

and on the in- consequently highly criminal. And much as that territory is worth to us—and were it worth ten times told the wealth of the Indies—its value is still not so great that it should be retained at the heavy and inordinate expense of reckless and unnecessary war, the crime of wholesale murder, which the world's wealth could not expiate, or the world of waters wash away. We should not scruple to modify the notice in the manner indicated, when no evil can result from it; and all admit there is nothing dishonorable, nothing humiliating in it.

I have said that the intention of this notice will be gathered from, and the controversy of war and peace depend, to some extent, on the subsequent action of Congress; and as one of the measures which may so affect the notice and the whole subject, the bill introduced by the Committee on Territories stands first and foremost, particularly conspicuous in obnoxious objections. The draughtsman of the bill, and chairman of the committee, (Mr. DOUGLASS,) was in remarkable haste in the introduction of this bill; and doubtless some of its manifold imperfections are attributable to the great and unnecessary haste in its preparation. And the gentleman himself, after the subsidence of zealous and fiery haste, has withdrawn the bill for the amendment and corrections of "second sober thoughts." But as I do not purpose here debating that, I shall only allude to its defects. I do not hesitate to declare, if that bill passes in its present shape, it cannot but be regarded as a cause of instant war. It would be a violation of the treaty, for it asserts title, by boundary, to the whole of Oregon; it grants lands in any part of the territory, on the north as well as south side of the 49th parallel, in the very centre of the disputed and debatable land that lies between the 49 and 54 40 parallel, and pledges the honor and whole power of the nation to make good the grant; it establishes block houses, forts, and stockades; and this bill, or another on your table, provides for raising the men who are to garrison these forts, stockades, and blockades; thus, in itself, before notice is given, taking, in violation of the letter and spirit of the treaty, exclusive possession of the whole country, and shutting out all hopes of a compromise of our claims to Oregon, and must involve us in war. Suppose, however, the notice be given, such as I have contended for, and be unaffected by any rash action on our part, what possible pretext, what ground for war? The treaty itself, as has been often remarked, provides for the notice, and could give no just reason, or even excuse, to Great Britain, for war. If, however, she were to take offence, why, we being in the right before, let the guilt and consequences of a war be on her head.

The reasons which have produced conviction on my mind, that, if the notice were given, we will not have war, are briefly:

The inconsiderable amount of territory which is now in real dispute, our Government has four times substantially proposed to England to settle, by taking, as our northern boundary, the 49th parallel—England has four times substantially offered to compromise, and take, as her southern boundary, the 49th parallel, till it struck the Columbia river, and thence down the river to its mouth, in about 46th parallel. Thus, it may fairly be inferred, the country between the Columbia and 49th parallel is, in fact, only the subject of controversy. It is impossible to suppose that two such mighty empires can, in this day of Christian influence and enlightened feeling, be brought into conflict for a territory, compared to the losses which each would sustain in the conflict, of insignificant value. And I must say that, for one, I estimate highly, in producing and preserving the peace of the world, the influence of the Christian religion—an influence which, though not seen on the throne, yet is above the throne; which is not audible about the high places of the earth, but which, with its inaudible and potent spell, surrounds the rulers of the earth, and gives direction to their courses. It would be a reflection on our common religion to suppose that two such nations as England and America, the bulwarks of Christendom, should fight for cause so small as that in controversy between them.

Again, sir, nations do not go to war now with the same ease and readiness they did in times past. The habits of peace multiply interests in favor of its continuance, and beget the desire for its perpetuation. England, and we ourselves, have been affected in the same way. She is not so warlike as she once was. With a change of interes,