to Mr. Nelson, in 1823, says:

"Cuba's commanding position, with reference to the Gulf of Mexico and the West Indies, &c., gives it an importance in the sum of our national interests with which that of no other foreign territory can be compared."

In his letter to our minister at Madrid, written during the same year, Mr. A. further says:

"In looking forward to the probable course of events for the short period of half a century, it is scarcely possible to resist the conviction that the annexation of Cuba to our Federal Republic will be indispensable to the continuance and integrity of the Union itself."

In 1862, Mr. Everett, Secretary of State, in reply to the French minister, writes:

"The United States, on the other hand, would, by the proposed convention, disable themselves from making an acquisition which might take place without any disturbance of existing foreign relations, and in the natural order of things. The island of Cuba lies at our doors. It commands the approach to the Gulf of Mexico, which washes the shores of five of our States. It bars the entrance of that great river which drains half the North American continent, and with its tributaries forms the largest system of internal water communication in the world. It keeps watch at the door-way of our intercourse with California by the isthmus route. If an island like Cuba, belonging to the Spanish crown, guarded the entrance of the Thames and the Seine, and the United States should propose a convention like this to France and England, those powers would assuredly feel that the disability assumed by ourselves was far less serious than that which we asked them to assume."

"But whatever may be thought of these last suggestions, it would seem impossible for any one who reflects upon the events glanced at in this note to mistake the law of American growth and progress, or think it can be ultimately arrested by a convention like that proposed. In the judgment of the President it would be as easy to throw a dam from Cape Florida to Cuba, in the hope of stopping the flow of the gulf-stream, as to attempt, by a compact like this, to fix the fortunes of Cuba 'now and for hereafter'; or, as expressed in the French text of the convention, 'for the present as for the future,' (*pour le présent comme pour l'avenir*) that is, for all coming time."

Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Mason, and Mr. Soulé, our ministers to London, Paris, and Madrid, having, in compliance with the wish of the Presi-

dent, assembled at Ostend, in 1854, for the purpose of conferring on the subject of our relations with Spain, addressed a joint letter to the Secretary of State, from which I read the following appropriate extract:

"But if Spain, dead to the voice of her own interest, and actuated by stubborn pride and a false sense of honor, should refuse to sell Cuba to the United States, then the question will arise, what ought to be the course of the American government under such circumstances?"

"Self-preservation is the first law of nature, with States as well as with individuals. All nations have, at different periods, acted upon this maxim. Although it has been made the pretext for committing flagrant injustice, as in the partition of Poland, and other similar cases which history records, yet the principle itself, though often abused, has always been recognized."

"Whilst pursuing this course, we can afford to disregard the censures of the world, to which we have been so often and so unjustly exposed."

"After we shall have offered Spain a price for Cuba far beyond its present value, and this shall have been refused, it will then be time to consider the question, does Cuba, in the possession of Spain, seriously endanger our internal peace and the existence of our cherished Union? Should this question be answered in the affirmative, then, by every law, human and divine, we shall be justified in wresting it from Spain if we possess the power; and this upon the very same principle that would justify an individual in tearing down the burning house of his neighbor, if there were no other means of preventing the flames from destroying his own home."

"Under such circumstances, we ought neither to count the cost, nor regard the odds which Spain might enlist against us. We forbear to enter into the question, whether the present condition of the island would justify such a measure? We should, however, be recreant to our duty, be unworthy of our gallant forefathers, and commit base treason against our posterity, should we permit Cuba to be Africanized, and become a second St. Domingo, with all its attendant horrors to the white race, and suffer the flames to extend to our neighboring shores, seriously to endanger, or actually to consume the fair fabric of our Union. We fear that the course and current of events are rapidly tending towards such a catastrophe. We, however, hope for the best, though we ought certainly to be prepared for the worst."

From the earliest ages, the East India trade has been the most valuable object of commercial nations. The rise and fall of a hundred dynasties have been dependent upon it. This commerce, when borne on the backs of camels over the deserts of Asia, enriched Palmyra, and built up those splendid palaces whose ruins, even after the lapse of many centuries, are the wonder of travellers, and the shame of modern art. It was afterwards seized upon by the genius of Alexander, to found, and stamp with a conqueror's name, the glorious city of the Nile; and, during the middle ages, it was a source of unfailling wealth to the merchant-princes of Italy. After the southern capes of Africa had been rounded by the bold navigator, this commerce attracted the attention of England. She grasped it; and her hold upon it, at this day, is unloosened. From it she has derived the principal elements of her naval importance. To perfect it, she has expended millions in attempts to find a shorter passage through the icebergs of the Arctic seas. To retain it, she has been engaged in numerous desperate struggles. Her wars with Napoleon, and, more lately, her conflict with Russia—no matter what may have been their alleged pretext—have, in reality, grown out of her jealousy against all nations that might dispute with her the exclusive control of this vast mine of commercial wealth.

