

of 49, he touches already the straits of Fuca, the entrance, and the only entrance, to Puget Sound. If he abandons to England but one degree out of the three, which span this debatable land, the line cuts us wholly off from these straits, from Admiralty Inlet, and consequently from Puget Sound; we might as well take the line of 47 at once and surrender that Sound altogether, as to cede its sole entrance and exit.

Is this, then, the gentleman's proposition? that England should have the harbors of Puget? and that it is of no practical importance, whether she has them or not?

Let Captain Wilkes, speaking in his recently-published narrative, say a word to us, touching the harbors of that territory. He tells us:

"The Coast of Oregon, to the south of Cape Flattery, (the southern cape on the Straits of Fuca,) is rocky, much broken, and affords no harbors, except for very small vessels."—*Vol. IV., p. 296.*

And again:

"No ports exist along any part of the Coast of Oregon, south of the Columbia River, that are accessible to any class of vessels, even those of but very small draught of water."—*Vol. IV., p. 143.*

As to the mouth of the Columbia itself, which, for so many years, repelled discovery, he tells us:

"More description can give little idea of the terrors of the bar of the Columbia: all who have seen it have spoken of the wildness of the scene, the incessant roar of the waters, representing it as one of the most fearful sights that can meet the eye of a sailor."—*Vol. IV., p. 293.*

The surveys made by Wilkes have already greatly diminished these dangers; but yet it must remain matter of great doubt, whether the mouth of the Columbia can ever be used, throughout the various seasons of the year, as a general port of entrance for vessels of every draught.

On the other hand, all navigators, from Vancouver to Wilkes, concur in testifying to the safety of the entrance to Puget Sound, and to the value of its harbors; as capable of receiving, and sheltering in perfect security, the largest fleet of line of battle ships the world ever saw brought together. Captain Wilkes says:

"Nothing can exceed the beauty of these waters nor their safety: not a shoal exists within the Straits of Juan de Fuca, Admiralty Inlet, Puget Sound, or Hood's Canal, that can, in any way, interrupt the navigation of a 74-gun ship. I venture nothing in saying, there is no country in the world, that possesses waters equal to these."—*Vol. IV., p. 306.*

I repeat my question: is it of no practical importance whether or not we, as the future owners of Oregon, cede to Great Britain the only safe harbors in that country, retaining not even one roadstead of value, along the entire Pacific coast? Is the maritime control of Oregon a matter so trifling that we are tamely to surrender it to England, merely because, without a color of title, she sees fit to ask us for it? According to what code of logic or morals does it become our imperative duty submissively to give way, for this only reason, that she chooses pertinaciously to insist?

See, in her very pertinacity; the proof, how well she estimates—how differently from the gentleman from Massachusetts, [Mr. WINTHROP,] or the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. PENDLETON]—the value of this disputed tract and its magnificent harbors. She is experienced; she is far-seeing. She looks to practical results. On the table of her cabinet lie minute topographical surveys of the straits of Fuca, of Admiralty Inlet, of the harbors of Puget. From

the first moment of negotiation she contended for these; to the very last she has adhered to her pretensions. And whenever the day comes, if come it does, when she shall relinquish to us that master key to the commerce of the Columbia valley, then will a favorite and long-cherished plan of hers fall to the ground: the plan of settling, with British subjects, quietly but exclusively, this district of country. A distinguished gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. RUETT] seems to perceive no evidence, or danger, of any such plan. I ask him, is it to go for nothing, that while seven thousand American citizens have already settled south of the Columbia, not one, no not even one, has found a home north of that stream? Are we to pass over, as of no serious import, the fact, that the Hudson Bay Company deliberately, if without violence, induce the removal, to what they call the American side of the river, of every citizen of these States who attempts a settlement on what they persist in calling the British side? Must he have stronger portents still? I can furnish them. The following paragraph is from Wilkes's narrative:

"As the charter of the Hudson Bay Company precludes their engaging in agricultural operations, another Company has been organized under the title of the Puget Sound Company, and its officers are exclusively chosen from among them." "The capital of the Puget Sound Company is \$500,000; (that is, about two millions and a half of dollars.) "The operations of the Company are, in consequence, large: they began by making large importations of stock from California, and some of the best breed of cattle from England. They have also entered into farming on an extensive scale." &c.—*Vol. IV., p. 329.*

The Puget Sound Company, observe; their centre of operations being Fort Nisqually, at the southern extremity of the Sound; the very point at which in all probability, a line of communication hence to China and the East Indies, would terminate, and the consequent point of embarkation of the Asiatic trade; the New Orleans, in short, of the Columbia valley, with half the world directly open to the vessels that shall leave her wharves. And this Puget Sound Company has the chartered right, and the capital, to found extensive agricultural settlements settlements of the most permanent kind; settlements which must inevitably and rapidly spread out from that centre, south to the very banks of the Columbia.

And then, whose will that country be? How will the British government dare, even if she would neglect, or abandon, the British interests that will have sprung up, under the protection and privilege of her own laws and charters?

Does the gentleman from South Carolina think that all this is going on just as it should; that no notice to terminate such a state of things, is required? that we have but to fold our hands, in sagacious inactivity and look quietly on, and all will be well? Then may we also declare, when the thunder growls, that there is no storm in the air. Then may the patrol slumber in security at his post, even when the enemy cannot give warning note, that he is advancing, in mass, to the onset.

I pass to the second proposition of the gentleman from Massachusetts, that if, under any circumstances, we suffer war to arise, we thereby bring discredit on our country, and dishonor on the age in which we live.

Discredit! dishonor! strong terms! I have already shown, that we contend for no trifle, for no unprofitable right. The only remaining contingency under which such charges can justly apply, is

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