

of territorial rights on the Northwest coast, and interpreting its provisions by the light of the debates ensuing thereon in her own Parliament, I do not see how any candid man can resist the conclusion, that England has no more right to a foot of soil south of forty-nine and a half than has the Emperor of Morocco; and that the only portion of territory in regard to which she may talk of a compromising division at all, is the tract from Nootka to the Russian Boundary; about five degrees of latitude; of which tract the centre line is about fifty-two; leaving us, if we suppose that compromise made, the whole of Vancouver's island and the coast beyond as far north as the southern point of Washington or Queen Charlotte's island.

And now, let those who accuse our Government of grasping ambition and reckless contempt of right, stand forth and answer me! Has our Government claimed more than its own? Has it offered no sacrifices for the sake of peace? By the text of British-claimed documents, by the showing of British authorities, latitude fifty-two is the fair line of compromise. And have we not proffered forty-nine? In a spirit, even of Quaker forbearance, have we not, to avert the calamities of war, expressed our willingness to relinquish to British pertinacity three degrees—three most important degrees, too, embracing the valuable and commanding harbors of Vancouver's island—upwards of two hundred miles of coast, which, on every principle of fairness and equity, is our own?

I admit, to an able reasoner from South Carolina [Mr. RUETZ] the consolidating influence of war, and I admit the lurking danger, in all republics, of consolidation. I admit, that war is the enemy of human progress; the friend of ignorance, the ally of despotism. I believe, that the wars of Napoleon arrested, as only the glare of military glory could have arrested, the onward march of liberty in revolutionized France. War is a terrible alternative. But yet it sometimes happens, that only through grievous evil can men attain great good. Our republic was cradled in war. If war, under any circumstances, be a discredit and a dishonor, what of a certain DECLARATION, written by Thomas Jefferson, and adopted, seventy years ago, by a band of sturdy patriots assembled in the old Philadelphia State-house?

There must be an end, somewhere, to concession and compromise. Let those who deal in imputations of discredit and dishonor, tell us plainly, where the end shall be. For myself, I declare, that I consider the whole course of our administration throughout this affair, from first to last, to reflect credit on America, honor on the age in which we live. I challenge, out of all history, an example of

a territorial dispute, in which a nation with rights so clear, with power so great as ours, ever made concessions so liberal, demands so moderate.

So much for the rights in this case. So much in justification of our course, and in proof of its moderation. One word now, in conclusion, in reply to that plea for delay, urged by the gentleman from Alabama, [Mr. YANCEY,] and others: "We are not ready to assert our rights; in peace we have not prepared for war." If the meaning is, that we have no standing army and powerful navy to match England's, then devoutly do I hope, that we never shall be, in peace, prepared for war. Whenever we are, we shall be prepared also for despotism. We are as much prepared now, as any free nation in peace ever ought to be; yes, and as we need be. Cadmus's sabled dragon teeth have been sowed, in very deed, throughout our land, and are ready to spring up, in armed shape, in every forest, on every prairie. It is not in our country as in England, where the peasant carries no weapon, nor learns the use of any. The chase and the hardships of the frontier have trained, to our hands, an army of hundred thousands, not uniformed or enrolled indeed, but with every essential of the soldier, and armed with that terrible weapon, America's own rifle, before which the bayoneted musket of the regular—witness New Orleans!—is but as the plaything of a child.

England may boast, and boast justly, that if we, bent on a war of aggression, were to cross the Atlantic and attack her in her own sea-girt isle, the attempt would result in disaster and defeat. And she knows, full as well, that such will be her own fate, whenever she carries war into our hemisphere. Either nation is impregnable at home. Neither can succeed against the other, in an unjust war of conquest, abroad. I speak here, not of the result of a few months' or of a single year's warfare, but of ultimate consequences.

We have sought peace. We have sacrificed for peace. Not that war, in such a cause, is a thing to be feared; but only because, with its horrors and its barbarizing influences, it is a thing ever earnestly to be avoided. If, notwithstanding, war be thrust upon us, with prompt energy let us meet it. If, in spite of our averting efforts, the blow must be given, let it be in the spirit of the old adage, "he gives twice, who gives quickly."

No temporizing policy befits the present crisis, nor can avail, to avert its dangers, if with any it be rife. Firmness, neither boastful itself, nor yet moved by the boasts of others, becomes us as an independent nation. And, in such firmness, is to be found the best promise, at last, of permanent, because honorable, peace.