

(Mr. Clay,) for he then acted as Secretary of State. We have for nearly half a century been claiming the free navigation of the St. Lawrence as a natural right. It has at length been gratuitously conceded to us by Great Britain, and now the Senator from Kentucky, (Mr. Clay,) complains of it as a grievance.

The Senator, (Mr. Clay,) also complains that the instructions state, "that the late Administration had abandoned certain pretensions." The Senator admits that these pretensions had been waived.—The Senator from Georgia, (Mr. Forsyth,) has contended that there is no difference in substance between these words. I leave this grave question to be settled by those learned Senators, and will proceed to show what those pretensions were, and which, I can hardly restrain myself from pronouncing, were puerile in the extreme.

During the Session of 1822, Congress was informed, that an act was pending in Parliament, for the opening of the Colonial ports to the commerce of the United States. In consequence, an act passed, authorizing the President, in case the act of Parliament was satisfactory to him, to open the ports of the United States to British vessels, by his proclamation. The Act of Parliament was deemed satisfactory, and a proclamation was accordingly issued, and the trade commenced. Unfortunately for our commerce, and I think *contrary to justice*, a Treasury circular issued, directing the Collectors to charge British vessels entering our ports, with the alien tonnage and discriminating duties. This order was remonstrated against, (I think,) by Mr. Vaughan. The trade, however, went on uninterrupted.—Congress met, and a bill was drafted in 1823, by Mr. Adams, then Secretary of State, and passed both Houses, with little, if any debate.—I voted for it, believing that it met, in a spirit of reciprocity, the act of Parliament. This bill contained, however, one little word, "elsewhere," which completely defeated all our expectations. It was noticed by no one. The Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. Webster,) may have understood its effect. If he did so understand it, he was silent. The effect of that word "elsewhere" was to assume the pretensions alluded to in the instructions. What were they? "That the produce of the United States should be received in the West Indies, on payment of the same duties, as were payable on the produce of the North American Colonies." The British Minister said, "as well might we ask that our sugar should be received free of duty, as is the sugar of Louisiana."

The result was, that the British Government shut their colonial ports immediately, and thenceforward. The act of 1822, gave us a monopoly of the West India Trade. It admitted free of duty, a variety of articles, such as:—Indian Corn, Oats, Indian Meal, Pease, Beans, &c. &c. &c.

The British Government thought, that we entertained a belief, that they could not do without our produce, and by their acts of 27th June, and 5th July 1825, they opened their ports to all the world, on terms far less advantageous to the United States, than those of the act of 1822; and these are the pretensions which the instructions say, had been *abandoned*, by the late administration. They were abandoned, Mr. President, by the following words in the instructions to Mr. Gallatin:—"That the United States consent to *wave* the demand which they have heretofore made of the admission of their productions into British Colonies, at the same and no higher rate of duty, as similar articles are chargeable with, when imported from one into another British Colony, with the exception of our pro-

duce descending the St. Lawrence and the Sorel." Now, Sir, whatever difference there may be between the words "*waiver*," and "*abandonment*" in common parlance, it is in this case, a *complete abandonment* in diplomatic language. What in simple truth, is after all, the great ground of objection? It is this.—*Mr. McLane has made an arrangement conformably to the preceding instructions from Mr. Adams to Mr. Gallatin. Hinc ille lacrymæ.*

The dissolution of the late Cabinet, Mr. President, has been charged upon Mr. Van Buren; *and what is there at home or abroad that we have not heard charged to him?* The elder Adams changed all his Cabinet, except the Secretary of the Navy. The change was approved by the Democratic party, and disapproved by the Aristocracy of the day.—A change of the Cabinet is, therefore, nothing new.—We now grieve and lament over the late change, and yet never was a Cabinet more traduced than the late one, by the whole body of the opposition throughout the Union. The Cabinet certainly was such an one, as did not meet the views or approbation of the friends of the administration. They regretted in silence the selections which the President had made. The gentlemen selected were honest and honorable men. They were my political friends, and, I may say, some of them were my personal intimates. Their dismissal has done no harm to the nation. The new Cabinet is, (I believe,) more acceptable to all parties. The members of it, are known to be competent to the special duties of their several departments, and equally so, as advisers in the great affairs of the nation.—What is it to the people whether A, B, C, or D, be at the head of affairs? All the people ask, is, that *their duties shall be well performed*, and that they act in harmony. But the present President has held no Cabinet Councils for two years, and Mr. Van Buren is charged as being the adviser of the President to that course.—Is this mode new? I believe not—I think Gen. Washington held no Cabinet Council, during the first two years of his administration, and I remember well, a discussion in strong terms, against the President's holding them, on the ground of their being unconstitutional. I think that General Jackson was at that time a member of Congress, and perhaps he then imbibed the opinion, that Cabinet Councils were not conformable with the Constitution. Reasoning thus, I must believe, that the not assembling his Cabinet was *his own act*, and not in consequence of the representations of Mr. Van Buren.—The unpardonable crime of this gentleman has always been, that the President has great confidence in his talents and abilities, which all will admit, he possesses, in an eminent degree.

The Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. Webster,) says, that "instructions shewing a difference of opinion in the dominant party, with that of the defeated party, had never been given by any Government." I ask, Mr. President, on what ground does the Senator make that assertion? Few nations, if any, except our own, have ever published the instructions to their Ministers—We, therefore, cannot know what has been done. But, I hardly think it possible that such instructions never have been given. They are natural, and were for Mr. McLane alone, and never shewn by him to any person.—But, I infer from Mr. Hartley's language to our Commissioners at Paris, when treating for a peace, that he