This lucrative trade, during the next twenty years, is destined to take a new channel. When the isthmus of America shall be cut, the Gulf of Mexico will become the highway of communication, not only between the most distant portions of our own territory, but also between Europe and the East Indies, and China. The island of Cuba is, as I have before shown, the key to this path of communication. The pos-

sensors of that island will have the control of all this mighty trade, and consequently, will soon become the first naval power of the globe.

Such are the natural advantages of the American continent; and to us, not to Europe, do they belong. We are the great power of this hemisphere; it is not only our right, it is our positive duty, so to direct our affairs that European interests and intrigues may gain no permanent foothold upon our shores. Shall we, who look upon our institutions as promotive of the highest civilization, intellectual improvement, and popular happiness,—shall we permit the natural advantages of our land to be taken away? Shall we yield them up, with calm indifference, to the unfriendly powers of Europe?

We are not impelled only by the laudable and patriotic desire of advancing the interests of our own country; other considerations of a higher character are presented by the aspect of the neighboring States. Cuba has the most important claims upon our sympathy. There we find a people of our own race, the white Caucasian man—a race born for all noble endeavors, and capable of indefinite progression—we find that people crushed to earth by the brutal despotism of an old, effete, decayed, and corrupt nation, which is itself kept alive only by the principle adopted by the more vigorous European nations of preserving the “balance of power.” The tyranny of Spain over the people of Cuba is a reproach to the age, a disgrace to Europe, and an insult to the United States. There is no legitimate government in Cuba; there is no law there. The will of a Spanish satrap changes the government from day to day, and makes the law a thing of caprice. The sword, the musket, and the garoté are the ministers of sway. The immense military force overawes the spirit of the inhabitants. The most sacred principles of the social compact are violated; yet Europe sustains this heinous fraud, and America tolerates it. Why is this? Because British statesmen with wily policy are determined to keep this commanding-point in the Gulf of Mexico, this outlet to the richest commerce of the world, out of the hands of Americans, and under their own control. They have seen its transcendent value, present and prospective. They know that, if revolutionized and independent, with a domestic system similar to that of this Union, Cuba would always be our steadfast ally, even though she should not, as she undoubtedly would, become a member of our confederacy. They know that, with a ship-canal across the isthmus of America, Cuba united with us, and the control of the great staples of sugar and tobacco under our hands, as that of cotton now is, the commercial world would become tributary to us. Hence it is that she has striven, with so much art and perseverance, to maintain an ascendancy in Central America and Cuba. In the former instance, she has succeeded in procuring from us, during a period of political delirium, a most absurd treaty, and in placing upon it a construction still more absurd; in the latter, she has been pertinaciously engaged in protecting Spanish tyranny, and in the unnatural and anti-Christian attempt to establish, throughout the whole of insular America, a barbaric black empire. The germ of her plot was exhibited in laying waste Jamaica, by destroying the proper relations between the white and black races there, and endeavoring by law to make those

equal whom God had made unequal. Her plot is further exposed by her intrigues in San Domingo, where, unfortunately, she had the address to defeat the ratification by that government of highly favorable arrangements, entered into by the United States commissioner, Gen. Cazneau, with the Dominican authorities.* Pursuing her schemes with intense cunning, and indefatigable zeal, she has used her strong influence with Spain to bring about the gradual abolition of negro slavery in Cuba. Her intent is plain. She is well aware, that, at some not distant day, public opinion in the United States, favoring the cause of Cuban independence, must control the action of our government. She has rallied all her skill to prevent this consummation so devoutly to be wished. She desires to devote the American archipelago, the great islands of the Caribbean sea, to the negro race. The history of that race, from the beginning of time, shows that it is incapable of self-government—that constitutional government cannot exist where that race predominates—that arbitrary despotism necessarily accompanies its social systems. Could this scheme be effected, the object of England would be attained; our progress in that quarter would be forever checked. The protectorate of the black empire, or States, thus brought into existence, would, of course, be vested in Great Britain. She hesitates not, for purposes of interest or profit, to stoop to alliances with a negro boy. On the other hand, we need not argue long to prove that the United States could have no relations, political or diplomatic, with a black empire. Such intercourse would taint with incurable leprosy our political system, already affected to an alarming extent by negrophilism. The end would be, internal convulsion, disunion, and death. Let Great Britain accomplish her aims, (and accomplish them she will, if we, with folded arms, supinely await the result of her machinations), and she will not only reap the incalculable advantages connected with the possession of this Gibraltar of the American Mediterranean, and forever retard our commercial advancement, but she will also have the power to disturb, at her pleasure, the repose of the contiguous States, and to stimulate throughout our entire country the agitation of that slavery question which, even now, is so pregnant with mischief to the harmony of our institutions.

