

and nowhere has the character been more exemplified than in our intercourse with Mexico. We have been referred to the treaty of peace that closed our last war with Great Britain, and told that our injuries were unredressed, because the question of impressment was not decided. There are other decisions than those made by commissioners, and sometimes they outlast the letter of a treaty. On sea and land we settled the question of impressment before negotiations were commenced at Ghent. Further, it should be remembered that there was involved within that question a cardinal principle of each Government. The power of expatriation, and its sequence, naturalization, were denied by Great Britain, and hence a right asserted to impress native-born Britons, though naturalized as citizens of the United States. This violated a principle which lies at the foundation of our institutions, and could never be permitted; but not being propagandists, we could afford to leave the political opinion unnoticed, after having taught a lesson which would probably prevent any future attempt to exercise it to our injury. Let the wisdom of that policy be judged by subsequent events.

The outrage in the case of the *Caroline*, and in that of the *Creole*, have also been referred to; and though I am not satisfied with the course our Government pursued, I cannot admit that we have shrunk from asserting our rights against Great Britain; because that Government has not avowed the acts of which we have complained.

Now, sir, I will view the other side—the case of Mexico. So far from having trespassed upon her, the facts will bear me out in saying that we have borne more of insult and outrage on our citizens by Mexico, than England ever has, or will ever be permitted to perpetrate. Our citizens have been robbed, our vessels seized and condemned. In two instances the crews were imprisoned (the “*Julius Caesar*” and the “*Champion*,”) in one, the captain of the vessel murdered—the “*Topaz*.” Our treaties have been broken, and in numerous instances the property of our citizens confiscated, in violation of the laws of nations. All this we have borne from a Government we mainly contributed to warm into existence and first introduced to the family of nations. As a neighboring republic, we desired the prosperity of Mexico, and nothing could be more unjust than to charge our Government with seeking aggrandizement from her helplessness.

So much, sir, for the cases which gentlemen have chosen so frequently to compare to our injury. But whatever may have been the conduct of our Government in the past, if we credit the various positions taken in this discussion, we have now arrived at a point where an honorable progress is almost impossible. On the one hand, we are told, not to give notice to terminate the Oregon convention is a dishonorable retreat; on the other, that to give the notice will probably lead to war, and that would be dishonor.

Sir, were there more of justice, there might be more of mortification at having such terms connected with suppositions attached to our Government. We have a right, by the terms of the treaty, to give notice for its termination at our pleasure; and whether we shall exercise the right is now, as it has been, a question of expediency merely. The convention was adopted as a tempo-

rary measure for the preservation of peace, and rescinded, could only restore us to our former position. My colleague, [Mr. Thompson,] however, goes so far as to say that notice is the only way to avoid war; and that to extend our law over our people in Oregon is war—a war of grace. This opinion is new, and I think incorrect. It is certainly different from that which prevailed at the date of the treaty; and opposite to that held for many years thereafter, by those whose labors on the Oregon question have commanded most respect and attention. Not so thought Floyd, Linn, nor Benton.

In the early discussions upon the policy to be pursued in relation to the Oregon territory, no one denied the power to extend our laws over the Columbia valley. The opinion which, in this discussion, has gone to such extent as to denounce emigration to Oregon as stealing into the country, is part of the bitter fruit which has grown out of partnership with Great Britain. The right to migrate to Oregon, to extend our laws, or to erect territorial government over that country, rests alone upon the opinion of our statesmen in Congress, but is supported by the correspondence of the negotiators who formed the Oregon convention.

Upon this point, I will refer to a letter of Alexander Gallatin, dated January 22d, 1846, and recently published in the “*National Intelligencer*,” of this city. As one of the United States Commissioners who negotiated the convention of 1818, he represented our Government in the arrangements of 1827, for its indefinite prolongation, his commentary must be received as the highest authority. The following passage refers to the transactions of 1827, and shows the opinions then held by the negotiators upon this subject.

“It will be seen, by reference to the protocols and correspondence, that, although it was generally admitted that neither party ought, during such continuance, to exercise any exclusive sovereignty over the territory, the American plenipotentiary declined to agree to any convention containing an express provision to that effect, or accompanied by the insertion in the protocol of a declaration for the same purpose by the British plenipotentiaries. The reason was, not only because an exclusive right over Astoria and its dependencies was claimed by the United States, but principally because it was anticipated that, in order to have, in fact, an authority equal to that exercised by the Hudson Bay Company, it would become necessary for the United States to perform that which the British Government might contend should not be conferred by treaty. The consequence was, that the convention recognises some certain rights, and imposes positive restrictions; but only such as may be supposed to be implied in the clause which declares that nothing contained in it should be construed to impair or affect the claims of either party. The probability that it might become necessary for the United States to establish a territorial government, some sort of government, over their own citizens was explicitly avowed.”

The circumstances of the case, the early and discussions, and the contemporaneous interpretation of the convention, forbid the novel and extraordinary construction which would decide emigra-

be a crime, extending in territory. I will now address the citizens being a joint convention to colonize the territory for our purposes. By discovering the United States in the west, Great Britain, we were the treaty, the side of the country, they were inclined to. By the treaty, that the territories is to protect themselves. Not having a boundary, it is either party, either with the “navigation” could be, for the “navigation” to the “Powers.” Nothing more, the power to impair property, a clause in the other Powers, the country, the valley of the river, admitted the reactive restoration of the conditional, was our nation of the territory, altered the connected with, could here be on to which, on the court, charge the territory, Mr. Chairman, convention has been. Pursuing, should not be conferred by, were restrained, levying duties would have, at the country, joint right, should previously in any other, as the agreement, companies, and settlements.