

den incursion of an invading foe. For his reply to this part of his orders, your memorialist begs leave to refer to his report, communicated to the House of Representatives by the Secretary of War.

However important such a bulwark, insulating, to a great extent, as it undoubtedly would, the public and private edifices of the city of Washington, might prove, under circumstances of sudden and unforeseen danger, the undersigned are animated by views yet more enlarged, in appealing, for the support of their present application, to the provident forecast of a legislature, charged with the protection of the entire union, but more especially from the peculiar position of the seat of its operations, with that of the waters and shores of the Chesapeake.

Your memorialists advance, they trust with becoming diffidence, the apprehension, of which the anticipation of future danger justifies the disclosure, that, in the contemplated defences of the Chesapeake, at the entrance, and in the vicinity of Hampton Roads, so long as they are unaccompanied by an efficient provision for the prompt construction as well as equipment of ships of war, near the head of the same bay, sufficient precaution will not have been taken, for the security, in future wars, of the shores and commerce of that bay; a commerce, may not your memorialist add, of vast importance, not only to the five states bordering on this great estuary, or intersected by its tributary streams, but to the prosperity of the entire union, to the interchange of whose commodities, as well as the constant intercourse of whose citizens, this capacious bay, and the many copious rivers which pour their waters into it, serve as an indispensable facility.

If ever the entrance of Hampton Roads shall be effectually secured from naval aggression, by the fortifications designed for its defence, and the Navy Yard at Gosport from sudden destruction, by a military expedition over land, from the open bay of Lynnhaven, still the experience of the last American war demonstrates that the mouth of the Chesapeake may be effectually sealed up, by an enemy's squadron lying under the shelter of Cape Henry.

To drive such a fleet from its moorings, if superior to the naval force of the United States in Hampton Roads, would be, on ordinary calculation, impracticable, as it would alike prove, if attempted by an inferior squadron,