I am aware that the British minister has denied, somewhat informally, that it is the design of his government to urge upon Spain the emancipation of the negroes in Cuba. I have not time to present the many and conclusive proofs that the policy of England is such as I have attributed to her. Can we not point to the “mixed commission,” English and Spanish, which her influence over Spain has enabled her to secure in Cuba, for the purpose of examining into the status of a portion of the negro population, with powers to declare certain classes of that population free? Let us refer, also, to the instructions given by Lord Palmerston to the British minister at Madrid, in 1851, in which he says:

“I have to instruct your lordship to say to the Spanish minister, that the slaves form a large portion, and by no means an unimportant one, of the people of Cuba; and that any steps taken to provide for their emancipation would, therefore, as far as the black population

* See letter of General Cazneau—Appendix.

is concerned, be quite in unison with the recommendation made by her Majesty's government, that measures should be adopted for contenting the people of Cuba, with a view to secure the connexion between the Spanish crown and the island; and it must be evident that, if the negro population of Cuba were rendered free, that fact would create a most powerful element of resistance to any scheme for annexing Cuba to the United States, where slavery exists."

Here is the plan of England plainly laid open to the gaze of all civilized nations. She says to Spain that it would be quite in unison with the policy of her Britannic Majesty's government that the negroes of Cuba should be set free, because their emancipation would create "a powerful element of resistance" to the annexation of that island to the United States. Unfortunately, such would, indeed, be the case. This proud country, which, when united in sentiment, might stand against a world in arms, is unable to resent the insults of feeble Spain when the slavery question may be, even incidentally, involved. Full well does England appreciate this fact, and through its means she seeks to obtain over us a safe and bloodless triumph. She could thus place in our side a thorn which would cause our energies to fester and gangrene, and might, perhaps, bring about national dissolution. None but the perversely blind can fail to perceive her serpent-like policy—a policy in which France, since the advent of Louis Napoleon, has heartily coincided. This important circumstance was announced by Lord Clarendon, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, to the British Parliament. He remarks:

"I will further add that the union between the two governments has not been confined to the eastern question. The happy accord and good understanding between France and England have been extended beyond the eastern policy to the policy affecting all parts of the world; and I am heartily rejoiced to say, that there is no portion of the two hemispheres, with regard to which the policy of the two countries, however heretofore antagonistic, is not now in entire harmony."

I have thus taken a very cursory view of the condition of Cuba and the neighboring States of Central America and Mexico. I have shown that, to preserve a free communication between the Atlantic and Pacific portions of our Union, the right to the undisturbed transit of the American isthmus is absolutely necessary; and that, for the same purposes, and to secure an outlet for the productions of the great valley of the Mississippi and of the States bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, and to protect a commerce now valued at more than four hundred millions of dollars annually, the possession of Cuba by ourselves, or by some reliable friendly power identified with us in principles, is equally a necessity. I have shown, further, that paramount interests, involving the safety, the prosperity, and the advancement of our beloved country—"the last and noblest realm of time," destined by Providence, as we fondly hope, to promote the civilization, the moral and physical improvement, the elevation and happiness of man on earth—that paramount interests not only justify us, but loudly urge us onwards, in sweeping away every obstacle from the path of our glorious mission. I have still further shown, that while we, from over-fastidious notions of our neutral obligations to other powers, supinely rest in fancied security, or, what is worse, restrain by laws and prosecutions the giant energies of our free and adventurous population, the never-slumbering vigilance of our great commercial rival is at work, weaving intricate meshes and planning dangerous combinations to entangle and destroy

us. It is time for us to awaken from our lethargy. The matured, deliberate, and sound opinion of the people, I believe, demands our concurrence. The government, which should always be the follower, as it is the offspring, of that opinion, is called upon to act. How shall we act? By the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, which I hold to be unconstitutional, because it professes to impair the right of Congress to admit new States, at least in Central America—by that treaty we have thus far most foolishly bound ourselves to exercise no dominion in Central America. Spain refuses to sell Cuba at any price. The hope of acquiring that island by purchase was always a delusion. The white people of Cuba, though crushed to earth by the iron heel of tyranny, are still too proud to give their assent to be transferred as chattels. They deny that Spain has the right to sell them. Were we to declare war against Spain, the evil would not be corrected. Were we to attempt an invasion of the island, the landing of our troops would be preceded by an edict, emancipating the slave population. It is known that, in such event, the Captain-General has power to issue such edict. Yet there before us, pregnant with ruin, hangs the dark and terrible cloud. Cunning devices to cripple our commerce and check our prosperity are being rapidly matured. Public opinion cries out for action; and again I ask, how shall we act? My answer is, meet that opinion! Let it speak, and be heard; aye, more, let it have way! Repeal your neutrality laws. If you cannot, or will not, avert impending dangers, at least do not manacle the hands of your free citizens, and prevent them from protecting themselves. If you cannot, or will not, remove the barriers that obstruct the career of our brilliant future, leave them to the foresight, enterprise, and perseverance of the American people, and, my word for it, they will prove themselves equal to the emergency.

