

culty of drawing the line to ascertain who shall be deemed British subjects, without wounding the constitution, still remains; under this impression, therefore, we would rather err on the side of indulgence, though not merited, than violate our constitution, by throwing down those barriers with which it has wisely secured the liberty and property of the subject. We are averse from setting a precedent in order to reach persons really criminal, which may hereafter be extended to the oppression of the innocent; intemperate zeal and intemperate resentments have frequently given fatal stabs to governments as free as ours. We need not remind you that the rigour of law is often injustice, and you are too well informed not to know that the rigour of the law of nations is much softened in this very point by the present usage and practice of the most civilised European nations; for the truth of this assertion we appeal to Vattel, a late and celebrated writer on the law of nations. As an independent and civilised people, would we not rather wish to imitate the conduct of all the civilised and enlightened nations of Europe, than that of the piratical states of Barbary? The consequences of such a seizure and confiscation may be serious and perplexing; a negotiation may possibly take place this winter, and peace soon ensue; it may, and probably will, be made a preliminary article of the peace, that that very property which this bill is about to confiscate, shall be secured to the present owners in such a manner, that they may at least receive the full and real value thereof. If the estate should at this time be confiscated and applied, our constituents must be taxed, to repay the original proprietors the full value of the lands and chattels so confiscated and applied; and this, in our judgment,

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