

when been discussing, are really unimportant here the sovereignty of a newly-settled country has to be decided; and it may be imagined that the territory which was in dispute during the Oregon negotiations was already overrun with American 'pioneers,' and valuable to the United States on that account. But so far was this from being the case, that the settlements of the whole country in dispute were British. Even if the British proposal had been accepted, it would have been necessary to break up some British settlements south of the Columbia, while there were no American settlements to be disturbed on the north side. On the other hand the American proposal required this country to give up a quantity of settlements, including Fort Vancouver, the *dépôt* of the Hudson's Bay Company; to resign the use of eleven rivers, and to give up all the good harbours of Admiralty Inlet, besides the agricultural district round Puget Sound. Yet this was a proposal that Buchanan described as one showing 'a sincere and anxious desire to cultivate the most friendly relations between the two countries, and to manifest to the world that the United States is actuated by a spirit of moderation.'

As, in dealing with the Maine boundary question, we refrained from a tedious recital of the negotiations carried on by Lord Ashburton, so we need not now follow the details of the diplomacy which was crowned in 1846 with the surrender by Great Britain of all the territory in dispute; of the Columbia River, of the harbours in Admiralty Inlet, and of all the other possessions just enumerated. There is no mystery involved in the surrender. From the tone of the debates in Congress, British statesmen once more perceived that if they wanted to enjoy the continued friendship of the United States, the only way to secure that blessing was to pay for it. They paid for it by giving up a large tract of the most valuable country on the Pacific coast, a tract which was ours by right of ancient claims, by right of prior discovery, prior survey, and prior occupation, and by the actual right of settlement and possession under the authority of treaties as well. Mr. Richard Pakenham was invested with full powers as a plenipotentiary, to conclude a treaty and set the Oregon controversy at rest; and, as his choice lay practically between the surrender of the territory the Americans required, and war, the surrender was duly made and the treaty of 1846 concluded.

This was the treaty out of which the San Juan controversy arose. With a moderation that American statesmen look back upon

with pride, the United States consented, when at last this country submitted to the boundary along the 49th parallel, by which she was shut out from the whole valley of the Columbia, that the line should be deflected when it reached the sea-coast, so as not to cut off, as it would have done otherwise, a fragment from the end of Vancouver's Island. When we contemplate the American moderation involved in this deflection of the boundary, from the point of view of 1846, and remember what we gave up on that occasion, we are perhaps less disposed than Americans themselves to admire the self-denial shown in the surrender to us of 'the whole of Vancouver's Island.' The authors of the recently published American Case refer to the manner in which the United States agreed in 1846 'to give to Great Britain the whole of Vancouver's Island,' as if the whole continent had originally belonged to the United States, and as if the possession of Vancouver's Island by Great Britain was entirely due to United States' generosity. In reality, we have to thank the people of the United States for Vancouver's Island no more than for Van Dieman's Land or Australia. But to return to facts. The treaty of 1846 defined the boundary on the west coast as follows:— 'The line shall be continued westward along the said 49th parallel of north latitude to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island, and thence southerly through the middle of the said channel and of Fuca's Straits to the Pacific Ocean.' Unfortunately the space intervening between Vancouver's Island and the continent is studded with small islands, whose existence the negotiators of the treaty of 1846 ignored. The consequence is, that no one channel can be selected as *the* channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island. According to an American map, drawn from surveys taken under the authority of the United States Congress by Colonel, afterwards General J. C. Fremont, the boundary-line was shown running down the channel on the east side of the island of San Juan, known as Rosario Straits. But in 1856, when, after a long delay, for which the American Government is responsible, joint commissioners were appointed to mark out the boundary which had never before been officially determined, the American Commissioner, Mr. Archibald Campbell, insisted that the line ought to run down the Canal de Haro, on the western side of San Juan, giving that island to the United States. In making this claim he was only following up an aggressive movement begun some years before by the legislature of Oregon Territory;