I wish not to be understood as the advocate or apologist of any act in violation of the moral obligations due from one nation to another. I would faithfully observe and stringently enforce all the duties imposed upon us by honor or good morals. As a legislator, I am ready to assent to any regulation that will punish offences against the law of nations, provided that that regulation does not infringe upon the reserved rights of the citizen. Farther than this, Congress must not go. This government has no powers beyond those delegated by the constitution. If the power be not therein written, or clearly deducible therefrom, the acts of Congress are usurpations, and void. By these rules I am disposed, as my time will permit, to briefly examine our present neutrality laws. It has been my misfortune to become somewhat acquainted with them, and to witness the total disregard of the rights of the citizen with which they have sometimes been administered by courts and judges.

The leading features of the eight sections of the act of April 20, 1818, which my bill proposes to repeal, are, in my opinion, not only unnecessary and impolitic, but are repugnant to the intention of the constitution, and must be regarded as infringements of the personal rights of the citizen. This act, as may be shown by the debates at the time of its passage, is supposed to have been suggested by the representatives of European courts, for the purpose of crippling the practical sympathy manifested by the people of the United States in favor of some of the

Spanish colonies in America then struggling for their freedom. Mr. Clay, then Speaker of the House, and a warm advocate of the cause of the young republics, descended from the Speaker's chair, and strenuously opposed some of the provisions of the act, denouncing them as placing our government in the attitude of an ally of European despotism, and an enemy to the extension of liberal political institutions on this continent. That bold and sagacious statesman saw the deep schemes of European sovereigns whose colonial possessions in America were jeopardized, and dared to assail the suicidal policy attempted to be foisted upon us, under the specious pretence of non-interference and national morality. In the History of Congress, published by Gales & Seaton, p. 1403, in reference to the discussion of this bill, I find the following:

"Mr. Clay offered some general remarks on the offensive nature of the bill, which he said, instead of an act to enforce neutrality, ought to be entitled an act for the benefit of his Majesty the King of Spain."

Again, on the 18th of March, it is reported of Mr. Clay:

"In the threshold of this discussion, he confessed he did not like much the origin of that act. There had been some disclosures—not in an official form, but in such shape as to entitle them to credence—that showed that act to have been the result of a *leasing* on the part of foreign agents in this country, which he regretted to have seen. But from whatever source it sprung, if it was an act necessary to preserve the neutral relations of the country, it ought to be retained; but this he denied."

"In its provisions it went beyond the obligations of the United States to other powers, and that part of it was unprecedented in any nation which compelled citizens of the United States to give bonds not to commit acts without the jurisdiction of the United States, which it is the business of foreign nations, and not of this government, to guard against."

Again, on the same day, this bill being still under consideration, Mr. Clay, alluding to the Spanish minister, said:

"He (Mr. G.) would not treat with disrespect even the minister of Ferdinand, whose cause this bill was intended to benefit; he is a faithful minister, if, not satisfied with making representations to the foreign department, he also attends the proceedings of the Supreme Court to watch its decisions; he affords but so many proofs of the fidelity for which the representatives of Spain have always been distinguished. And how mortifying is it, sir, to hear of the honorary rewards and titles, and so forth, granted for these services; for, if I am not mistaken, our act of 1817 produced the bestowal of some honor on this faithful representative of his Majesty; and, if this bill passes which is now before us, I have no doubt he will receive some new honor for his *further success*."

Mr. Clay concluded his speech thus:

"Let us put all these statutes out of our way except that of 1794. When was that passed? At a moment when the enthusiasm of liberty ran through the country with electric rapidity; when the whole country *en masse* was ready to lend a hand and aid the French nation in their struggle, General WASHINGTON, revered name! the Father of his country, could hardly arrest this inclination. Yet, under such circumstances, the act of 1794 was found abundantly sufficient. There was, then, no gratuitous assumption of neutral debts. For twenty years that act has been found sufficient. But some keen-sighted, sagacious foreign minister finds out that it is not sufficient, and the act of 1817 is passed. That act we find condemned by the universal sentiment of the country; and I hope it will receive further condemnation by the vote of the House this day."

