

science, would be inhabited by savage man or savage beast. The joyous song of plenty would not now rise daily from the hearts of our happy millions. I am replying more to the arguments urged here against the West, than arguing our title to the territory. It is now too late to begin an argument on the question of our title. That seems to be admitted on all hands, at least by most of the gentlemen who are opposed to giving the notice at this time.

The gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. BEDINGER,] apparently not content with the praises that have been urged in favor of British valor and British power, dragged down the American Eagle—the noble emblem of our country's freedom—from its high flight, and made it to stop in its free course, that a rainless cloud might pass by. It is true, sir, the gentleman made his bird at first to soar gracefully and boldly upwards, as though to snatch in its beak the lightnings of Heaven; but, as it approached even an imaginary danger—"a rainless cloud"—like a coward, it stooped to its perch to let it sweep by. Sir, I, too, am familiar with the habits of the eagle, and well remember, on the approach of one of those maddening tempests that sometimes seem to be struggling for mastery over both sea and land—one which carries before it consternation and terror, and leaves in its track destruction and death—one that now sweeps the vale below, and now seizes by the top the mountain pine, and dashes it to the earth, and anon lashes old ocean to a fury. At the approach of such a tempest, I beheld one of these noble birds, with its wings folded in peace, watching the coming storm, and, as it felt the first rockings of the tempest, it sprang aloft, and for a moment lay suspended in mid heaven, as though to discover where the tempest most raged; then, dashing onward, it approached nearer and yet nearer the coming storm, until at last it was lost in its darkness and confusion. I could but exclaim, Noble bird! even if thou fallest, stricken down by the bolts of Heaven, 'twas bravely done. For a moment to learn its fate, I saw it gracefully emerging from the cloud into the broad sunsh. Heaven, far above the raging tempest below. Then shaking the raindrops from its triumphant wing, it cut its course westward to its seat of empire. That, sir, that, was an American eagle, and no mousing and cowardly owl, that stoops to its perch because a rainless cloud lay in its free course.

Sir, we are admonished by gentlemen, that if this notice be given, we shall lose California. Lose California! When, sir, was it ours? Never, sir, never; and how are we to lose that which is not, and never was, ours? Sir, I have no objection to the purchase of California; and here let me say, that I confidently believe that this Republic, with her free institutions and prosperity, standing as an example to the world, free and enlightened governments are to and will, extend from one country to another, until at last every man will be left free to speak, free to act, and free to think. But, sir, for the chance of purchasing California from a weak and distracted nation, I am unwilling to yield territory that is ours, simply because a proud and arrogant nation

demands it. We are told by gentlemen who admit Oregon to be ours, that we must not give this notice, because England is in a state of preparation for war; that she is stronger this day than she was when she set her proud foot upon the neck of the very genius of war—Napoleon; that she belts the earth with her military posts and colonial possessions; that the sun never rises but it awakens an English soldier to arms; that it never sets but upon British dominions. Sir, this is an argument, if true, addressed solely to the fears of this House and this nation; but I am one of those who do not believe England is so powerful, and this Government so weak, as represented by gentlemen. On the one hand, we have at least four millions out of our twenty millions of inhabitants able to bear arms in defence of our country's honor, and in defence of American soil—with all the munitions and sinews of war at our control—with a country producing all the necessaries of life. On the other hand, England, with a population of about four millions greater than ours, many of whom are engaged in their mines, and have never seen the sweet rays of Heaven's sun, another large proportion of her subjects are confined within the walls of factories, with sinews worn out by fatigue and shrunk by starvation. And who of us is there who does not know that there are now eight millions of hearts of the *Green Emerald* panting for liberty, and eager for a conflict? Sir, who is there of us that does not know that some of the colonial possessions of England rather weaken her in war than give her strength? I repeat, sir, in my opinion, England is not as powerful as represented. But if she is, I would rather, as an American citizen, proud of my country, enter into a just war with England than set a cowardly foot on a weak and powerless nation. Nay, more, sir; I would rather yield Oregon to the imperious demands of England than be guilty of stealing it by masterly inactivity. If we are afraid to defend our territory, let us say so to the world, and give it up with as much grace as possible, and forget the inglorious deed.

Let me now for a moment revert to the proposition before the committee. It is the giving of notice to terminate the convention existing between this Government and England. The express treaty stipulation is, that either nation may, at any time, give such notice. Suppose we give the notice and England declares war, setting forth in her declaration that the United States have dared to execute an express treaty stipulation. This is all she could in truth say, and this embodies the entire proposition. Do you not see in such an event the civilized world would be against England and hold her responsible for the result? Sir, believing as I do that our title to Oregon is perfect—feeling it to be right that we should vindicate our title to it, and believing no nation should voluntarily surrender jurisdiction to her territory, and believing that further delay involves the question in more difficulties—I shall cast my vote for the notice, and leave the issue with Him who holds the destinies of nations in his hands.