

The principles and feelings expressed in the debate on the forcible impressment of seamen, reported in our paper of yesterday, were most satisfactory. We cannot say the same for the vote by which the discussion was terminated. Till impressment be declared illegal, unless upon occasions in which extraordinary circumstances would justify a suspension of all law, we can never be secured against its terrors on sailors, or its damage to the mercantile service of the country. With a case of extreme necessity, or of overwhelming state danger from foreign enemies, like that which would warrant the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act in civil life, we have nothing to do. A legislature ought not to provide for extreme cases, nor ought a Government to retain privileges which contemplate the occurrence of such cases as ordinary events. On this ground we dissent from the plan of Sir JAMES GRAHAM, though probably no former First Lord of the Admiralty ever delivered himself with a more liberal spirit, or showed more enlightened zeal to correct a despotic practice. The registration of seamen in the merchant service, for the purpose of being enabled to draught from that body by ballot a supply for our national navy in case of a war, might certainly diminish the arbitrary injustice of a press-warrant against the merchant crews of particular ports, but would only go a small way in removing the evil. Besides, the registration itself would, in this case, be reckoned a kind of exposure to penalty, and would either be evaded altogether or complied with reluctantly, as a kind of marine conscription. The practice of training boys for the naval service, which the enlightened Administration of the Admiralty has already commenced—the general feeling that a little better treatment and a little more indulgence would have their effect in procuring sufficient volunteers of a better class;—and the opinion of several naval men of high character, particularly of the hon. Admiral who spoke on the question, seem to us to be decisive of the question at issue between the original mover and the Government. As the question, however, does not seem to be finally set at rest on the side which has the most argument in its favour, we make no apology for inserting the following observations which were written before the debate, in order to promote its object, but which were omitted on Tuesday