In the course of the same debate, Mr. Robertson also intimated the charge that foreign influence, more than domestic policy, produced the passage of that law. He argues:

"This might be a sufficient ground for the ministers of Portugal, of England, and of France to proceed upon; but shall we sympathize in their feelings on the subject, and be induced by them to pass acts to shackle our citizens, when it is so easy to trace their remonstrances to a general hostility to the cause of any people who are engaged in a struggle to ameliorate their condition by changing their form of government? It does not appear now that that act was passed so much with a view to do what is just to ourselves, as to accommodate the views of foreign nations.

But, alas! European ideas were too much venerated; European influence prevailed, and this unfortunate system was engrafted upon us. The objections to this act, as interpreted in our day, are:

Its creation of constructive crimes;

Its denial of the right of expatriation, and, under certain circumstances, of emigration even;

Its prohibition of the right of the citizen, in some cases, to avail himself of the rewards of his skill, his ingenuity, or his labor;

Its loading with onerous burdens, and punishing with severe penalties, fair commercial enterprises and speculations;

Its conferring upon the President and the collectors of ports powers inconsistent with the principles and dangerous to the institutions of our country;

Its branding as criminal, acts noble, generous, and patriotic in themselves;

Its assuming to treat the citizens of a free country as the subjects or property of the government.

If all these obnoxious features do not appear distinctly in the act, the construction which has been placed upon them by, at least, one of the judges of the Supreme Court, has marked them in bold and unmistakable outlines.

There is, however, at the start, a still more serious objection to the whole of this legislation. It is not only not warranted by the constitution—it is an attempt to take away from a free people rights which they have never surrendered. It is, to say the least, founded on an entire misconception of the relations which exist between the government and the people under our peculiar system.

This federal government is a limited one. Constituted by the States in their sovereign capacity, it possesses no powers but those clearly delegated to it in the compact of union. This character of our government is not left to inference: it is stamped in express words upon the instrument that created it. There it rests, and casuistry cannot blot it out. The "POWERS NOT DELEGATED ARE RESERVED." "The enumeration of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." When, therefore, it is proposed to legislate upon any subject, the first inquiry must be, whether that subject is within the jurisdiction of Congress. The broadest constructionist does not pretend that crimes and misdemeanors, generally, are within the jurisdiction of the federal government. Whence, then, are derived the powers claimed under the act in question? To what clause of the constitution do you trace them? There is no semblance of a warrant for them to be found in the constitution, unless they be included in the power to define and punish "*offences against the law of nations.*" If the grant of power be not contained in that clause, it is not to be found in any place. The act, to be defined and punished, must be an offence *against the law of nations.* To offences of that class is this power limited; to them alone can it be applied. Will it be pretended, that under this power to define and punish, Congress has power to go out of the law of nations, and *make offences or crimes of those acts which, by the law of nations, are not condemned?* If so, the whole field of initial jurisprudence is thrown open to federal legislation, and the

specification of a limitation becomes absurd. For instance, the sale of broadstuffs, or of clothing, by one of our citizens, to a nation at war with a friendly power, is not forbidden by the law of nations. Will it be assumed, then, that Congress, under the power above quoted, can make such sale a penal offence? Why can this not be done? Because the act is not an offence against the law of nations. That law is referred to in the constitution as a positive existence. No authority is given to Congress to alter or change it, or to create new offences. Judging the act of 1818 by these rules, its leading provisions are clearly without the pale of the authority of Congress. The very title of the act, as if in contempt of the limitations of the constitution, proclaims it an usurpation. Instead of an act to *define and punish offences against the law of nations*, it purports to be "An act for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States." Like the alien and sedition laws, it attempts to make a crime of that which was before not even an offence. Now, the law of nations, even as known and acted upon in Europe, where the government, generally, has entire control over the citizen, or rather the subject—there, I repeat, the law of nations does not regard it as an offence for the citizen to take service under a foreign government at war with a friendly power. The usage is the reverse. Vattel, b. 3, ch. 7, sec. 110, gives the rule and example:

"The quarrels of another cannot deprive me of the free disposition of my rights in the pursuit of measures which I judge advantageous to my country. Therefore, when it is a custom in a nation, in order for employing and exercising its subjects, to permit levies of troops in favor of a power in whom it is pleased to confide, the enemy of this power cannot call these permissions hostilities. * * * He cannot even claim, with any right, that the like should be granted him," &c. * * * "The Switzers grant levies of troops to whom they please, and nobody has thought proper to quarrel with them on this head."

If, then, it be not an offence against the law of nations, even according to the European code, for the citizen of any neutral state to take service under a belligerent nation, what constitutional power has Congress to prohibit the right of a free American citizen to lend his intellect, his wealth, or his sword, to any cause which he believes to be just? And yet the first and second sections of the act of 1818 declare the exercise of this right to be a high crime, and worthy of fine and imprisonment.

