# NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER,

AND

# WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

VOL. VII. | WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. | No. 966

FIVE DOLLARS PER ANNUM. | MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1806. | PAID IN ADV[illegible]


## *PRUSSIAN MANIFESTO.*

(CONCLUDED.)

But even these hostile steps were not sufficient. Does any one wish to know what was the lure by which it was hoped to gain the elector of Hesse, and what was the augmentation of territory with the expectation of which he was flattered? It was the prince of Orange, the brother in-law of the king—that prince who had been twice deceived in the most shameful manner, who was now to be robbed the third time. He still possessed the territory of Fulda; this was promised to the elector, and it would have been given, and the elector consented to accept it, had not Prussia taken up arms.

His majesty saw the system of usurpation advance every day; he saw a circle, continually becoming narrower, drawn around him & even the right of moving within it beginning to be disputed with him; for a sweeping resolution forbade a passage to any foreign troops, armed or not armed, through the states of the confederation. This was to cut off contrary to the rights of nations, the connexion between the detached Hessian provinces; this was to prepare pretexts on which to act; this was the first threat of punishment aimed at a magnanimous prince, who had preferred a defender to a master.

But even after this, his majesty cannot reflect on it without admiration; the king considered whether a combination might not be found, which should render this state of things compatible with the maintenance of peace.

The emperor Napoleon appeared to be solicitous to remove this doubt. Two negociations were then carrying on at Paris, one with Russia, the other with the English ministry. In both these negociations the intentions of France against Prussia were evidently manifested.

By the treaty which the Emperor of Russia has refused to ratify, France offered, in conjunction with Russia, to prevent Prussia from depriving the king of Sweden of his German territories—Yet, for many months, the cabinet of St. Cloud had continually pressed the king to seize those states, with the threefold views—first to revenge himself on the king of Sweden; secondly to embroil Prussia with all other powers; and, thirdly, to purchase her silence with respect to the subversion of southern Prussia. But the king had long been aware that such were the views of France; and his unfortunate dispute with Sweden was painful to him. He had, therefore, been careful to provide against every suspicion of self-interested motives, and he confided his explanations to the Emperor Alexander. The scene now again changed; and Napolean, who had so long been the enemy of the king of Sweden, was suddenly transformed into his protector.

It is not superfluous to remark, that, this insidious treaty of the French Emperor, in order to satisfy the honorable interest which the court of St. Petersburg took in the maintainance of the rights of the King of Naples, he promised the latter an indemnification; engaging to prevail on the King of Spain to cede to him the Beleairic Islands. He will act in the same manner with respect to the augmentation of territory he pretends to bestow on his allies.

These were all preludes to the steps he took against Prussia; we now approach the moment which determined his Majesty.

Prussia had hitherto derived nothing from her treaties with France but humiliation and loss; one single advantage remained. The fate of Hanover was in her power; & it still must remain, unless the last pledge of the security of the North were annihilated. Napoleon had solemnly guaranteed this state of things, yet negociated with England on the basis of the restoration of the Electorate. The king is in possession of the proofs.

War was now, in fact, declared—declared by every measure taken by France. Every month produced a new notification of the return of his army; but, on one frivolous pretext or another, it was still continued in Germany; and for what purposes? Gracious Heaven! To eradicate the last trace of sovereignty among the Germans—to treat kings as governors appointed by himself—to drag before military tribunals citizens only responsible to their own governments; to declare others outlaws who lived peaceably in foreign states, under foreign sovereigns, and even in the capital of a German Emperor, because they had published writings in which the French government, or at least its despotism, was attacked; and this at the time when the same government daily permitted hired libellers to attack, under its protection the honor of all crowned heads, and the most sacred feelings of nations.

The French troops were in no manner diminished, but continually reinforced and augmented, and continually advanced nearer to the frontiers of Prussia or her allies, till they at length took a position which could only menace Prussia, and were even assembled in force in Westphalia, which certainly was not the road to the mouths of the Cattaro.

It was no longer doubtful that Napoleon had determined to overwhelm Prussia with war, or to render her for ever incapable of war, since he was leading her from humiliation to humiliation, till she should be reduced to such a state of political degradation and feebleness, that, deprived of every defence, she could have no other will than that of her formidable neighbour.

The king delayed no longer. He assembled his army. Gen. Knobelsdorff was sent to Paris with the final declaration of his majesty. Only one measure remained which could give security to the king, which was the return of the French troops over the Rhine. Gen. Knobelsdorff had orders to insist on this demand; it was not the whole of the king's just demands, but it was necessary that it should be the first, since it was the condition of his future existence. The acceptance or refusal of it must shew the real sentiments of the French Emperor.

