

of the proposition made in deference alone to what had been done by my predecessors, and the implied obligation which their act seemed to impose, afford satisfactory evidence that no compromise which the United States ought to accept can be effected."

Impose on whom? On James K. Polk? No; impose on the American nation, of which he was the mere representative, an obligation arising from the fact that, on four different occasions, this offer had been authorized; so that the honor of the nation bound him now to renew it. He renews accordingly the offer of 1824, that is, the line of 49; but with the exception of the navigation of the Columbia river, at the same time giving England some minor but substantial advantages in lieu of it. The question I now propose to the friends of the President on this floor, (and it is a very obvious one,) is this: If the previous offers of this Government in 1818, 1824, 1826, and and their renewal in 1843, created an implied obligation on the President to settle our controversy on the same terms, is not that obligation now more imperative than ever, from the fact that the President himself has repeated that very offer? "Who is James K. Polk?" was a question once asked. We all know now who he is, though there are some who do not know what he is. He is the President of the United States. He speaks for the whole country; he is vested with the authority so to speak, and his acts, in the exercise of that authority, are as binding on the United States as the acts of any of his predecessors; they can create an obligation, express or implied, just as strong as the acts of his predecessors could do. If, in making his offer to England, he was under obligation to make it from the acts of his predecessors, how can any man deny that, having made that offer, he is not bound to accept it if it shall come to him from the other side?

Supposing he shall refuse it, and go with the Senators from Indiana and Ohio for 54° 40', what will be the judgment of the civilized world when England asks us to settle this question of title on terms which we have five times recognised as just and fair? There can be but one opinion. What was right and proper in 1818, right and proper in 1824, right and proper in 1826, right and proper in 1843, right and proper in 1845, is right and proper now. Let us go to war as soon as we think fit after the refusal of such an offer, and I use no extravagant language when I say that from one end of the civilized world to the other the absolute and unmixed reprobation of the American character, the deep and permanent disgrace of the American name will assuredly follow.

But I have no idea, not the most remote, that we are to be subjected to any such degradation. I have an abiding, a settled confidence, which I know cannot deceive me, that no man standing in the relations in which the President admits himself to be placed, and acting under an obligation which he admits to be binding, and with the Senate beside him, which I make bold to say will, by much more than the constitutional majority, affirm such an adjustment as I have referred to, will refuse to make it, provided England gives him the opportunity. I speak from an assurance derived from no other source than that which I have before me on this floor. The Senator from New York who first addressed us, (Mr. Dix,) and the Senator from Missouri who followed him, (Mr. Benton,) have both admitted, almost in words, certainly in spirit, that this dispute ought to be compromised; and though I do not intend to chatechise any Senator, nor ask to be informed of the opinion entertained by any, yet, from the oft-repeated remark of the Senator from Michigan, (Mr. Cass,) though he did at first alarm the Senate and the country, (if he will pardon me for saying so,) that he feared a war, and would be

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