

the negotiation. To the preceding Secretary, (now the Senator from South Carolina,) an offer had been made on the British part. It had been rejected by our Government. The British negotiator had then invited a reference to arbitration. That had been, (I think very properly,) declined, but for reasons fair, statesmanly, and friendly, entirely unlike those on which a like offer has lately been declined on our part. In the first instance, the matter had not arrived at the point of arbitration, and so the former Secretary, (Mr. CALHOUN,) simply said; in the last, the point at which Britain was left, by the abrupt termination of the negotiation, and the retraction of the proposition to settle on the principles of compromise at the parallel of 49°, there was no amicable resort but arbitration, or an unconditional surrender of all further claim to any portion of Oregon. Without stopping to discuss the policy of the rejection of that fair and friendly mode of adjustment of our controversy, I must say that the reasons assigned by Mr. Buchanan for declining to submit the question to arbitration are unsound and puerile, and reflect no honor on him as a statesman.

In the letter of our Secretary to which I now refer, he sets out with urging the question of title; and, before any offer of a settlement is submitted, he tells the British Minister many things very unfit to incline him to accept the coming proposition. He tells him that he is bid to say, that had the Oregon question been a new one, the Executive would make to England no proposition at all. Is this not a strange language to hold in a negotiation which we ourselves had invited? However, (he goes on to say,) the President has found pending negotiations, based on principles of compromise, and in consequence does not feel at liberty abruptly to break them off. Why this new tone, so unlike the previous negotiations and the terms so repeatedly offered by our Government? Why state sudden and haughty pretensions, that are not to be acted upon, and can only surprise and offend? Why talk of ceasing to treat, when the conference is one of our own seeking, and we have not yet made a single offer? He proceeds to tell England, that while we believe and know our title to be unquestionable up to 54° 40', the President feels constrained, as well by existing negotiations as by the acts of his predecessors, to submit a proposition. And now what sort of a proposition? More advantageous to the counter-party than those repeatedly made by his predecessors, in deference to whose admissions he makes it? No, it falls short of them. Is this negotiation to go backwards instead of meeting the advances made on the other side? The President plainly admits, that he yields to the acts of his wise predecessors: either, then, he avows himself bound by some moral, or political, or legal, or diplomatic authority, or by several of these at once. If it binds him, why, then, does he not conform to it? If it bound him at all, it bound him to go at least as far as it had gone. He has said that he found pending negotiations on the basis of a compromise: what would that be in the case of a renewed negotiation? Clearly, that setting out from the old concessions on either side, both parties should offer some additional one. Sir, I cannot forbear remarking that these Polk negotiations seem to have been conducted rather on the horse-trading principle. I do not, however, mean to quarrel with the President so much for this coming short in the proposition made as with the next act in connexion with it. Its rejection could have been no matter of surprise, and it was at once refused by the British negotiator, in terms, as neither reasonable nor fair. Thereupon it was immediately withdrawn, as if in a huff; the refusal to entertain and transmit it was construed as a kind of insult; and Britain was informed that our Government would now accept of nothing short of the entire territory.

Sir, the British Minister is not responsible to me, nor even to the American people, for his course; yet I regret that course; nay, I think he was hasty, presumptuous, and committed a great blunder, unless he had explicit instructions which

met the case heard that other. The terms offered by the negotiator for our Secretary added intimations except to will read offer of 49° 40' and Secretary's rejection. himself, of a constructive calamitous, the code of Secretary's serious.

Was, the adopted to have fifty and probably taken in of reason is less than was the confessed diplomat step was personal yet known plain against Government retained its proposition compromise. No proposition treat. I the other may we was such short of is inferior so that to his Government Sir, the tion—consider, in draw the reason, seize that the accepted have le