Unmeaning professions—arguments, the real virtue of which were known by long experience—were the only answer the king received. Far from the French army being recalled, it was announced that it would be reinforced; but, with a haughtiness still more remarkable than refusal, an offer was made, that the troops which had advanced into Westphalia should return home, if Prussia would desist from her preparations. This was not all; it was insolently notified to the king's ministers, that the cities of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck, would not be suffered to join the Northern Confederation, but that France would take them under her her protection; in the same manner as in the other confederation, she had given away cities, and promulgated laws without permitting any other power to make the least pretension. The king was required to suffer a foreign interest to be introduced into the heart of his monarchy.

Another contrast of conduct incensed the King to the utmost. He received from the emperor a letter full of those assurances of esteem, which certainly, when they do not accord with facts, ought to be considered as nothing, but which the dignity of sovereigns renders a duty to themselves, even when on the eve of war. Yet a few days afterwards, at a moment when the sword was not yet drawn—when the minister of the emperor endeavored to mislead those of the king, by assurances on assurances of the friendly intentions of France. In the Publiciste of the 18th of September appeared, with a diatribe against the king and the Prussian state, in a style worthy of the most disgraceful periods of the revolution, insulting to the nation, and what, in other times than ours, would have been considered as amounting to a declaration of war.

The king can treat slanderers that are merely abusive, with contempt; but when these slanderers contribute to explain the real state of things, it would be unwise to treat them so.

The last doubt had now disappeared; troops marched from the interior of France towards the Rhine. The intent to attack Prussia was clear and certain. The king ordered a note to be transmitted by Gen. Knobelsdorff, containing the conditions on which he was ready to come to an accommodation. These conditions were:

1. That the French troops should immediately evacuate Germany.

2. That France should oppose no obstacle in the formation of the Northern Confederacy; and that this confederacy might embrace all the larger and smaller states not included in the fundamental act of the confederation of the Rhine.

3. That a negociation should immediately be commenced for the adjustment of all differences still in dispute; a preliminary article of which should be, the restoration of the three Abbeys, and the separation of the town of Wesel from the French empire.

These conditions speak for themselves: They shew how moderate the king, even at this moment, has been in his demands, and how much the maintenance of peace, if France wishes peace, depends upon France herself.

The term peremptorily fixed by the king for the decision of peace or war has elapsed. His majesty has not received the answer of the cabinet of St. Cloud; or rather, the preparations made around him daily, give that answer. The king can henceforth confide the safety and honor of his crown only to arms. He takes them up with pain, because the chief object of his wishes was not a glory purchased by the tears of his people, but by their tranquility; for his cause is just. Never has a sovereign made greater sacrifices to peace. He pushed his condescention to the last limit that honor would allow. Every thing which was directed against him personally he passed over in silence. The opinions of the ignorant, and the reflections of the slanderous, he despised, animated with the constant hope, that he would be able to conduct his people, without injury, to that period which must sooner or later arrive, when unjust greatness, shall find its bounds; and ambition, which obstinately refused to acknowledge any limit, shall at length o'erleap itself.

The motives which induced his majesty to take up arms are not to satisfy his resentments, to increase his power, or to render a nation uneasy which he shall always esteem, as long as it confines itself to its just and natural interests; but to avert from his kingdom the fate which was preparing for it; to preserve to the people of Frederick, their independence and their glory; to rescue unfortunate Germany from the yoke by which it is oppressed, and to bring about a safe and honorable peace, the day on which he shall effect this, will be the proudest of his life. The events of the war which is now beginning, are in the disposal of Supreme Wisdom. His majesty leaves it to others to indulge in premature exultation and gratuitous insult, as he has for a long time allowed them the miserable satisfaction arising from unjust invectives. He leads to an honorable combat an army worthy of its former glory. He reigns over a people of whom he may be proud; and while he is ready to shed his blood for them, he knows what he may expect from their energy and affection. Princes, the honor of the German name, who can confide in his gratitude and honor, and who, fighting by his side, are not dubious of victory, have joined their banners with his; and a sovereign who adorns with his virtues one of the first thrones in the world, is penetrated with the justice of his cause. Every where his arms are blessed by the voice of the people, and even where they are silent from fear, their impatience is the greater. With so many motives to be conscious of her strength, Prussia may well be permitted continually to confide in her high destiny.

Head quarters, Erfurt, }
Oct. 3, 1806. }

## CONGRESS.

*HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.*

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17.

