

war must come, we will find that it was not "folly to be wise."

It has been asserted here that a compromise of this question under existing circumstances would be dishonorable. In this sentiment I do not concur. Though the previous negotiation may have closed, I cannot believe that negotiations have been abandoned. This Government, in 1818, in 1824, and 1826, offered terms of compromise to England. A similar offer was made by the present Administration in 1845. Sir, if compromise is dishonorable now, it was dishonorable at the respective periods to which I have referred. We have repeatedly, by our conventions with England and otherwise, recognised her claim to Oregon. To settle and adjust those claims we have proposed to her an equitable division of the territory in dispute; and we now should be bound by the honor of our nation, if an offer came from England, to accept any proposition which shall be as good as we ourselves have offered. But, sir, we cannot, consistently with honor, renew the proposition. England has rejected our terms. She alone must renew the offer.

Sir, it is my firm conviction that if notice be given, before the expiration of the twelve months negotiations will be reopened, and some amicable mode of adjustment be adopted. It cannot be that two nations elevated in civilization, distinguished for everything that adorns the national character, will rush blindly into war, the consequences of which no human imagination can trace.

I regret to have heard gentlemen, in the course of this discussion, talk so lightly and flippantly of war. War has its horrors; war has no charms for me. Sir, I have never witnessed "the battle of warriors, with its confused noise, and garments rolled in blood;" I desire never to witness such a scene. I have never heard the shriek of agony, wrung from the bosom of the dying soldier, as on the battle-field he yielded up his life; his anguish rendered more poignant as the thoughts of home and friends rushed in upon his soul. I have never heard the groan of the widow, from whose embrace the rough bloody hand of war has torn the idol of her heart; nor the sigh of the orphan, deprived of a fond and affectionate parent. I never wish to hear such sounds. Amid the shoutings of victory, such notes of woe are blended that they fall discordantly on the ear. The laurels that encircle the brow of the victor and the hero are stained with the blood and steeped in the tears of thousands. The aspirations of every patriot and Christian heart should ascend to the throne of the Eternal, that the evils and devastations of war may be averted from our beloved country. Sir, notwithstanding my abhorrence of war, I hope ever to be found an advocate of the preservation of our national honor and our national rights, at every hazard and at every sacrifice. But war, to be just, must be necessary. We must, in accordance with the strict principles of national honor, have exhausted every means in our power to bring about an amicable settlement of the controversy now

waged. Without it, war can never be justified. Have all these means been resorted to, so that nothing remains but war? The question is still open. The honor of the country is not involved, so as to prevent its amicable adjustment. What, sir, is national honor? Is it that sickly sensibility to imagined insult and injury that prompts men, in the spirit of modern chivalry, to imbrue their hands in the life's blood of their fellow-men? It is a nobler and more generous sentiment; it is a principle founded upon that grand sentiment, "do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." National honor must have its foundations deep in the eternal principles of truth and justice. All other honor is a bubble; it might glitter, but only to deceive and to betray.

There are other considerations which induce me to the course of policy I have indicated, but I forbear to detain the committee longer.

Do gentlemen doubt the policy of giving this notice? If doubts exist, I am always in favor of resolving them in such manner as to protect and defend the rights and interests of the country. To doubt on this question is to jeopard the interests of the nation.

"Our doubts are traitors;  
And make us lose the good we might attain,  
By fearing to attempt."

I believe, sir, the issue of our present difficulties on this subject will be peace—an honorable peace. But whilst such is my opinion, let us be prepared for any contingency. I would say to the country, be ready for war. Are we in that condition now? I do not wish unnecessarily to disclose our want of preparation to the world. Our actual condition is, however, well known. Preparation, prompt and efficient, is necessary, and I am willing, to-morrow, to vote appropriations for building forty iron steamers of war, if so many be required. [A voice: "Of Pennsylvania iron?"] Yes, of Pennsylvania iron, and thus afford incidental protection to the iron interest of Pennsylvania, notwithstanding the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. HUNTER] has expressed his regret that the agitation of the Oregon question had prevented, and was likely to prevent, the Democratic party from consummating their favorite measure, the repeal of the tariff of 1842. To-morrow I am ready to vote appropriations of fifty millions of dollars to place our country in a state of readiness to meet every emergency, although direct taxation might be the result. The citizens of Pennsylvania, already pressed down with a burden of taxation, will be ready to meet this additional burden, if necessary for the defence of the interests and honor of the country. Their patriotism and valor need no praise from me. In the day of trial they will be found at the post of danger; in the field of battle they will be found "first in the fight, and last in the retreat."

Sir, I cannot conclude without recurring to the sentiment of the gallant Decatur, as expressive of my own feelings, and applicable to the present crisis: "Our country! may she always be right; but right or wrong, our country!"