

of further outrage—and will our people, think you, await your tardy legislation before they rush to the rescue? We have faults and failings enough, God knows—we of the West; but cowardice—tame, cold-blooded cowardice—the craven spirit that would desert a comrade at his utmost need—that, at least, is no part of our character. Let the news pass over our land, of a massacre among the Oregon emigrants; and your armed occupation project will be an idle form. Oregon will soon be occupied—an armed occupation, too! And occupied by whom? Not by smooth-chinned, trim-uniformed cadets from West Point; but by veteran pioneers, from whom old age itself, though it whiten their locks, cannot steal their strength and their fire; by fierce young hunters of the frontier, who heard the war-whoop in their cradles, and who burn to emulate the exploits—to avenge the death, perhaps—of their fathers; by a partisan army, in short, of Nimrod warriors, who, with their knives at their belts, and their long rifles on their shoulders, fear nothing, red or white, in the form of a man.

I am a friend of peace. I hold, that it is our duty to do much, to suffer much, if thus we may avoid the shedding of human blood. What a spectacle would it be, in this age of the world, to see two powerful nations squandering lives and treasure in the insensate and antiquated trade of war! To avert such a calamity, I would agree to any adjustment within the bounds of reason, that should not compromise our honor. Farther than this, even expediency itself forbids us to go. A distinguished British statesman has well said: "He who vindicates the honor of a country, vindicates its dearest interests; for he who vindicates its honor, preserves its peace." Nothing more true. Permanent peace was never yet obtained by dishonorable concession.

Say that these United States, struck with panic terror of England's power, were to abandon to her that to which she scruples not to set up a claim—the entire territory of Oregon; suppose that, for the moment, the settlers there submitted to pass under monarchical rule: should we, even by such base abandonment of our rightful claim, have obtained anything beyond a suspension of hostility? We may, by law, cede territory; but the spirit of freedom is no Russian serf, to go with the land, and become a bondsman to its new master. We thus postpone, not avoid, a contest. We sow the seeds that will surely ripen, and produce, some day, a Northwestern War of Independence. We decree, in fact, that the scenes of 1776 shall, hereafter, be re-enacted on the shores of the Pacific; that Oregon shall have her Bunker Hills and her Benningtons; that some Lexington grass-plot, on the banks of the Columbia, shall, one day, be dyed with the blood of freemen. Then, with a thousand aggravations, will come that war, which we vainly dream we may escape by temporizing.

When we do make a move, let it be an effectual one. It is but folly to cry peace! peace! when there is no peace. It is worse than idle to patch up a hollow truce. That which public opinion demands—that which these United States must have, sooner or later—let us claim now; now, before blood has flowed; now, before, in the excitement of an actual rupture, both Powers lose sight, as there is too much reason to fear they may, of cool and rational judgment.

We know that we must have the valley of the Columbia, north as well as south of the river. No thinking man doubts that. We know, that, ere long, we must not only extend our jurisdiction over that valley, but also provide homes for its emigrants, by grants of lands to actual settlers. A bill