

Ghent, on the 20th May, 1818, instructed Mr. Rush, our minister, to say to the British Government: "If the United States leave her (England) in undisputed enjoyment of all her holds upon Europe, Asia, and Africa, with all her actual possessions in this hemisphere, we may very fairly expect that she will not think it consistent either with a wise or friendly policy to watch with eyes of jealousy and alarm every possibility of extension to our natural *dominion* in *North America*, which she can have no solid interest to prevent, until all *possibility* of her preventing it shall have vanished." Here you have the very principle, laid down by the Executive, in relation to colonization and dominion in North America, and here it is as broad and as clear as it is in the President's Message, and here you have its application to this very subject under consideration. After this announcement, in the face of her own pretensions, England yielded; and on the 6th October, 1818, formally delivered possession of Astoria to this Government. And I believe, if she is sincere in her desire for peace, she will yield now to our rights, and abandon the entire country west of the Rocky Mountains.

But it is urged by those opposed to giving this notice, that it will prevent further treaty, and all prospect of future compromise. To this I answer, I would not interfere with the treaty-making power, and this notice will not—but I am opposed to any compromise of this question—I do not see how it can be effected without compromising the Administration with it. Texas and Oregon were in issue in the Presidential contest, as well as a revenue Tariff and a constitutional Treasury. And is there an intelligent man who believes for one moment that Mr. Polk could have been elected on the Tariff and Treasury questions without the principle involved in Texas and Oregon? It seems to me there is not. Texas is admitted—Oregon remains—and in it is to be tested the broad questions of Foreign Colonization and Foreign Dominion on the *North American continent*. The moment any compromise is made by which the exclusive right of Great Britain is acknowledged to any portion of the territory west of the Rocky Mountains, even north of 54° 40', between the Rocky Mountains and the Russian territory, you allow her to colonize, and especially do you give her *dominion*. The moment you compromise at 49°, you recognize her right to colonize, and grant her *dominion* in the most essential part of the Oregon Territory, notwithstanding the declaration of the proposition, "that it should be distinctly announced to the world as our settled policy, that no such thing, "with our consent," should be permitted. Compromise this question and pass, if you can, with the present Congress, your Tariff and constitutional Treasury laws, and Mr. Polk will be compelled, before he leaves the Presidential chair, to sign or veto bills for their repeal; more than this, the majority that are in power with him will be scattered to the winds. In my humble judgment, he will be driven to sign or veto bills for internal improvements of the most latitudinarian character. And he will leave the Presidential chair with less regret, and more reproach from his countrymen and odium from abroad, than any man who has ever filled it. On the other hand, if the President stands firm, as I believe he will, and maintains inflexibly the principle he has avowed as to foreign *interference*, foreign *colonization*, and foreign *dominion*, all is well—it is his country's cause—the people are with him; and though he is without a party in Congress, and although this House and the Senate, and even a Cabinet be against him, he has nothing to fear. The whole of Oregon, like the whole of Texas, will be ours, and the President will rally around him a party, not by the old organization, but of the Democratic elements of the country, in the country's cause, more formidable than any President since the days of Washington.

But it is urged that the President is bound to accept the 49° if offered by Great Britain. This is denied; and those who should sustain the affirmative, and show sufficient reason, evade it by asking, "what can the President do if England refuses to approve the act of her minister in rejecting the proposal of the President and agrees to accept it?" This ingenious question they answer themselves, by asserting: "He cannot avoid settling at the 49th deg. without dishonor. He is 'bound to do it.'" This is more specious than sound. It assumes, first, either that by such refusal of Great Britain, the proposition of the President would be reinstated, or he would be bound to renew it. Not so, the proposition has been made—it has been rejected; and it has been unqualifiedly withdrawn. The matter now stands as though no such proposal had been made, and no