

out prejudice to the claim of either. In 1827, Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay, then in the administration, offered to give to Great Britain all north of forty-nine degrees. But this offer of a part, only made her greedy for more; and a long negotiation ended in the renewal, in 1827, of the above agreement, subject to be annulled at any time after a year's notice by either party.

Great Britain here began to set up her pretensions, which have been growing ever since; but it was no direct claim. "Great Britain (said her negotiators in 1826) *claims no exclusive sovereignty over any portion of that territory.* Her present claim, not to any part, but to the whole, is limited to a right of joint occupancy in common with other states, *leaving the right of exclusive dominion in abeyance.*"

And there it was suffered to rest by Mr. Clay, in 1826; and from that nest-egg, as has been aptly said, has been hatched the chicken that now flaps its wings and crows over the empire corporation, which England is cherishing in Oregon, to emulate, one day, in the West, the power of her empire corporation in the East.

With Russia, the only other power in that region, we have a treaty not to extend her settlements south of her acknowledged line. But Great Britain keeps the question of dominion in "abeyance," and continues to encroach, while she continues to negotiate, and while the leaders of the Whig party in the Senate of the United States, following the policy of Mr. Clay, in 1826, coolly say that, "if we have waited so quietly for twenty-six years, for the adjustment of this question, they do not see why we should not wait longer."*

And their remedy against the encroachments of Great Britain, who never turns her foot back till driven, is, to wait "twenty years longer, when an agricultural population from the United States will peaceably have spread itself over the territory, and the hunters of the Hudson Bay Company will all pass off to the desert."

"The controversy is not urgent," was the language of those who opposed action in the present Congress with reference to Oregon; and this has been their language ever since Mr. Clay's proposed concession in 1826; and when a committee of the House of Representatives said, with a truth which has been constantly accumulating in force from that day to this, that "the indifference of America stimulates the cupidity of Great Britain. Our neglect daily weakens our own claim, and strengthens hers; and the day will soon arrive, when her title to this territory will be better than ours, unless ours is earnestly and speedily enforced."

This, then, is the question for the American people, in regard to the national policy as to this vast and invaluable possession. It is a question of national security, whether Great Britain shall circumvent our whole continent.

It is a question of national commerce, whether Great Britain shall monopolize the vast resources of that region, and exclude our hunters and traders and whalemens from the soil and the coast.

And it is a question of national protection to the hardy pioneers, who, in the faith that their country would not claim a soil she should fail to shelter under the wings of her eagle, have settled in that region, and demand the name of an American citizen should, on American soil, be the guaranty of American rights.

THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY AND THE JOINT OCCUPANCY.

Great Britain concedes to us the joint occupancy of the Oregon; but, like the joint occupancy of the hedge-hog and the rabbit, the power to annoy is all on her side.

In 1821, she leased this whole territory to her great territorial corporation, the Hudson Bay Company, for twenty-one years. In 1838, it was extended another twenty-one years. They have already an armed force of some thousands, with six stockade forts, and a marine of six armed vessels, and they are confident that British influence may be maintained as paramount in this interesting part of the coast of the Pacific.

Already they have murdered between four and five hundred of our citizens, who went to Oregon peaceably to share this right of joint occupancy; and in pursuance of the same policy that marked her course toward the North American colonies, England has refused to stipulate with us for the neutrality of the savages, that she may stir up against our citizens in that region.

Great Britain is thus colonizing, by means of her empire corporation, while our institutions will not admit of the use of like means; and while a party in this country hold that the treaty of joint occupancy will not allow us to extend the shield of our laws over our own citizens, she has gone on and attached the whole territory to the province of Canada, appointed justices of the peace, and now administers her laws throughout the country. And

WHAT HAS THE UNITED STATES DONE TO PROTECT HER SETTLERS?

Literally nothing. In 1839, a memorial from Massachusetts showed that three thousand New England emigrants were prepared to proceed to the Oregon, if they could be assured that they

* Speech of Mr. Choate, of Massachusetts, in the Senate, March, 1844.