### DEBATE

*On the bill to prohibit the importation or bringing of slaves into the United States, or the territories thereof, after the thirty first day of December, 1807.*

Mr. SLOAN moved to insert, in the 4th section, after the word "forfeited"—the following words—"& such person or slave shall be entitled to his freedom"—so as to make the provision read—That if any negro, mulatto, or person of color, the importation or bringing of whom is by this act prohibited, shall, after the 31st day of December aforesaid, be found within the U. S. or the territories thereof, ever such negro, mulatto, or person of color shall be forfeited, and such person or slave shall be entitled to his freedom.

Mr. ALSTON doubted whether Congress possessed the power of saying that slaves imported into a particular state whose laws directed them to be sold, should be made free.

Mr. ELMER considered the amendment as altogether useless.

Mr. EPPES moved to amend the amendment by adding to it the following proviso: *Provided*, That such forfeiture shall take place in one of the states of the union where slavery is not by law permitted.

This last amendment was disagreed to—Ayes 31.

Mr. BIDWELL suggested a modification of the amendment, so as to make it read, "and shall be entitled to his or her freedom"—to which Mr. Sloan assented.

Mr. EARLY said he would barely ask of the mover of the amendment, whether there was not a palpable absurdity between the amendment and that part of the bill to which it was offered as an amendment; whether there was not an absurdity in saying the description of persons referred to should be forfeited, and sold by the U. S. as provided for in the 6th section, and yet that they should be free; whether the two things could exist together?

Mr. SLOAN said he would ask whether it was not the understanding of every member of the Committee, that it ought to be the object of this bill totally to prohibit the importation of slaves into, or the selling them in the U. S. He would not pretend to say his amendment would effectually answer this purpose; it might require alteration, and he acknowledged there was an apparent contradiction between it and the provisions of the bill. But it was the principle which it contained, that he was anxious to see adopted.

Mr. EARLY said there was no doubt but that the motion of the gentleman from New Jersey would have the effect of trying the sense of the House on a very important principle contained in the bill; on the question whether they would or would not agree to pass a bill on this subject, which would be efficacious. For myself, said Mr. Early, I have always believed that on the decision of this question would turn another, whether this government ever would prohibit the slave trade or not? It is true, if we pass the bill as it stands, that persons imported will not only be forfeited, but will likewise be sold as slaves, and be afterwards kept as such. This is a melancholy truth; melancholy, because, without such a provision, we can pass no law on the subject that will be effectual. What can we do with this description of persons in case they are brought into the country in contravention of this act? I repeat the question—what can we do with them? If any gentleman can devise a plan, on which they can be disposed of, without proving extremely injurious to the country where the disposition shall be made, less exceptionable than the plan contained in this bill, he shall my thanks, and what is of more consequence, he shall have my vote. I believe, however, that the plan contained in the bill will be the most effectual that can be devised. The gentleman enquires whether the bill is not intended to prevent the importation of this description of people into the U. S. and to prevent their being sold here as slaves. I answer that it is; and I ask, if the law prohibiting the importation of brandy in demijohns was not intended to prevent its being brought into the U. S. in that way; and yet do the U. S. instead of selling it as a forfeited article, scatter it about the streets when thus introduced in contravention of the laws? I repeat it—on the decision of this question will depend the efficacy of the bill. We who live in that part of the U. S. where the evil referred to principally exists, know from experience that this is the only effectual plan that can be pursued. I will conclude my remarks by again declaring, that if any gentleman will devise another practicable plan, he shall have my vote.

Mr. ALSTON was decidedly of opinion that if the amendment prevailed, the bill on the table would be good for nothing. The amendment proposes that the slaves imported shall be forfeited and become free. Thus all inducement to give information of their importation would be taken away. You cannot, said Mr. A. prevent them from being slaves when they are once brought into the U. S.—the only way is to prevent the importation. In the state which I have the honor of representing, this mode had been practised; the importation of slaves had for ten or twelve years been prohibited under a penalty of 200 pounds. This had completely prevented any importation by water, in which way not a single slave had been imported. Some, it was true, had been introduced from adjoining states. The amendment might have another effect. What was there to prevent this description of persons, although made free, from binding themselves out for a term of years, or for life?

MR. SLOAN said he would just observe that the simile drawn by his friend from Georgia did not apply in the present instance. He had never considered the act prohibiting the importation of brandy in demi-johns, as intended to prohibit the importation of brandy, but merely the particular mode of importing it. It appeared to be the universal wish of every member in the committee to put an entire stop to this inhuman traffic. He would then ask, for information, (he would not say that he was perfectly able to explain the constitution on this point) whether it was not in the power of the House as completely to prohibit this trade as the parliament of Great Britain. If he was rightly informed, as soon as a slave put his foot into that country, he became free. If this was among the constitutional powers of the government he hoped it would be exercised; and if this amendment should be rejected, he trusted some other, calculated to be more efficacious, would be adopted.

