

and we will place there, our mounted riflemen, to protect them. Can Britain complain of this? No, sir. We are told she has now thirty forts in Oregon, upon which floats the banner of St. George. Should our citizens settle and improve the country, Britain cannot complain. She has made a settlement at Puget Sound, in latitude 47°, on the most inland arm of the sea, and which is destined to be one of the greatest commercial emporiums in that country. Sir, some gentlemen, who, but a few weeks since were as brave as Cæsar, when a certain other territorial question was pending, which has now been happily consummated, said to the helmsman of the ship of State, "*Nè times Cæsarem vchis,*" and who were then ready and willing, not only to fight England and France, for their interference, but to fight "the world in arms," have by some unseen and mysterious influence, almost in the twinkling of an eye, become the converts to peace and the alarmists of power. A change has come over the spirit of their dream. Sir, for the last five weeks, at the opening of our session, every morning a British lion has been introduced into this Hall, to shake his gory locks in our faces, and awe us into submission. Shall we take counsel of our fears, and surrender at discretion? Sir, that beast, powerful as he may be, is not invincible. Had Samson taken counsel of his fears, he never would have met and slain *the beast*, and won and wore the prize of his achievement, or sipped honey from the prostrate carcass of this monster king of the forest.

Gentlemen have not stopped here with their pictures of terror. They have told us of the vast dominions of British possessions; that the sun never rises or sets upon her dominions; no matter in what clime, her banner floats in the breeze, and the peals of her drum greet the ear around the circle of the globe. They have counted her ships and numbered her cannon and her battalions of infantry. They have told us she holds the strong places on every continent, and the commanding islands on every sea; that Gibraltar, Malta, and the Dardanelles, are hers; St. Helena, Good Hope, the Indies and China, are her outposts; the Bermudas in the Atlantic, the Sandwich and Falkland Islands in the Pacific, were her resting places, within striking distance of our shores. That she encircles us on the north and east by the Canadas, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia; and, to appease her rapacity for dominion, we are now to give her Oregon, and thus to shut ourselves out from the Pacific, and hem us in on the west. Are these the arguments of American statesmen, in an American Congress? No, sir, they are the arguments of fear. Yes, the very arguments the British Government desire to hear. Create alarm and division at home, and encourage her obstinately to press her pretensions: you accomplish for her what she cannot accomplish for herself. You hear no such arguments in her councils; her advocates and alarmists appear to be on this side the water. Sir, is it possible that that rock-girt speck of an "ocean isle," lashed by the waves of a northern sea, can hold the world in chains, and the nations of the east in fear and bondage! That she has power, will not be denied; but that she is invincible, cannot be admitted. The giant monster, clad

in his panoply of steel, was slain by the stripling shepherd boy. Sir, what mean these arguments of gentlemen? Do they tend to prove our title or disprove the claims of Britain? No, sir. Why, then, are they used? They are the echo, in words, of the same arguments by which the British Government intends to force her demands, by the promulgation of her military preparations. They are the arguments of *arms*, which silence the voice of reason and coerce submission to unjust and unfounded demands. Who ever knew Britain to negotiate on any important question, for centuries past, without first arming, and promulgating to the world that she was armed? History does not furnish an instance. Sir, how and by what means has she extended her dominions? In the very same manner and by the same means she now seeks to get Oregon. Some straggling smuggler, such as John Meares, or some marauding freebooter, as Drake, either by choice or accident, lands upon some unsettled shore; remains a short time for temporary purposes of trade or repairs; he takes possession of the country in the name of his sovereign. No matter who has discovered or explored the place before him, he returns to England with a long and false account of important discoveries. England wants the country; she makes a grant to some colony or corporation; if their intrusion be resisted by another nation, upon better title, England arms, and then proposes negotiation; but if her claim be too new and fragile at that time to bear investigation, or she is otherwise engaged, a final division of territory and adjustment of claims is waived for the present. Some diplomatic convention is proposed and agreed upon, by which Britain is kept in possession, and in which are artfully interwoven extensive terms and complicated conditions, to form the germs of future controversy. For, sir, it has become a maxim that Britain never makes a treaty without planting in it the seeds of its own dissolution. Time rolls on. Her claims, by time and circumstances, ripen into what she then calls treaty rights; she refuses to go back of her conventions, plants herself upon them, insists upon the execution of their terms as she construes them. If she cannot entirely monopolize the country, at some convenient time for her she renews negotiations to settle boundaries, proposes arbitrary and unfair lines as a compromise, without regard to the justice or injustice of the origin of her claims. If her demands be not yielded to, she arms, publishes in her gazettes that her fleets are equipped, her garrisons supplied, the regiments filled, and then shakes her trident at the world, and demands a categorical answer, and thus coerces negotiation, and she dictates the terms of the treaty, always being sure to have the lion's share. She now attempts to make that experiment upon us. Will we submit? She has planted herself upon the Nootka convention, and construes it in her own way, without ever looking to the entire want of any just claims to base it upon. In 1788, John Meares, a Portuguese smuggler, visits Nootka and builds a boat. In 1790 John Meares is changed into a British lieutenant, and his claims have grown into "tracts of land and houses." In 1815 this claim has ripened into a national right, and that too without either settlement or possession.

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