

success in entering it; the arrival of Vancouver at Nootka, where he obtained copies of Gray's charts left with Quadra, by the aid of which, Vancouver was enabled to find the stream, and send up his lieutenant, Broughton, to explore it. I say, sir, all these material facts are suppressed—I trust not intentionally—to sustain the unfounded assumption that Broughton was the discoverer of the Columbia. But it is worthy of remark that Mr. Fulconer, a respectable British writer, who has recently published a pamphlet on Oregon, and who wrote about the time Lord John Russell spoke, admits that Gray was the first person who noticed the Columbia river after Heecet, and concedes the discovery to the latter. Happily the historical facts are too well authenticated to be permanently misunderstood. They were so well known at the time, that even the rivalry—not to say the detraction—of the day conceded to Gray the merit of the discovery by designating the river by the name he gave it—the name of the vessel that first entered its waters. In regard to the attempt to restrict Gray's discovery to the bay or mouth of the river, it is only necessary to say that the settlement at Astoria is universally admitted to be on the Columbia river. Is it not so, sir? It is designated "the settlement on the Columbia river," in the despatch of Earl Bathurst directing it to be restored to us in 1818, as well as in the act of restoration. Now, sir, Captain Gray ascended the river not only as high as Astoria, which is ten miles from the Pacific ocean, but at least six miles above it, according to Broughton himself. Look at the map of Oregon on your table, by Captain Wilkes, and you will find Gray's bay, so named by Broughton, (see Vancouver's Journal, vol. 3, page 92,) on the north side of the Columbia and higher up than Astoria. According to Gray's own log, he anchored, the day he discovered and entered the river, ten miles above the entrance, and three days after he sailed twelve or fifteen miles higher up. He must, therefore, have been from six to fifteen miles above the site of the settlement at Astoria. What, then, becomes of the attempt of Broughton, revived by British statesmen, not negotiators, (no negotiator at this day would so risk his reputation,) to restrict Gray's discovery to the mouth of the stream!

Lord John Russell's statement is equally erroneous in other particulars—erroneous in saying that Vancouver entered the Columbia, or the inlet—erroneous in saying that he took possession of Nootka Sound. His vessel, the *Discovery*, did not pass the bar at the mouth of the Columbia river; he did not take possession of Nootka: Quadra refused to make a formal surrender of anything but Meares's Cove, which he would not accept: and the formality of taking possession of the Columbia river was performed by Broughton, after Vancouver had left the coast, much in the same way as it had been done years before by the Spaniards, who were the first discoverers and explorers of the country. I repeat, and I say it with regret, that, besides the errors in point of fact, the leading and material circumstances connected with the discovery of the Columbia river are kept out of view. I do not expect British statesmen to produce arguments in favor of the American title; but when they undertake to refer to historical facts, resting on their own authorities, and in their own possession, they are bound to state them with accuracy.

Sir, we may excuse illogical deductions from admitted data; we may look with indulgence on differences of opinion in regard to the same facts, knowing, as we do, our liability to be biased by prejudice or by too partial views of personal or national interest. But for an omission of essential circumstances in the discussion of an important national question—a discussion entered upon voluntarily for the purpose of enlightening the public mind of a nation—there can be no apology, even though it arise from a want of a sufficiently careful examination of the subject. On the Oregon question it is well known that great excitement existed at the time in Great Britain and the United States—an excitement which exists still, though happily somewhat abated—an excitement which needs, perhaps, but little provocation to break out into open hostilities; and no man, who appreciates as he ought the calamity of an interruption of the amicable relations which exist between us, should be willing to incur the responsibility of misleading the public judgment of either country; or if he does misdirect it, he should at least have the consolation of reflecting that it was through erroneous deductions, and not a misstatement of facts fairly within his knowledge.

The misrepresentations to which I have alluded are the more to be regretted, for the reason, if I do not err, that they constitute almost the only views of the subject which reach the great mass of the British people. In this country, statements of both sides of great national questions are equally diffused. Look at our newspapers, and they will be found filled with the diplomatic correspondence between the British and American Plenipotentiaries. The letters of Mr. Pakenham are published with those of Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Buchanan, and are as widely circulated. All read, compare, and judge them. It is not so in Great Britain. As a general rule, the British side of the question only is presented to the British public. Nor is it the official argument of the Government, drawn up by the diplomatist, under a sense of his responsibility to the criticism of other nations, and the general judgment of mankind. No, sir. It is more frequently the "tirade" of the politician, by which the public mind of Great Britain is made to pronounce judgment upon great questions of international right and duty.

These misrepresentations are still more to be regretted, because they constitute the basis of the statements which find their way to the continent. Through Galignani's Messenger, the echo of the British press, they are translated into French, and widely circulated, poisoning the whole public mind of the continent, and exciting prejudice against us.

I will only add, that the Earl of Aberdeen in one house, and Sir Robert Peel in the other, adverted to these statements in a manner which, though not altogether unexceptionable, was in general dignified and statesmanlike; and it is earnestly to be hoped that the better feeling which now exists between the two countries may continue unabated, and lead to a settlement of the question on terms honorable to both.

I feel that I owe an apology to the Senate for this long digression. I trust it will be found in the consideration, that the inaccuracies I have endeavored to point out did not go to the world with