

by raising their flag and other ceremonies, acquired a valid title to the country on Cook's river, the Spaniards had, three years before, acquired a title equally valid, by the performance of similar ceremonies, to the territory of Port Remedios, in latitude 57°. The title of Spain was at this period unquestionably better than that of Great Britain. Has anything occurred since to deprive Spain of this advantage? The British ministry contend that, by the surrender of the territory under the stipulations of the convention of Nootka Sound, the title of Spain was transferred to Great Britain. If this reasoning be worth anything, it is only upon the admission that the title of Spain thus acquired was good; for if bad, no right would have been acquired under it. It is necessary to look into the act of surrender by Spain, to ascertain the extent of the British right under it; for they can claim no more territory than was actually surrendered. In other words, the title of Spain remains good to all her territory not surrendered. The surrender was made by virtue of an order from Count Florida Banca, dated May 12, 1791. The following extract describes all that was to be restored: "You will give directions that His Majesty's officer, who will deliver this letter, shall immediately be put in possession of the buildings and districts or parcels of land which were occupied by the subjects of that sovereign in April, 1780, as well in the port of Nootka Sound or of St. Lawrence, as in the other, said to be called Port Cox, and to be situated about sixteen leagues distant from the former, to the southward; and that such parcels or districts of land, of which the English subjects were dispossessed, be restored to the said officer." It will be seen how cautious Spain was in so wording this order as to exclude the presumption of any right of dominion in the Crown of Great Britain, and confining it to the possession of certain tracts or parcels of land by British subjects. The British subject was Meares, who gives us the extent of his grant in the following words: King Maquinna "most readily consented to grant us a spot of ground in his territory, whereon a house might be built for the accommodation of the people we intended to leave behind." This looks very little like an intention on the part of the British to take permanent possession of the country; and that Meares himself considered it a temporary establishment only, is clear from his having promised Maquinna, that when they finally left the coast, he should "enter into full possession of the house and all the goods thereunto belonging." It is a little doubtful whether the house were ever built: but if it were, then the surrender of this temporary house and lot to a British subject is to give title in the British Crown to the whole of that coast, for many degrees of latitude.

Captain Vancouver was sent to receive the surrender, but Señor Quadra, putting the same construction upon the letter of Count Florida Banca which it has received from the committee, viz. that he was to surrender only the particular parcel of land occupied by Meares, and Vancouver contending for the whole territory adjoining Nootka Sound, the parties separated, and no surrender was in fact made. For the particulars of the correspondence between Captain Vancouver and Señor Quadra, relative to the surrender, the committee refers to the 2nd volume of Vancouver's voyage. For an account of the transactions which led to the Nootka convention, and the true meaning and effect of that convention, the committee refers to the report of Mr. Cushing and the Memoir of Mr. Greenhow.

On the 14th of December, 1790, Mr. Duncombe, in the House of Commons, moved an address to His Majesty on the Nootka convention. The following extract from that address will show what the minister claimed to have acquired by that convention:

"They (the House of Commons) are eager to embrace the first opportunity of offering to His Majesty their cordial congratulations on so satisfactory an issue of the late negotiation, which has continued to these kingdoms the blessings of peace, has maintained the honor of His Majesty's crown, by providing an adequate reparation for the violence which was committed at Nootka, and has secured to His Majesty's subjects the exercise of their navigation, commerce, and fisheries, in those parts of the world which were the subject of discussion."

Mr. Fox opposed this address, and the following extracts from his speech will show his estimate of these acquisitions:

"In the early part of the debate we had heard nothing but rhodomontade about acquisition, nothing but of new sources of trade, new objects of enterprise, new oceans and new continents opened to the activity of our merchants and the courage

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