The third, fifth, eighth, ninth, and eleventh sections of the act are obnoxious to objections of a similar character. They, in substance, forbid, under severe penalties, the selling, fitting out, arming, furnishing, or adding to the force of any ship or vessel intended to be employed in the service of any foreign state, or to cruise or commit hostilities against the citizens, subjects, or property of any foreign state; and, furthermore, they invest the President and the collectors of ports with extraordinary powers, to seize and detain suspected vessels. Now, many of these acts, if not all of them, thus made criminal and severely penal, are in strict conformity with the rights of neutrals; acknowledged by the law of nations. The property thus risked may, if seized by a belligerent, be confiscated; but the neutrality of the country whose citizens are engaged in such trade has never been considered as violated thereby. Vattel, in the same connexion, proceeds thus:

"Further, it may be affirmed, on the same principles, that if a nation trades in arms, timber, ships, military stores, &c., I cannot take it amiss that it sells such things to my enemy, pro-

vided it does not refuse to sell them to me also. It carries on its trade without any design of injuring me; and in continuing it the same as if I was not engaged in war, that nation gives me no just cause of complaint. * * * It is certain that, as they have no part in my quarrel, they are under no obligations to abandon their trade, that they may avoid furnishing my enemy with the means of making war. * * * They only exercise a *right* which they are under no obligations of sacrificing to me."

The question, then, recurs, has Congress a right to brand as criminal, acts clearly permitted by the law of nations?

The sixth section of the act proposed to be repealed, although in its phraseology, and still more in the interpretation which judicial advocates of constructive powers have placed upon it, it is more odious to the unaffected impulses of the American heart than any of the others, is still not so palpably at variance with the rights of neutrals, conceded by the laws of nations. This section forbids, under severe penalties, any person within our territory to begin, set on foot, provide, or prepare the means for any military expedition or enterprise to be carried from this country against the territories of any foreign prince or people with whom we are at peace. This clause, if strictly construed, according to the rules which should govern the interpretation of penal statutes, means only to forbid military associations in the United States, intended to proceed from thence in full military organization; but it has been construed by government officials, executive and judicial, to embrace in its penal denunciations those who separately, as private individuals, and without military organization, may choose to leave our country, with or without arms, to combine together elsewhere, for the purpose of aiding an oppressed people to achieve their political independence. Such acts, on the part of citizens, do not involve the neutrality of our country; therefore, penal laws to punish them are not only beyond the scope of congressional powers, but are also infringements on the unquestionable right of the citizen as well to expatriate himself, and unite his fortunes with those of another political community, as to emigrate to foreign lands, and there follow pursuits which may not be inconsistent with his allegiance to his country.

I have thus, Mr. Chairman, in this brief argument, considered the constitutionality of this law, with reference to the European views of the law of nations. I have shown that the act of 1818 restrains individual rights, private enterprise, and personal liberty, beyond the requirements of the international code; and, consequently, is without the pale of congressional powers. The power "to define and punish offences against the law of nations" was confided by the constitution to Congress, not to the Executive or judiciary, for the sole purpose of preventing individuals from compromising the neutrality of the United States. It was never intended to control the private enterprises or speculations of the people. So far, then, as these enterprises do not, according to the established international code, involve the neutrality of the government, it is powerless to restrain them, because the right to do so has never been delegated. The government is responsible to the citizen, but not for him. He may commit, without responsibility to any earthly power, many deeds which the government cannot so commit. The latter is always responsible. The American citizen sits enthroned within the charmed circle of his reserved rights, the monarch

of his own actions.' The reservation of these individual rights is the noblest feature of our system; and he is its worst enemy who, by legislative usurpation or judicial construction, would seek to impair them. The true patriot should watch and guard them from secret as well as open foes.

Even if the penal laws which I have arraigned were strictly constitutional, I would still oppose them as unwise, impolitic, and against the genius of our free institutions. They are founded upon the false assumption that the government should direct the morals and control the sentiment of the people. It is sheer political hypocrisy, or, at least, self-stultification, to crown with honor the memory of the good man Lafayette, whose portrait is deemed worthy to decorate this republican Hall, in company with that of our own Washington, in our gratitude for the aid which, in despite of his country's laws, he rendered us in the dark hour of our revolutionary struggle, if we are by legislation to stigmatize as criminal the efforts of our own citizens, to bear assistance to a neighboring people, groaning under the yoke of an iron despotism—a despotism to which the condition of our ancestors was almost a state of freedom.

