

faggot and stake. They now, in turn, indulge the "retort courteous" towards those who differ with us as to Oregon. While the majority of us must deeply regret that any occasion for vituperation should have arisen either on the one hand or the other, all must be admonished that, on a question of reannexation or occupation of territory, it is, to say the least, perilous to be tender-footed on any part of the ground.

Those who so earnestly (and I may add ably) oppose the giving the notice to Great Britain, differ with us only as to the means of obtaining the end. They, with very few exceptions, are decidedly of opinion that our title to the Oregon territory, up to 54° 40', is clear and indisputable, and are willing to go with us for all of those that I regard as the strong and warlike measures, which look to the taking and holding possession of that country.

My purpose, then, is not to upbraid them for this difference of opinion, but, as far as I can, to discuss the question with them; to oppose argument to argument, and let mind grapple with mind, until the judgment is convinced, so far as that can be done.

This resolution is debated by the opponents of the notice as a war measure; and it is sought to be made the occasion of producing a panic throughout the country; and brokers and stock-jobbers, together with that portion of the American press under their control, are uniting their efforts in this general outcry against a war. It is doubtless remembered by all, that these panic-makers have been engaged from time to time in alarming the public mind for the purpose of subserving their pecuniary interests. That Great Britain may make it the pretext of a war, as she might make the reannexation of Texas, or any other exercise of our rights, the pretext for war if she chose to do so, is not denied; but that it furnishes no just ground for an appeal to arms is, I think, plainly demonstrable.

The distinguished member from South Carolina [Mr. RHETT] seemed to congratulate himself upon the fact that he was pursuing a course on this question in opposition to the venerable gentleman from Massachusetts, [Mr. ADAMS:] and that, therefore, he must be right. Let him not, however, "lay the flattering unction to his soul;" for, unless the signs of the times greatly deceive us, Massachusetts and South Carolina, that have indulged the most deadly hate and bitter feuds towards each other in times past, will be found side by side at the present moment; and their sons, with a few exceptions, who have been for so long a time "looking daggers" at each other, will come up and vote together against the giving of this notice.

It is contended by some gentlemen that negotiations should be again renewed; but I think very differently. The ministers of Great Britain understand the arts of diplomacy better than ours. For more than a quarter of a century we have failed to settle this question by negotiation. Our offer of compromise has been formally withdrawn, and I think that the matter should rest there; and that we should now stand upon all of our rights until that imperious nation shall make us a fair and just offer.

Some, again, are proposing to arbitrate. This is

wholly inadmissible, for in that adjudication we should not be tried by our peers. Crowned heads do not desire to broaden or lengthen the territory of republican governments; but, on the contrary, they are strongly interested in enlarging the dominions and establishing the doctrine of "the divine right of kings." As well might the question of the divinity of the Messiah be submitted to the decision of Mahomedans and Jews, as for this question to be referred to the arbitration of monarchs or of emperors. We know the decision in advance. No, sir; as much as I love peace, and desire to avoid war, yet if there is no other alternative but to arbitrate this difficulty, I would say, unhesitatingly, let it be done at the cannon's mouth.

Those of our friends who seem most alarmed at the prospect of a war, and who have depicted its horrors so eloquently and so vividly, were not, I believe, when Texas was the prize, afraid to meet Mexico, Great Britain, and France, combined, on the battle-field, and our navy and army were in no better state of preparation then than they are now. The Mexican Minister declared that annexation would produce war. He demanded his passports, and returned home. The fingers of Great Britain and France were traced in the plot to prevent annexation. It was then said we should have war with the three Powers combined; and all the effort then to get up a war panic did not check the "immoderate valor" of our friends, whose thoughts seem now so "turned on peace." It appears to me that they have placed themselves in a dilemma from which they cannot very well escape. South Carolina and Virginia, then so impetuous and eager for "hearding the British lion," are now the most eloquent in depicting the horrors of war and the progress of British arms. These members admit that our title is clear, and yet they are unwilling to give the notice. This is a strange voice to come from these ancient Commonwealths; and did we not know better, it would be supposed to emanate from the peace party of New England.

The distinguished member from the Harper's Ferry district in Virginia [Mr. BEDIKER] described, with captivating eloquence, a scene he witnessed at that point. It was the American eagle, darting along the verge of a dark and portentous cloud, charged with thunder and gleaming with lightning, and perching himself upon one of the loftiest peaks of the Blue Ridge. The cloud passed away, the sun again shone forth from a clear sky, and he saw the eagle take his flight westward. I trust, sir, that his eagle has found a mountain as tall, a climate as genial, and a sky as clear in Oregon as those he left behind him. Virginia patriotism and valor have been illustrated in many a fearful conflict; and should war come upon us, I say, without hesitation, that all the eagles that have been driven from her mountains, either by thunder-clouds or panic speeches, will be won back by the deeds of noble daring of her sons upon the battle-field.

So, sir, with South Carolina, I know it is tauntingly said that her political leaders control the masses with absolute, not to say, despotic rule. It is believed by many that when her politicians take snuff, the common people involuntarily sneeze all over the State; and that you can ascertain the state of public opinion in South Carolina with as much

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