

probable that any notice *in itself* will produce war. But much will depend on the intention with which it is given, and that intention must be gathered from its tone and language, and from the Executive and Legislative acts which have preceded and will succeed it. If this Government intend it as a challenge—if it be flung as a gage of battle at the foot of a haughty and a hated foe, in the same temper will it be lifted. If it be the blast of the trumpet which summons to the field of honor and of mortal fight, then will the answering defiance be heard, and the armed foeman cannot avoid the lists. The shock of the conflict will be inevitable. If, on the other hand, we intend this notice as only the more earnest and anxious expression of our desire for the amicable and honorable adjustment of this long protracted controversy, now perilous to the peace, prejudicial to the interests, of both Governments, and every day becoming more complicated and more perilous, in a corresponding spirit will we be met, and peace be its result. It is right that we should make it in its face and form, as it professes to be in its design and purpose, a peace measure. Peace is a blessing of such inestimable value—war is a curse of such infinite evil—that the one should be cherished and cultivated, the other be shunned and avoided, by all honorable means. Sir, we all profess a desire for peace; it is the condition necessary to the welfare of the Republic—to the development of its vast and various resources—necessary to the successful prosecution of its commerce, its agriculture, and its manufactures. It is that which has so benefitted and blessed us, which, like the dews and sunshine, has fallen upon our land, and “clothed it with beauty as with a garment.” And that statesman, now, who by his rash and inconsiderate, much less his reckless and wilful action, breaks that peace, will deserve, and receive, the curses of God and man. It should be the habitual policy of this Government to cultivate peace with all nations; as a matter of principle to avoid war, with the weak as well as the strong. We should not seek it with the weakest and most depressed of the nations, with even the down-trodden and impotent Mexican. His very weakness should be the guarantee of our justice, his inability to avenge a wrong the surest appeal to our magnanimity, and the strongest assurance that we would not, we could not, insult, much less strike him.

The firm and conscientious conviction of the correctness of this policy constituted one of the reasons which led me to oppose the immediate annexation of Texas, she then being in a state of war with Mexico. I apprehend that it might result in the annexation of war; and though the war was not to be a dangerous one, or very bloody, yet it was to be an unnecessary one. But permit me to say, Mr. Chairman, that, from the passage of the joint resolution by Congress, and its acceptance by Texas, the whole question was changed; a contract was made by our Government with Texas, and, by every consideration of honor we should have fulfilled that contract, and at every hazard. Nothing but dangerous and protracted illness prevented me from voting for the bill, which in fact admitted Texas into this Union, for I do not feel towards her as the gentleman from New York, (Mr. CULVER,) who addressed the committee last night, who remarked, he did not regard her as a sister legitimately born into the family, and therefore he did not cordially receive her. I feel for her the kindest sympathy, and welcome her into the family circle as one of the sisterhood of States, henceforth entitled, with the others, to an equal participation in the blessings and protection of the great family dwelling. In the same policy I would have the Government to avoid war with England, not from the motives and considerations which some gentlemen have so forcibly referred to; not because, as some have said, we are weak and she strong—because we are defenceless and she armed at all points, and exhaustless in the munitions of war; not because, as some gentlemen have said, that her Island Queen sits throned upon an empire whose shadow covers the world; not because her proud flag, in the day of battle, will be upheld by well appointed and invincible veterans; not because her war steamers and her well built and countless ships of the line upon the wing of the wind and wing of the flame shall cover the ocean, and sweep every sea with their destructive and irresistible fire. But I would avoid war with Great Britain, because we have not resorted to all proper and honorable means for an amicable adjustment of the controversy, and therefore war must be deemed unnecessary, and