

abstain from proposals which she might otherwise make; and might render her more haughty in her demands. If a treaty should be made, I would decide upon my vote when it should be submitted to this body. I did not even say for what boundary I may vote.

If, by chance, opinions are expressed in this body favorable to the pretensions of England, and in furtherance of her views, it might induce her to withhold an offer of settlement which she may be ready to tender, and thus prevent the very object which we desire. She will never be prepared to take less than we are prepared to concede; and opinions favorable to her pretensions will not be likely to lessen her demands. However, this I will say, that I never could consent to the proposition made by Mr. Gallatin—to the boundary of the parallel of 49°, with the navigation of the Columbia river accorded to England. Rather than vote for such a proposition, I would resign my place in the Senate. I am led to this determination for the reasons already stated.

If the country is to be divided by an ideal line, the sooner it is done the better. But I apprehend if it should be done the evil will be felt by our children's children; and I am fearful that whatever is now done to effect that object will be but patchwork of the difficulty, and will inevitably lead to a rupture at some future day.

I believe if this controversy is susceptible of satisfactory adjustment, the present measure will attain that object; and I am free to confess that in giving my vote for the notice I would prefer, if it could be done, to take it in its most simple form without any qualification whatever. To what does the proviso amount? It is probably intended by some that it should be understood by Great Britain to mean no barrier to negotiation. I would leave that to be inferred, though I think it manifest. I would not state it in advance of the notice, as if it were placed there under the influence of fear. Has England ever adopted such a course?—or is America to set such an example? I would give the notice respectfully and with the utmost decorum, but I would leave its qualification, if any, with the Executive. I would not trammel the President; I would not have the head of this nation manacled; I would leave him free, because he is responsible to the American people, and his acts to the revision of this body. Let him be left free to conduct the negotiation, for we have nothing to do with treaty making. We have the power of ratification or rejection. The President alone is charged by the constitution with negotiations and international correspondence. He knows the course and progress of each, for they are conducted under his direction. When he has performed what he believes to be his duty, the power then results to the Senate to approve or dissent from his action. But we have no power to mould a treaty, or to direct the President on what terms he shall, or shall not, treat. Therefore I would consider it disrespectful to him to attach any qualification to the notice. No co-ordinate branch of the government can take so clear and comprehensive a view of the whole ground as can the Executive. The Congress is in session temporarily; he is perpetually present at the seat of government, ready to watch the public interests as they change. We remain here but a few months and then return to private life; but the Executive is constantly present watching every emergency. We should therefore leave him not only unembarrassed, but uninfluenced.

Allusion has been made to the subject of the negotiations between the United States and Texas and claiming some little identity with these transactions, I may have a right to correct any errors that may exist on this subject before they are received in history by the public mind. They were interesting then, and it may be that they are so still. Therefore I will endeavor here to give some account of the progress of events as they occurred.

The authorities of Texas in 1836 proposed annexation to the Union of the United States. This was done in obedience to the express will of the people of that country, and after the fullest expression that will had been given. The proposition was rejected by this government, though the desires of Texas continued the application for a considerable length of time; until, finding there was no hope of admission, the executive of Texas ordered the withdrawal of the proposition for annexation. In the mean time the independence of Texas had been recognised by the United States. In December, 1838, when a new administration came into power, the Executive, in his inaugural address, denounced the measure of annexation, and it was not revived for three years, nor were any measures taken for its effectuation. During this time a treaty was negotiated between England and Texas, in which the latter proffered to give five millions of dollars to England, if she would guarantee the recognition of the independence of Texas by Mexico. England did not succeed; but the misfortunes of Texas accumulated to an extent which I will not here describe.

In December, 1841, that administration expired and a new one commenced. The first leading act of the new administration was to appoint a minister to the government of the United States, with instructions to sound it on the subject of annexation; and it met with a favorable reception, that negotiation should be immediately opened. The minister (Mr. Riley) hastened to present the subject to the consideration of this government. It was received without any indications of favor; and though somewhat importunate in the discharge of his duty on the subject, he received no encouragement. A little while he was gratified with the reception of the proposition, that he asked, and obtained leave from the government, to return. His successor, Mr. Van Zandt, was then appointed, and referred to the instructions of his predecessor, by which he was authorized to renew the proposition. He did not renew it, but soon ascertained from the response with which it was met, that there was little hope of success. Not long afterwards, a proclamation was issued by the Executive of Texas for an armistice between Texas and Mexico. The armistice was upon which it was founded was received through her Majesty's chargé d'affaires, resident at Texas; nor did the Executive fail in that proclamation to allude to the kind offices of England in the most friendly terms. Still, our minister had been unable to make progress towards opening negotiations with the United States upon the subject of annexation, and so advised the government. A few weeks after the issuance of the proclamation, Mr. Van Zandt was directed by the Secretary of State of Texas to inform the government of the United States that the proposition for annexation was suspended, and that the subject was no longer open to discussion. In December then following the Executive of Texas, in submitting his annual message, made no allusion to the subject of annexation; but took care to remark frankly upon certain