

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JAMES MADISON (1809-17):
THE WAR FOR COMMERCIAL INDEPENDENCE

If we fall, let us fall like men, fighting for Free Trade and Sailors' Rights.—Henry Clay.

143. James Madison.—Jefferson expressed a wish that he might be succeeded in the Presidency by his friend James Madison of Virginia. The leaders of the Democratic party took the hint, and Madison was elected President in 1808 and reëlected in 1812. Next to Jefferson himself, Madison, at the time of his election, was perhaps the greatest of American statesmen. We have seen him among the leaders in the Convention of 1787. His services in helping to frame the Constitution and secure its adoption were so great that he was called the Father of the Constitution. He was a leader in Congress under Washington, and for eight years, acting as Secretary of State, was the chief of Jefferson's cabinet.

144. England and France Continue to Harass American Commerce.—Madison had to face the same kind of trouble that had vexed Jefferson. France and England were still at war, and both nations were still capturing American ships and inflicting injury upon American trade. There was a moment when Madison thought the long trouble with these two nations had come to an end. The British minister at Washington, Erskine, promised that Americans should be allowed to trade where they pleased if the President would not enforce the Non-Intercourse Act, which followed the Embargo Act and which forbade American vessels to trade with England or France but permitted them to trade with all other nations. Relying upon the good faith of this promise of Erskine, Madison gave out the word that the Non-Intercourse Act would not be enforced and that American ships were free to trade with all foreign coun-