If our moral and national obligations to other nations require us to curb, by severe penal statutes, the adventurous and progressive spirit of our people, and we have the constitutional right to do so, let the bond be executed. If no such obligations rest upon us, and we are left free to consult the best interests of our country, it is my opinion that, even if we had the power to retard the progression of the age, it would not be exactly the perfection of wisdom for us to do so. Keeping in view the remarkable and interesting condition of adjacent countries, we cannot fail to perceive that we have reached an epoch, pregnant with mighty events. A year, a month, even, may determine whether Mexico, Central America, and Cuba shall be European or American. If, as I fear, the eyes of the two great powers of western Europe are directed to their acquisition, how easy would it be for them, with their fleets and their armies now unemployed, to effect their purposes? How long, bloody, and destructive would be the struggle, should we attempt to assert the rights which, since the days of Mouroe, we have claimed upon this continent, and which, but for the ignorant policy of the act of 1818, we would now peaceably and without violence possess! But for that act, Tehuantepec, Nicaragua, and perhaps all Central America, would be now Americanized, advancing and prosperous, under a liberal and stable form of government. In Cuba the tyrant-flag of blood and gold would have given place to the tri-color of independence, or to the starry and more glorious banner that floats "o'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave." The bayonets of Spain, with the war-ships of France and England, could not have supported in that lovely island an unrelenting despotism, had not the private American aid, invoked by the patriots of Cuba, been cut off by the stringent application of this law:

An able editorial of the "Union," under date of March 11, 1855, truly says:

"The well known fact that Spain is indebted to the United States for the continuance of her dominion in Cuba, so far from inclining her to be grateful or even just, has only made her

more arrogant and insensible to reason or liberality. But for the neutrality laws of the United States, which are far more strict than those of any other government, Cuba would at this moment have been at least independent, if not annexed to this confederation, had such been its desire. The government of the United States was the great instrument that arrested what in a few months would have been an invasion that no power in or out of Cuba could have resisted. The government of the United States preserved Cuba to Spain," &c.

Who will say that liberal civil institutions, borne over our borders by the energy of freemen, and planted in the misruled countries around us, would not have promoted civilization, and added to the sum of human happiness? What American patriot, who appreciates the beneficent results to our country which might have flowed from such sources, by not only securing our safety, but also many incalculable commercial advantages, does not deeply regret the false policy that manacles our hands, while those of our rivals are unconfined? The monarchies of Europe are annexing to their dominions vast territories in Asia, Africa, Australasia, and the islands of the South Sea. They take away the liberties of the conquered people, and establish arbitrary colonial governments, without regard to the opinions of the governed. We carry to the annexed free representative systems, and unite them with us as equals. The oligarchs oppress and impoverish their possessions; yet the false sentiment of the world styles them philanthropists, and fastens on us the name of "fillibusters." Let us accept the word. As the term "rebel," in Ireland designates the patriot, so let the term "fillibuster" designate the bold, fearless man of thought and action in America.

I have, Mr. Chairman, reflected much upon the subject of these neutrality laws, and I believe that of 1818 such a departure from the theory of our institutions as to be incapable of amendment. I therefore propose to repeal all its prominent features at once. When it shall come up for consideration, I shall either propose to return to the act of 1794, or present some proper bill, to perform our absolute duties to other nations, and no more.

I know that the public voice calls for some action on this subject. The true secret of national prosperity is progress. Understanding the value of free institutions, we cannot but wish to extend them wherever the force of our example may penetrate. A social system, like ours, is most secure when its range is widest, and its influence is most extensively felt. We can afford to profit by the follies of the past; we can still more afford to profit by the *prestige* of our name. We are too dangerous an element in politics to be loved by the monarchical governments of the Old World. They tolerate us only because they cannot crush us; it is upon our own continent, within and around us, that they seek to fan the flames of discord. By firmly establishing our influence upon this continent, we wrench away the last offensive weapon from their hands. Shall we now pause in our career? I, for one, will not be satisfied that our experiment of free institutions has been fully tested, until it has gained the fairest portions of this continent for its field, and the noblest types of the white race for its supporters. When I look back to the past, I can form but one conjecture for the future; I rest in the faith, that our favored country will steadily ascend through all the grades of her glorious destiny.

APPENDIX.

WASHINGTON, April 25, 1856.

DEAR GENERAL. Feeling, as every true citizen must, a deep interest in the vindication of the honor of my country, outraged by incessant acts of foreign aggression, I have heard with great satisfaction that you propose to arraign before Congress and the people that absurd contradiction to every independent principle of American policy, the neutrality act of 1818. That law, and the obsolete ideas on which it is founded, constitute the most efficient aid and support to European interference and dictation in American affairs.

Our country can never occupy its proper and honorable position among other nations while the freedom of our citizens is shackled by laws which seem made for the sole and exclusive benefit of foreign and unfriendly powers.

Among the many instances of European interference in American affairs, I wish to call your attention to one in which I have it in my power to place before you the most undeniable evidence of a direct and insulting attack on the freedom and dignity of our inter-American relations.

The Dominican republic had repeatedly and earnestly solicited the attention of the United States to its peculiar situation. It is the only territory in all that grand circle of islands which enclose the Caribbean sea, and command our isthmus routes to the Pacific, under an independent American flag.

