

what has been called in this debate "manifest destiny," becomes an important consideration.

In the few remarks which I addressed to the House on a former occasion, I glanced at this view of the subject hastily and briefly, and I shall now devote a few moments to its application.

I suppose, sir, that when Mr. Monroe made his famous declaration of 1823, he designed it to have some practical application. That portion of it referring to European interference with South American politics was occasioned by the attempt of the Holy Alliance to assist the Bourbons to recover an ascendancy in South America. But that portion of it which denied that "any unsettled portion of the continent was the subject for future *European colonization*," was intended to apply to the northwest coast of the Pacific, the very territory in question: it was so treated in the debate on the Panama mission, and Judge White, of Tennessee, expressly so stated in that discussion. A moment's reflection will make it apparent that this was its object—it was indeed the only considerable territory to which it could refer. I do not contend, sir, that when a declaration of this general character is made by a President or Congress that we are bound to sustain it by force of arms whenever its principles are violated. But I insist that it was a statement of a great American policy; that it well became our growing importance; that subsequent events—our increase in population, in States, in commerce, in all the constituents of greatness—give it still greater authority. And I submit that this is the very case which demands its practical application. This territory is unsettled—it is on this continent—it is contiguous to this Union. As long as it was merely ground for hunting and trapping, and trade with Indians, it was of but little consequence. But now the wave of population breaks across the peaks of the Rocky mountains, and mingles its spray with the Pacific; it is becoming settled, and will soon be of commercial importance. The question is, shall we permit it to remain open to foreign colonization? I say that question should be determined, judging of us not merely as we are, but as we probably shall be.

The doctrine that a nation has a right to regard the preservation of its vital interests, in such a controversy, is to be found "in the best considered state papers of modern times." It is the province of enlightened statesmanship to look forward, and no statesman can fail to perceive the importance of that territory to this Union. To divide the country would be to build up rival and conflicting interests—to permit England to erect a commercial, if not a military Gibraltar on the Pacific coast. It would be to surrender all chance of fair and equal rivalry in commercial enterprise in that sea. It would be to put England in possession of ano-

ther key to control what may be the seat of a vast commerce. Mr. Chairman, I think that to abandon the principles of Mr. Monroe's declaration would be to filter in the path which Providence has marked out for us, and to prove ourselves unworthy of a high destiny. It is not thus that England has "halted by the wayside." She has gone onward with a steady and imperial march. She has seen her destiny, and has pursued it; and she has made a small island on the borders of Europe the seat of the mightiest power the world has ever known. The seat of our power is a vast continent. We are widely separated from Europe, and unconnected with its politics. In the very spring and vigor of our youth, we, too, are pressing onward with the steps of a giant. Ours will be the great predominating Power on this continent; and our permanent peace and our essential interests will be jeopardized by any foreign colonization.

Would Great Britain permit us to colonize any portion of India contiguous to her possessions? Would she permit us to "annex" any independent State, if there were one on her East Indian frontier? Would we permit her to conquer or purchase Cuba? No, sir; no, sir. It is in this sense I would apply the doctrine of "manifest destiny," so often remarked upon in the debate. It is an expression which I did not originate, and which does not convey my idea; but, sir, I would not be willing to shut my eyes to the argument contained in the phrase itself. The doctrine of natural boundary sometimes establishes a title to a country; a deep river, a high chain of mountains, even a change in production, may mark the line between nations. Sir, the title for which I contend is not so feebly established; a rolling ocean, an unsettled country, a contiguous territory, all lend force to our pretensions. Providence has separated us from the Old World, and our policy, as well as our institutions, should perpetuate the division.

In conclusion of these remarks, it only remains for me to say, that I am as far as any gentleman on this floor from a desire to precipitate this country and Great Britain into a war. I believe that peace is the policy of both countries. We are running a career of earnest (I trust, not ungenerous) rivalry, and we are both disseminating the English language, the principles of free government, and the blessings of religious toleration. Yet I believe that this notice is the best mode of maintaining peace, if it can be maintained upon honorable terms; but if we can only preserve peace by a surrender of American territory, by adopting a course as impolitic as it would be degrading, I shall give my vote for every measure the honor of the country may demand, under what, I trust, is a true sense of my responsibility as a legislator and a man.