

and they who take the trouble to examine it in all its consequences, must come to the conclusion that it was a most unfortunate blunder in the Executive.

Sir, it is not my purpose to speak of the Chief Magistrate with acrimony or without respect. I have towards him no personal feelings of unkindness, however opposed to him and his party politically. He whose secret views are a matter of angry doubt and contest among his confidants, or those who might naturally be so, is little likely to have made disclosures to an opponent. The documents he has caused to be published, and the authentic facts with which all are acquainted, form my only sources of information. From these, however, I have drawn certain plain conclusions as to the motives which have influenced the Executive management of the Oregon controversy, and as to the consequences of that management. If among those who stand nearest, of this body, about the President, and most enjoy the advantage of receiving his own explanations of what he has communicated for the public instruction, there is such an entire and direct difference as to the interpretation which is to be set upon his declarations and intentions, it need excite no surprise if I should venture to construe things for myself. When the priests fall out and deliver utter contradictory oracles, the profane are at liberty to believe as much or as little as they like or can understand.

Mr. President, we have before us a most extraordinary and (I must say) humiliating public spectacle. It is not merely unprecedented in the history of the country, but without any shadow of parallel or even of analogy. We sit here a part of that great National Council, which, along with the Executive, directs the affairs of this people; of that council we are the branch which more directly and intimately shares with him the management of our foreign relations. Amongst us he has a decided party majority, anxious to afford him support in all his measures; and yet not only are we, as a body, denied to know what it so much behooves we should, as the President's advisers and a co-ordinate branch of the Government, understand—his real purposes in the momentous questions before us—but they are an enigma to his very adherents here, who cannot, for their lives, settle between them his true meaning and intention! There never was, before, a period when some one in the Senate was not authorized to speak for the Executive, made regularly acquainted with his views, and ready to put right those who misconstrue his plans or language. A part of his supporters tell us that he is in every manner pledged to nothing less than 54° 40', or war; the other part, equally zealous and equally positive, assure us that he has never had a thought beyond 49°. The Senator from Indiana, (Mr. HANNEGAN,) backed by the high authority of the distinguished Senator from Michigan, (Mr. CASS,) and that of the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, (Mr. ALLEN,) whose position implies the possession of the President's complete confidence here, declares that, if there is any truth in man or in Holy Writ, the President is irretrievably engaged to 54° 40'; that should he falter, turn back, and not lead on his gallant followers up to the Russian line, he will be recreant to his party, his principles, and the Baltimore Convention; that should he desert his standard, bearing aloft the mighty motto of 54° 40', it will sink him to a depth of damnation from which the very hand of resurrection can never pluck him up. Now, this was rather strong language, and this hypothetical denunciation made me feel exceedingly uncomfortable, lest the Senator had really got a peep behind the curtain of the President's intentions, and knew what he would do. I was, too, the more disturbed, being, as I have said, a peace-man, but on terms which I shall explain before I take my seat; because, in many particulars, that Senator's interpretation is the obvious one of the message itself. My alarm, however, was much allayed by what was said by the Senator from North Carolina, (Mr. HAYWOOD,) supposed to enjoy in a peculiar degree the personal confidence and

affection of the President. He has assured us; that the President neither advances nor retreats, and, moreover, that the revelation of the President's state of the mind, not that of the land at the present time.

But to proceed to the newspapers, that this Oregon question is to be exceeded, have very strong charges with greatly disturbed minds, made, to suit the occasion.

I say, the President's first intention, have had of late, have meant, that looks to against standing, mends no in what is still presents to deprive us of the President's first intention.

On the other hand, he is anxious to be contrary.

a settlement, that he now

I myself, tion being, the fence, was follow war, quiet ment of the then some things, we was altogether after reading pretensions, terpretation, plainly put himself in

Now, to have entire question, necessary consequence Senate's from the