Of all that one hundred thousand square miles of tropical wealth, with their three and a half millions of inhabitants, the Dominican republic is the only free white and republican government; all the rest of the West India empire is European and African. The Dominicans alone have achieved by their unassisted courage an independent, constitutional, and American existence. Their central and commanding position, their splendid harbors and inexhaustible natural resources, offer great and peculiar advantages to our commerce, and it was manifestly our interest to encourage the prosperity and independence of this American State.

In pursuance of this just and enlightened policy, I was commissioned by President Pierce, in June, 1854, to negotiate a treaty with the Dominican republic; and, after encountering many difficulties, through the intrigues and false representations of the French and English agents—who notoriously make common cause with the negroes of Hayti against the whites—the terms were fully agreed upon, and the 8th of September, 1854, named for the final signature of the treaty.

Meantime, an allied squadron had been sent for by these agents, and sustained by its presence before the Dominican capital, Sir Robert H. Schomburgh, acting, as he declared, under the directions of Lord Clarendon, warned the Dominican government that it could not be permitted to enter into treaty relations with "such a suspicious and dangerous power as the United States, without the previous knowledge and sanction of France and England." If the Dominicans resisted this dictation, they were threatened with a Haytian invasion. Under the specious title of "the mediating powers," France and England always hold the negroes in readiness to be let slip like bloodhounds on the whites at the east end of Hayti, if they prove, at any time, refractory to European policy.

The pretext for this forcible and high-handed dictation in our inter-American negotiation was, that the treaty contained some encouragement for the establishment of steam lines, and provided for a suitable naval and coal depot in the admirable bay of Samana. This is the natural and invaluable point of intersection for our lines of trade with South America and Africa, as well as Central America and the West Indies. It is to the Caribbean sea and the outlets of our isthmus routes, what Cuba is to the Gulf of Mexico and the mouth of the Mississippi. These European powers would not permit this American State to enjoy the advantages which nature has lavished upon it, and at their interference and command, Samana remains a closed port to our citizens.

So many other American interests were at stake, that it seemed advisable to waive the question of a coal depot, in order to deprive France and England of every excuse for combining with Hayti to attack the Dominican territory. Besides, to confess the whole truth, I had in view the necessity of bringing out and obtaining conclusive proof of the character and extent of these European encroachments. Actuated by these considerations, and the critical position of the Dominican Republic, the article respecting a depot at Samana was omitted in the second convention.

The treaty, thus modified, was signed by all the plenipotentiaries October 5, after every clause and article had received the full concurrence of the Dominican executive. It secured perfect liberty of conscience and worship to our citizens, and the most complete right to acquire, hold, and bequeath all kinds of property in the Dominican Republic.

It reciprocally guaranteed all advantages of trade, travel, and residence by the most favored nations, and it particularly recognised and established the important principle—without which no American treaty ought to receive the seal of the United States—that the flag covers the goods, and prohibits arbitrary search on the high seas. Perhaps it was this last, and truly American principle, which provoked the displeasure of England, who seems to persist in her title of "mistress of the seas," even on our American coasts.

After the promulgation of the treaty with the United States the French and British consuls called an allied squadron for the second time before the Dominican capital to overawe that government and prevent its ratification. The unfortunate Dominicans had no alternative but obedience, and the convention with the United States was sacrificed in the mode dictated by the agents of France and England.

These agents even went further and demanded, as the price of their mediation with Hayti, that the Dominican government should stipulate, as a permanent bar to the establishment of American steam lines and depots, and the introduction of American settlers on Dominican soil—

"Not to permit any government to found or occupy any depots or factories of any kind on the Dominican territory; not to tolerate the landing on the said territory of parties of emigrants armed or unarmed," &c.

Such privileges had been previously conceded and secured to European companies by special grants, and these prohibitions were expressly aimed at Americans. I cannot severely blame the Dominican government for receding from its engagements with the United States with the evidence I had before me that it was under stringent European duress. I have the evidence of this interference at command, and also of the protection afforded by the French and British consuls to the negro conspirators, who had planned the general massacre of the white authorities, and there is no doubt that the British consul was an active accomplice in the plot.

The Dominican journals which advocated the American treaty were suppressed, and the editors were obliged to leave the country at the direct instance of the European agents, who in all their aggressions on American rights publicly avowed they were carrying out the wishes of their respective governments.

For this whole class of encroachments there is but one available answer—suspend the neutrality laws until the encroaching powers shall give ample security for future non-interference, or so modify them as to allow our citizens the same advantages in defending, that unfriendly powers have in attacking American interests. The people will be with you in your efforts to open a new and noble era in our foreign policy; and firmly trusting in your triumphant success,

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
WILLIAM L. CAZNEAU.