

that shall be sufficient to take and hold the country. This is what they call the peaceable, friendly mode of proceeding. Holding on to a convention guaranteeing joint rights; and, under it, seizing the exclusive possession in violation of solemn treaty stipulations. Would not such a course lead to war? Would it be deemed a friendly act, consistent with honor and good faith? Or rather, would it not wound the pride of Great Britain, and compel her to fight, whether she desired it or not? Sir, in the name and for the honor of my country, I protest against such a proceeding, as perfidious and disgraceful. I aver that any attempt to practise so insidious a policy—any effort to steal into the country under cover of the treaty of joint occupancy, and seize it in violation of its provisions, must lead to inevitable war—to a dishonorable war—a war in which our country would be placed in the wrong. It would convict our government of duplicity and perfidy—would array the whole civilized world against us, and justly subject us to the charge of a want of honor and fidelity. But if we plant ourselves on our undeniable rights—if we rely on our treaty stipulations—give the notice, annul the convention, demand the possession, we place our country in an impregnable position, which Great Britain cannot successfully assail, and dare not resist.

It will not do for gentlemen to say that England will not acknowledge our right to the possession, when the convention shall have terminated. She has already acknowledged it—has guaranteed it by an irrevocable treaty—has once made the surrender in pursuance of the acknowledgment—and is now estopped from ever interposing a denial. Hence, I insist that the notice is the rightful remedy—is the peaceable remedy, and the only peaceable remedy, by which we can recover the possession of the valley of the Columbia. Those who are opposed to the notice, must, therefore, discover, and avow, either that they are against obtaining the possession, or that they are in favor of war as a substitute for this pacific remedy.

When the restoration shall have been made, and the United States placed in the quiet possession, as they were on the 6th of October, 1818, we will be, as we were then, on the most friendly terms with Great Britain, ready to adjust all disputes amicably, and by negotiation, if she chooses. We will then be in a position to say to her, that we deprecate war—that we love peace—that we are ready to negotiate, and that she can take her own time to bring the negotiations to a termination. We are willing that she should proceed with all due care, and diplomatic formality, and take another third of a century for deliberation if she desires it. But in the mean time we will be in the possession, with the acknowledged right to remain until there shall be an amicable adjustment. Such I conceive to be our rights under our treaty stipulations with Great Britain, independent of the question of title, and such the reasons which should impel us to guard those rights strictly, and to do no act which would surrender them, or place ourselves in the wrong. When, under the operation of this pacific and rightful remedy, we shall find ourselves in the exclusive possession of the valley of the Columbia, our settlements will spread on the north as well as the south of that river, on all its branches and tributaries, on Puget's sound, and the straits of Fuca, until our people there will become so numerous and powerful that Great Britain will discover

the utter hopelessness of any effort to convert them into a British colony.

England has learned lessons of wisdom from the result of her diplomatic intrigues in Texas. She then discovered the true character and feelings of the American people, and their devotion to the political principles and institutions of their native land, no matter where their residence. Her designs upon the inhabitants of Oregon will be equally fruitless. They will increase in numbers and grow in strength driving the savage and the fur bearing animal before them. The fur and Indian trade will become valueless, and the Hudson Bay Company will be compelled to abandon their establishments for the want of business to sustain them. This will be the natural result of the policy recommended in the President's message. It will give us possession not only of the valley of the Columbia, but of the whole northwest coast. I do not wish to be extravagant in our demands, nor to claim more than right and justice will award us. But I say frankly that I will never be satisfied with the forty-ninth parallel nor with any other boundary which shall recognize the right of Great Britain to any part of the northwest coast. Our interests manifestly require us to assume and maintain this position, if our rights will justify it. The free navigation of the Pacific—the trade of China and the Indies—the commerce of the whole eastern world—will be opened to us by a route so direct, cheap, and safe, as to exclude successful competition. To accomplish these results, we must deprive her of the maritime ascendancy on the Pacific, which can only be done by excluding her from the best harbors on that coast. She has now no colony west of the Rocky mountains, and no title to the country which would authorize her to establish one. She only claims the right of joint occupancy by virtue of the treaty of Nootka sound with Spain, and the convention of 1818 with this country. She makes no pretensions to title, but claims simply the right of joint occupancy in common with other nations. Our government has always denied her title to any portion of the country west of the Rocky mountains, and also her right to joint occupancy, except by virtue of the convention which we now propose to terminate by giving this notice. During the administration of Mr. Adams, his Secretary of State in his instructions to our minister to England, used this emphatic language:

*"Nor is it conceived that Great Britain has, or can make out even a colorable title to any portion of the northwest coast."*

In the British statement submitted to Mr. Gallatin, December 16, 1826, the English commissioners define their claims thus:

*"Great Britain claims no exclusive sovereignty over any part of that territory. Her present claim, not in respect to any part, but to the whole, is limited to a right of a joint occupancy in common with other states, leaving the question of exclusive dominion in abeyance."*

I do not propose at this time to argue the question of title, but simply to state, in general terms, the grounds on which it rests. I do not deem it necessary to go into an elaborate discussion of the various modes by which title to an unoccupied country may be acquired, nor to trace the devious course of discovery and diplomacy in connexion with this question for the last three centuries. I am willing to rest that branch of the subject on the discussions which have taken place between the accredited agents of the two governments, and invoke the enlightened judgment of the civilized world upon them.

I will only remark, that the Columbia in our own right of exploration, and occupies the remainder through treaties. The original title on the Atlantic coast westward to the Pacific is the Mississippi between the English and America, and vested in the country west of the same to Spain. These several treaties, claims, and the English title and vested in our original title by the Columbia river. Our title founded on priority of occupancy, and absolute Spanish claims, was valid in possessions. It is between the Russian and remained undefined, as was that the Spanish of Mount St. Elias, latitude; and I have and, I believe I may the Secretary of State that "this ancient claim European nations for this position, I will ted in the following despatch, to which

"And, in the first place, the candor of the from the course of his coveries previous to 1778, as foundations of covery at a period so antiquity, presents a stain. The undersigned fact, which must be claim of Great Britain which was dictated by impairing the ultimate asserted, for nearly the ern side of North America of latitude, and which by any European in Spain with the most covery of the American quiesced in by all E admitted even beyond utes north, by Russian claims which could co too, under a sovereign rial rights of her emp been, as they could plenipotentiary, altho particular observation, a probation, for the pur the several titles held guage of Count de Fer at Paris, to M. de Mo department of France treaties, demarkations decided acts of sover those stations, from th by that monarch in 16 shall be brought forw all the coast to the n side of the South sea. William's Sound, wh edged to belong exclu "Compared with th in by all European na Britain, founded on di riod as the year 1778, pression"

This Spanish title European nations for co