MR. SMILIE was not prepared at present to say what was best to be done; but he would never give his assent to the last section of the bill. Shall we, said he, while we are attempting to put a stop to this traffic, take upon ourselves the odium of becoming slave traders. This would be the fact, in case the bill were agreed to. We will not suffer others to bring them to our shores with the view of selling them, but we agree to become their proprietors and to sell them ourselves. I hope in God the House will never agree to this. I have no objection to be at the expence of sending them back to their own country, if this shall be deemed proper, or to pursuing any other mode which may be deemed advisable.

MR. EARLY said it was time enough, when the last section was under consideration, to examine any plan, or reasons which might be offered in support of it, for altering the provisions in that section. At present the [illegible] section only was under consideration, and there appeared to him a peculiar impropriety in adopting the proposed amendment, as applicable to that section, for several reasons. That section does not operate on the vessels fitting out for the slave trade, or on vessels in the waters of the U. S. having persons of the description [illegible] on board. It operates only on the [illegible] dual cases of buying and selling between man and man, after the persons have been brought into the territory of the U. S. It operates, therefore, on persons, so far as [illegible] in them, on whom [illegible] can operate. Mr. [illegible] read the section:

"SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That if any negro, mulatto, or person of color, the importation or bringing of whom is by this act prohibited, after the thirty-first day of December aforesaid, be found within the United States or the territories thereof, every such negro, mulatto, or person of color shall be forfeited. And if any person or persons shall be concerned in buying or selling such negro, mulatto, or person of color, every person so concerned shall forfeit and pay dollars for each negro, mulatto, or person of color so bought or sold."

He would ask the gentlemen whether the House, or the government of the U. S. were constitutionally competent to declare what should or should not be property within the several states? They were not competent to this, after the article, considered as property, was brought within the limits of the United States.

MR. BARKER. It appears to me, either that the gentleman from Georgia does not understand the spirit of this section, or that I do not. If any description of persons are imported and forfeited, to whom are they forfeited? Not to the particular states, where they are landed, but to the United States, whose property they become, and who have therefore a right to say they shall be free; and in order to effect this purpose they may say that they shall be sent back to the country from which they came; certainly they have as great a right to make them free as to sell them.

Mr. SLOAN declared his correspondence in opinion with his friend from Massachusetts (Mr. Barker.)

Mr. BIDWELL. Gentlemen from all quarters appear to agree in the end they have in view; the only difference of opinion is with respect to the most proper means to be used. The gentleman from Georgia thinks that if the amendment be adopted the bill will be ineffectual, while the gentleman from New Jersey is of the opinion that without it, it will be ineffectual. The amendment undoubtedly embraces a most important principle. Without it the gentleman from Georgia admits that the description of persons referred to will be transferred from their individual owners to the U. S. as property, and be by them sold as slaves, and be holden afterwards in slavery. This is admitted to be the effect of the bill. It is objected to for several reasons. The first reason assigned is that if the amendment take place, and if by virtue of it these people should be entitled to their freedom, instead of being protected in their freedom, they will enter into indentures with their holders, and their condition be the same as though they were in slavery. But the very idea of indentures implies freedom; and this objection is applicable to every other description of persons whose ignorance renders them the easy subjects of imposition. Slaves, liberated under existing circumstances from servitude, are equally liable to being over-reached.

Another objection is that the amendment is repugnant to the principle of the bill, inasmuch as the preceding clause declares that this description of persons shall be forfeited, and their being made free is considered as incompatible with their forfeiture. I do not, however, view the case in that light. What is this forfeiture but a cessation of the interest of the former owner in the thing forfeited, and its transfer to the U. S.? And cannot the United States, instead of selling, manumit them? The operation, therefore, of the amendment will be that the property of the U. S. in them will determine, and that no person will have a property in them, but that they will be free; or, in other words, that instead of the property, as the bill now stands, being vested in the U. S. it will be renounced; the U. S. will not take the property themselves, or pass it over to any other persons; they will say the property shall entirely terminate. Is there any thing in this repugnant to the constitution? The gentleman from Georgia says this government has not a right to interfere with state rights or state property. But would it be any interference with state rights to say that in case a particular article should become the property of the U. S. they would not take it. As to the previous owner,