

and though we give her the whole of Oregon, yet, through Mexico, or some other means, she will find her occasion. If she desires peace, she will yield the question, and give you the whole of the country. What her policy is I do not know, and I have but little confidence in the speculations of those here who assume to point it out. My humble opinion is, that she does not desire war with us; but if, after rejecting the magnanimous and pacific offer which has been made her, she shall make the giving of this notice, which, by her solemn treaty she has stipulated we might give, the occasion for war, then is she manifestly wrong, and we shall never stand more clearly justified in the eyes of the civilized world than on this ground. It will be her war, not ours. It will not be an attempt to conquer England on our part, as is strangely asserted by those here who parade England's wealth, England's power, and England's navy, in opposing this notice, and as I believe this Administration, but a conscious and determined maintenance of our principles and our rights on our own soil, against her aggressions and encroachments.

But it is asked if we adhere to our rights, what can England do? How can she escape from the ground she has assumed? And when has she been known to yield a position which she has taken? To these inquiries I answer, she can do as she has before done on more occasions than one, with this country: yield her interference and pretensions unjustly put forward.

I do not mean to say that England is not powerful, that she is not haughty, or that she has not offered us insult and injury, for which she has not atoned: but I mean to say distinctly, that whenever the principle now involved, of the extension and maintenance of our territory and jurisdiction, has arisen, that England, in her own right, or in behalf of some ally, either civilized or savage, has opposed; and in every instance where she has been met with firmness, she has invariably yielded the ground. For this I appeal to the diplomatic history of the country, content with referring you to two or three instances.

Passing without comment the position that England occupied in 1803, 1804, and 1805, in relation to the acquisition of Louisiana—I refer more especially to the subject of Florida. During the administration of Mr. Madison, when this Government was seeking to obtain possession, vindicating our title, and about to extend our jurisdiction and laws over that country, Great Britain, in October and December, 1810, and July and September, 1811, interposed, and formally announced to this Government that she could not, and would not, permit us to accomplish what we desired; and if we persisted, we subjected ourselves to the imputation of “*ambitious motives*,” “a disposition for foreign conquest,” and for “territorial aggrandizement.” Such were the identical expressions used by her minister to this Government. This Government went forward, maintained its rights, obtained formal possession, and extended its jurisdiction. No war ensued, and Florida is now one of the States of this Union.

Again, in 1814, at Ghent, when this Government was treating with Great Britain, in the protocol presented by her commissioners, the second article required the United States to mark out and definitely assign boundaries to the territory of the different Indian tribes, (which, as I understand it, included as well those in alliance with us as with England, and as well those tribes within our States and Territories as those on other parts of the *North American continent*.) and that the territory thus marked out and defined, should never afterwards be acquired by treaty or otherwise to this Government. This, it was positively announced, was a *sine qua non*. It was put forward a second and a third time, in the same solemn and imposing manner, and as decidedly met by the American ministers; and the last time the British commissioners were told decidedly, that if this article was insisted on the convention would adjourn without coming to any understanding. The British ministers abandoned their ground, and a treaty was made, without embracing any such principle. I invite a consideration of the manner, the occasion, and the nature of the position thus assumed, and thus abandoned by the British Government.

These are not the only instances. During the administration of Mr. Monroe, after the treaty of Ghent, by which England was bound to deliver Astoria, in the country now in dispute, she declined; a diplomatic correspondence was had, and the venerable member from Massachusetts, (Mr. ADAMS,) then Secretary of State, in maintaining our rights and the obligations of the treaty of