

tion for their valuable and lasting improvements, made in good faith; as necessary and proper under the existing state of things, and to quiet the public mind. The people of Maine (since that State was formed out of a part of Massachusetts) are yet laboring under the evils of those disputed titles to land; and a case, involving questions of law common to numerous other cases, is now pending in the Supreme Court of the United States.

For forty years and more, the people of Kentucky were infested by the conflicting claims to land. The dockets of the courts, State and federal, exhibited crowds of bills in chancery upon contested claims to lands and of ejectments. The occupying claimant laws, enacted by the legislature of Kentucky, were adjudged, by the Supreme Court of the United States, to be invalid, as contrary to the compact between Virginia and Kentucky, and to the constitution of the United States. In the preamble to the act to compel the speedy adjustment of land claims, enacted by Kentucky, 9th February, 1809, the legislature declared that "the prosperity of this commonwealth hath been greatly checked, its improvement and settlement retarded, and its citizens continually alarmed, and often ruined in their fortunes, by reason of the interference of land claims, founded, or alleged to be founded, on the land laws of Virginia, or of this State;" that dormant claims "are often brought up, not only to alarm, but eventually to turn out naked to the world numerous well settled and industrious families;" "for remedy thereof, and to fix the period to which the citizens of this State, and the proprietors of land therein, may look forward for peace to themselves and safety to their property," this special law was enacted limiting actions at law and bills in equity, upon claims to land by adverse interfering entry, survey, or patent, to seven years, from and after the adverse possession taken and continued. This act was contested by non-residents, as contrary to the compact between Kentucky and Virginia, and to the constitution of the United States. It was finally adjudged by the Supreme Court of the United States, in January term, 1831, not to be in violation of the compact, but constitutional and valid. This decision administered peace and safety to such settlers as came within the enactments of this statute, and relieved the people of the State from an enormous public evil, which had harrassed the commonwealth for so many years.

Difficulties sprung up between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company, of Montreal, respecting the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company under their charter of 1670, exciting animosities, heart-burnings, and feuds, which, in 1819, had quickened multitudes into wild commotions and breaches of the peace, so serious in their character as to induce the parliament of Great Britain to interpose to put an end to them, by enacting the statute of 2d George IV., chap. 66.

There are good grounds to believe that the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company, grown up under their original charter, and existing in the Oregon territory, had great effect in protracting the adjustment, by amicable compromise, of the claims to sovereignty mutually asserted by the United States and Great Britain to the territory on the northwest coast of America, lying westward of the Rocky mountains, from the time of the treaty of Ghent, in 1815, to the treaty of Washington, in 1846.

Nor can it be doubted, that the uncertainty so prevailing for so many years respecting the right of the United States to this territory of Oregon, has, in a very eminent degree, retarded the settlement and improvement of that territory, and checked its prosperity. The adjustment of that question, by the compromise in the treaty of 1846, has given an impulse, a visible impetus, to settlements in the territory of Oregon.

Miserable is the servitude of a people—numerous are the ills to which they are a prey in a