

nation, pretending to independence, and the equality supposed to result from it, has yielded up the whole subject of dispute which had led to the war. There is, it is true, more than one shining instance, in which a nation has conquered its independence without impairing the position of equality of its opponent. There are instances, too, in which a conquered people have yielded all. But I know of no treaty in modern times, between equals, in which one of the parties, after a war, has given up the whole subject in controversy without an equivalent. There may be such instances, but I do not remember one, even in the most successful period of the career of Napoleon. Neither Marengo nor Austerlitz ever gave him such results in his treaties with Austria. Of all the European nations, Great Britain is the most distinguished for the pertinacity with which she has hitherto struggled for her rights and her honor. Now, Mr. Chairman, is there a man amongst us who supposes—does the wildest dreamer of us all believe—that she would ever close a war by yielding not only the whole subject in dispute, but her own undoubted territory until she had first waged it, and been defeated in it, as a war not only of mastery, but of existence? Would her sagacious statesmen be slow to perceive that any treaty which branded her with the visible stamp of inferiority after a war, would be the sure precursor of her downfall? She knows that the hungry and expectant eye of continental Europe is fixed upon the prey which a division of her mighty empire would afford. She is aware, too, that the calculation has already been made as to how far the invention of steam has destroyed the security of her natural defences—of her insular position. She no longer feels able to continue the proud boast that “Britannia needs no bulwarks, no towers along the steep;” for she is now engaged in constructing coast defences. She must feel that the whole charm of her power lies in the idea of her invincibility on the seas and in her colonial possessions. To destroy by her act this idea, would be to hold forth the signal for the eagles to gather to the banquet, and would involve the loss of power, empire, and character itself. Can I be mistaken in supposing that a war which brought her to such a conclusion, would probably be the longest and bloodiest ever known in the annals of mankind? Gentlemen have promised that this thing shall be done. I do not stand her to dispute it. In the event of a war, I wish that they may be able to make good their words. But before this can be accomplished, we must track the British lion in his blood from the rising to the setting sun. We must hunt him from stronghold to stronghold, until we have pursued him throughout the circumference of the globe. Every sea, every clime must become familiar with the noise of the terrific strife. Far distant people, nations to whom as yet we are scarcely known, must be startled at the apparition of this new power which is to struggle with Great Britain for the mastery in places where she had long reigned the most supreme. From Aden to the Ionian isles we must pursue her over wave and through fortress, on one continuous line of blood and fire, until we have swept her flag from the seas, and buried her fleets in the ocean. We must throw down her places of strength; we must despoil even her gardens of “pleasance.” Yes, sir; to this dreadful extremity must we bring her, before she can agree to conclude the contest upon terms which would destroy her most cherished sentiment of national pride, and probably lead to the

destruction of the mightiest empire which, as yet, the world has known.

If we are to obtain what gentlemen have promised us, such must be the war which we are to wage. What, Mr. Chairman, must be the consequences of such a war upon ourselves and our institutions? Who can foresee these consequences in all their extent, or undertake to measure the results? How great would be the danger of a centralization of all power in the federal government, and of an obliteration of the lines of State authority? How many hundreds of millions of debt should we entail on ourselves and our posterity? How far should we fall into the lower depths of the paper system? To how distant a day in the Greek calends should we postpone those great democratic reforms which we had fondly hoped we were about to introduce, and for which we have labored so long and often with such doubtful success? We should go into the war a free, happy, and moral people. Who can undertake to foretell the extent and nature of the transformations which we may undergo before we come out of it, or who can measure the waste of all the elements of human happiness and social order which such a war would occasion? Should we be justified in the eyes of God, or of mankind, for thus perilling the great interests of our country and of humanity for the sake of obtaining possession of Oregon a few years earlier, when we are sure of acquiring it a little later by honorable and peaceful means? Could we be justified in exposing the country to such extremity if there be even a probable chance of acquiring the territory by means not only peaceful but compatible with our honor? Or if war and such a war be inevitable, ought we not to postpone it until we have more men, more means, more resources, and more auspicious circumstances for its commencement? But, Mr. Chairman, it may be said that in my view of the probable consequences of such a war as that must be which should lead to such a conclusion as is promised, I have virtually admitted that the republican system of policy is practicable only in time of peace. Such is not my opinion. We have not had time as yet to introduce or mature our system. The ideas upon which they rest are not fully possessed by the public mind. They require time and a period of peace for their full development. But if once matured and developed, I believe they would enable our government and people to stand the shock and pressure of war with far greater ease and buoyancy than under any other course of policy. I, for one, am of the opinion that if we were now to plunge into war we should fall into some of the worst forms of the paper system, owing to the remains of what I believe to be a wrong idea once implanted in the public mind; and yet I believe that the expenses of a war could be far better sustained without these abuses of that system than with them. I have long thought that we suffered almost as much in the last war from such abuses as from the British troops. But, Mr. Chairman, I have yet another answer. The genius of our institutions is pacific—they were not organized for distant and offensive warfare. For defensive war I believe they are the strongest in the world, for they bring to its aid the united hearts of our people. We were not organized for a career of war and conquest, and I thank God for it; for then we should have required a far more despotic form of government, and we might have stood as fair a chance as any to become the curse of mankind, instead of being

their benefactors. We have a high belief in the usefulness and masterly character of the organization, to do universal good, to be wealthy and great without the glory of human like Attilla of nations, storm of our roads and carriers of nature, the common ministers of monuments, the more of our destiny. But, Mr. Chairman, was pursued the address in whatever them, the people most so in a war waged have promised the war would nations who great, and so large? I fire of a conflict to terminate the opinion and honor. Sir, I believe most probable we should we might Could any But gentlemen myself be easily be would secure honor. The negotiations have now a line of negotiations upon liberty have manifested how rely on Great Britain session of pacific for pages are in possession the chance are gentlemen this; but themselves with there are there are