

plete against the world. My only desire is, that we so regulate our movements as to be able to secure it all. To do so is not without great difficulty. On whichever side you turn that difficulty stares you in the face. To overcome it requires moderation—calculation as well as firmness. Haste and impetuous valor may lose us all, or give us but a part.

I desire to give a very brief review of the manner in which we have become connected with England in this matter. Asserting our title as derived from discovery, exploration, and settlement, we were confronted by England, claiming, through a convention entered into between her and Spain, and commonly called the Nootka Sound convention, a right of jointly occupying the country of Oregon, and therefore opposing any exclusive possession in us. Unable to settle the difference satisfactorily and amicably, on the 20th of October, 1818, both parties agreed to a convention, which left the title in abeyance, but gave to the citizens of both countries the right of entering, trading, &c., for the space of ten years.

Shortly afterwards, on the 22d of February 1819, Spain ceded to the United States all her rights to any territory on the Pacific coast, north of latitude forty-two degrees. We thus became possessed of all the rights to the territory of Oregon, save such as Great Britain might deduce from the Nootka Sound convention; under which she only claims a right of joint occupancy, expressly admitting, as I understand her, that she has no exclusive title to one inch of the territory.

Two other attempts at settling this question between us having failed, on the 6th of August, 1827, this joint convention was indefinitely renewed; a provision being inserted, however, that either party might terminate it, by giving to the other twelve months' notice of the intention to do so.

This convention, then, and its renewal, was the result of a failure to reconcile the conflicting claims of the two governments in 1818, 1824, and 1826. In 1818, Mr. Monroe, and in 1826, Mr. Adams offered, as a compromise, to give to Great Britain the free navigation of the Columbia, and exclusive title to all of the territory north of forty-nine degrees of latitude. In 1824, Mr. Monroe also offered to give to Great Britain all above the forty-ninth degree of north latitude. Each of these very favorable, and, it seems to me, conciliatory offers were promptly rejected by the English government. After the first rejection, if negotiation had then closed, what would have been the result? Either we would have had to force England from her joint occupancy, or have ignominiously "abandoned" our rights. To avoid such an issue, what did Mr. Monroe do? He entered into a joint convention for ten years. I put it now to the reason and candor of gentlemen, was not that measure a substitute for war? or, what is far more wretched and withering, if war was not to ensue, was it not a substitute for national disgrace?

After the second prompt rejection of the result of nine years' negotiation by England, our government again consents to an indefinite renewal of the treaty; and why? For the same cause that induced its original formation—to avoid the unpleasant alternative of an appeal to arms; for Great Britain positively, and three times, had refused to yield a joint occupancy of that territory, and of course, a failure to renew the convention would have forced us either to drive her from it, or to abandon it to her! I repeat, then, that this convention was a substitute for war.

It is now proposed to give notice of our desire to terminate this convention, or to substitute results for

these terms, it is now proposed that we annul this substitute for war, and to use the sword to cut this "gordian knot," which twenty-eight years of negotiation have been unable to untie—to do that which Mr. Monroe, under precisely similar circumstances, deemed it unwise to do in 1818; and which Mr. Adams abstained from doing in 1827, under far more favorable circumstances. I said, under far more favorable circumstances; for our States were not then loaded down with those enormous debts which the paper-money system has since bequeathed to them as its dying legacy, and our antagonist was not, as now, armed to the teeth. It will be conceded, I believe, by all, sir, that Great Britain has never—even in the moment when placing her foot upon the prostrate form of that mighty genius of war, Napoleon—been as completely panopied in all the means of defensive and of aggressive war as she is now. At peace with all the world, and having prepared the monarchies of Europe for her movements—amongst whom it is now said we have not a friend to whose arbitration we dare trust this case—she has been husbanding her resources, recruiting on a large scale her naval marine—has built an enormous steam fleet, and sent them round the world, in the powerful garb of mail-steamers, exploring the coasts and harbors of other nations—whilst, too, she has been constantly augmenting her already immense military resources.

But my colleague [Mr. HILLIARD] who so eloquently addressed the House yesterday upon this question, says that he will not pause to count the armies of England, or to number her ships, or to consider of her resources. Sir, with a feeling of sincere sympathy for that warm and gushing impulse which would fear no danger incurred in the cause of our common country, I must, however, be allowed to express the opinion that, in this instance, it is not "folly to be wise." It is wisdom to obtain a knowledge of, and to reflect upon, the strength of our foe. A Washington has jeopardized not only the lives, but the honor of brave men, in order to find out the strength of the enemy. I cannot but sympathize with this noble ardor, this high-toned American spirit, that is flashing up over the whole nation; but when it would advise us that this is victory, I must reject the advice. I know that it is equal to half the battle; and if the right—if truth and justice decided the swaying ranks of war—freely, heartily, and joyfully would I now commit this issue to that fierce ordeal. But, sir, that is not the case; not justice, but might, rules upon the blood-reeking battle-field; and, knowing this, it becomes the legislator not only to know the means of destruction which the enemy possesses, but to see to it that his own country is not thrown into that arena with nothing but the naked breasts and weaponless hands of her brave sons to maintain their cause. A nation that blindly and passionately plunges into a conflict of arms with an opposing power, deserves no higher meed of praise than should be awarded to the prairie bull, that, shutting his eyes, furiously but blindly rushes upon the object of his hate, the flag-flaunting and armed matador.

The question arises, then, are we prepared for this issue of arms? Alas! sir, "in peace" we have not "prepared for war." From the very West which now seeks to involve the country in its vicissitudes and horrors, has come a long-continued opposition, as I am informed, to any such increase of our gallant and glorious navy as the wants of

the country. Many of our young men are idly imported to our army. I learn from military affairs that a match, if a bay.

At this time are laughing full of courage even now, to cross over to passing providing men!

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But I am a notice is a lieve so. trary, witice itself, listened in in its favor such. On notice being contemplating the long uncommitted argument as a substitution involv of one or it is view though the

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