

the whole. And this is all any nation can gain by compromising its right for the sake of peace with Great Britain.

Thus we have a tract of country embracing twelve degrees and forty minutes, secured to us by a title so strong that I do not well see how it could be stronger. But 'will let the title pass. It is enough for me that the gentleman has acknowledged our right to the country. Now, sir, why not defend that right? After knowing what our rights are, how long shall we see them trampled upon before we arouse to their defence? How long are the emissaries of the Hudson's Bay company to maraud the plains of Oregon, part and parcel of our common country, oppressing the hardy pioneer in American enterprise, and we, the framers of our country's laws—the guardians of our country's rights—remain listless and inactive? How much further, under the encouragement of her old ally, Great Britain, are the Indians to extend their depredations upon American property and American life without an indignant response from the American Congress? There are not only dwelling houses and missionary stations in Oregon, but churches and school houses. And who can tell how many of these may have been burnt to the ground, or stained by the blood of massacred American citizens, through the cruelties of our ancient and allied foes, (Great Britain and the Indians,) whilst the gentleman was making his temporizing speech? Ay, sir, who can tell what outrages are perpetrated there, from day to day, upon American soil, and upon American citizens, under the sanction of laws? But what laws? The laws of the United States? Those we have never given them. In vain does the poor Oregon settler ask for a trial by the laws of his country. In vain does he ask for a judge or a jury. And, further yet, in vain does he ask for the protection of the American flag—a boon not denied one of our citizens in almost any other portion of the world. But how are they tried? By British laws, or by the British constitution? No, sir. Have they the advantages of even the old common law? No, sir. How, then, are they tried? Why, by the whims and caprices of the Hudson Bay company, which varies its laws to suit the times, the occasions, and the cases; which follow the old Scotch Jedburgh fashion—hang first, and try afterwards. To do justice to Great Britain, I will state that she has enacted a few laws in relation to Oregon; and one of these provides that the Hudson Bay company have power to give judgment against any American citizen in Oregon, and issue an execution, under cover of which he may be confined in their forts, or sent to the jails of Canada, at their pleasure. So, when they do not want to try and punish American citizens on American territory, without law, or by mob law, made on the spot, for fear of outraging public feeling, they will kidnap them, and take them to a British colony, to be tried by British judges and British laws. Now, under this state of things, we ask that a territorial government be sent them; we ask for them laws, judges, and jurors; to all of which, every American citizen, however humble his condition, and however distant his abode, is justly entitled. But if they cannot have these, as the scantiest pittance—as the least act of grace on the part of our government—we ask only the protection of the American flag. And what less can we ask for those daring adventurers who, "*duci amore patrie*," sacrificing all the endearments of their early homes, and all the gay delights of the social and fashionable circles, count their lives as

nothing in the midst of their determination to extend the bounds of American civilization, and plant the cross of Christ on the shores of the Pacific?

Mr. Chairman, when we have ascertained our rights, then is just the time to resent any encroachment upon them. Such was the governing sentiment of our patriotic forefathers in 1774, who thought not a moment of the power—the tremendous power—of their mother country, when they found her the aggressor—when they found her in the wrong, and they themselves in the right. And if poor as they then were, both as States and individuals; if weak as they then were in every respect; if unprotected as they then were against the Indians on one side, and Great Britain on the other, they dared strike for their rights, can we long hesitate as to our duty? Shall it be said that, ere the last revolutioner has gone down to his grave, this nation will condescend to tamper, to parody, to use the language of weakness and timidity, when a tract of country, embracing one-fourth more than the original thirteen States, is at stake? And that, too, because as the gentleman has told us, England is powerful and more prepared for war than we are. But what consists this great, this formidable power of England, sufficient, in the mind of the gentleman, to stifle the voice of our people, to paralyze the action of this body on so important a question as this? Like the millionaires of 1836, England makes great show on paper. She has possessions beyond count; but, like those millionaires, she has lived on that bubble, expanded credit, and she is about out of funds. Her citizens at home, who sweat and blood she has so long and so severely taxed, are becoming fictitious and disorderly, while her colonists are bearing her yoke very impatiently. She is in debt beyond her means or expectations ever to pay; and each year she adds to it. Her strength is anywhere else than where it ought to be in the affections of her people. And here, sir, the impregnable fortress of the American government. Her people love it, and will sacrifice their all to defend it. But here Great Britain is weak. The people upon whom she relies for defence are groaning under innumerable cruelties and oppressions; and if they fight at all, it will be from compulsion and for pay, rather than love. And the value of such soldiers against men fighting for their inalienable rights, the struggle for our independence, fully tested. England has little to gain even, at being going to war with us, and much, very much to lose; and she has no idea of it. She has had enough of wars with the United States, where she always gets worsted. She prefers negotiations, which she always beats us. Hence we find her not willing to fight for, but to negotiate for, Oregon. Having no title to this desirable tract of country, she pretends one, and modestly claims the whole. But in this enlightened Christian age, she does not wish to go to war, and propose compromise. And thus far she has been very fortunate; for already has an American Secretary of State (Mr. Clay, in 1826) instructed one of our ministers (Mr. Gallatin) to offer to give her all above 49 degrees so as to make our boundary west of the meridian parallel with that east—a surrender of 50 degrees and 40 min.—almost half the country; and this, after he had written that Great Britain could not make out a colorable title to any portion of the northwest coast. She, however, in her complacency, offered to give us all below the centre of the navigable current of the Columbia at its mouth.

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