

toiled that time is the great physician, who might have cured this disordered state of our political affairs. I am a firm believer in the silent and ceaseless operations of that mighty agent. But this case was beyond his power. If, indeed, time would stand still for one of the parties, and move only for the other—stand still for England, and move on for us—our straits of progress would soon pour through the passes of the Rocky Mountains a host of emigrants who would spread over all the hills and valleys from the summit of that great barrier to that other barrier, the ocean itself, which says to the advancing settlements, Come no farther. But neither time nor England would stand still. Her Government is sagacious, alive to her interests, and ready to maintain them. She knows the value of the country as well as we do, and appreciates it perhaps higher. No one can read the speeches in the House of Commons on the 4th of April last, without being sensible, that the subject, in all its extent, has occupied the attention of the British Government, and that the country itself will occupy its for-ting care. Think you that that Government would have continued to see land after land of our citizens leaving our frontier settlements, lost to human observation almost for months while passing through the desert with its toils, its privations, and its dangers, and finally emerging into the land of promise, to seize it, and to hold it, and would have looked calmly on, receiving as we advanced, retreating to the hill as we descended into the valley, and finally yielding us quiet possession of this long-disputed territory? He, who does not believe all this, must believe that time would not have peacefully adjusted this controversy for us. But, besides, this process of adjustment does not assume that our right to exclude the British from the country will be increased by settlement. It may add strength to our power, but none to our title. It does not presuppose that war is to be averted, but only postponed. The rights of England, at the end of any given period, will be precisely what they now are; and, unless she should voluntarily relinquish them, a conflict would be inevitable. It seems to me very clear, that if she would ever be disposed to abandon the country, she would do it now, when the disparity of force there is not such as to cast the reproach of timidity upon her counsels, and when the number of her subjects is not such as to render difficult a satisfactory arrangement for them.

Mr. President, the Senator from South Carolina has held up to our view a sombre picture of the calamities, which a war with England would bring upon the United States—too sombre, sir, if I am not utterly ignorant of the history and condition of my country, and of the energy and spirit of my countrymen. I shall not examine it feature by feature; but there are certain portions I desire to present to the Senate.

What probable circumstances could require this country to keep up a military and naval force of two hundred thousand men for ten years—the land portion of it divided into seven great armies—I confess my utter inability to conjecture. Why the honorable Senator fixes upon that period for the duration of the war, I know not. It is so wholly conjectural as to elude the application of any principle to it. Long before its expiration, if we are not utterly unworthy of our name and our birthright, we should sweep the British Power from the continent of North America, and the remainder of the time must be occupied by predatory incursions upon the coast and by hostilities upon the ocean. The dangers or disasters, which this state of things brings with it, would require but a small portion of the force considered necessary by the Senator. As to Mexico, I trust we shall bear much from her. We owe that to our own strength and to her weakness; to our own position, not less than to the situation of her Government and to the *quasi* civil war, which seems to be the curse of her condition. But should we be driven to put forth our strength, peace would ensue, and speedily; but it would be a peace dictated in her capital, and placing her political destiny at our disposition.

And besides, during the progress of such a war, to which the honorable gentleman alludes, who can tell the sphere of its operations, and what nations would become parties to it? How soon would the great maritime questions of our day present themselves for solution? How long would it be before England would revive and enforce those belligerent pretensions, which drove us to war when we were neutral, and which would drive other nations to war occupying the same position? How long before the violation of her flag would arouse the public feeling of France, and compel her Government to vindicate its honor? And who can tell what war of principles and opinions would come to all its excitement and passions to the usual struggles of contending nations? The war is, indeed, in comparative repose; but there are causes in operation which, if quickened into action by peculiar circumstances, might shake the institutions of Europe to their very foundations. I consider a war between Eng-

land and the United States for ten years, or for half of that time, utterly impossible, without bringing into collision the great questions of our day—the right to govern and the duty to submit—and into fierce action the interests and passions, which such a struggle would excite—a struggle that must come, but which such a war would accelerate.

In order, that I may remove even the possibility of misinterpreting the sentiments of the Senator, I will read an extract or two from his speech. After alluding to the material horrors of war, and doing justice to the courage of his countrymen, he adds, that a war between us and Great Britain, such as has been described, "in which every nerve and muscle would be strained to the utmost, and every dollar put in requisition which could be commandable, could not fail, under present circumstances, to work most disastrous, and I fear incurable changes in the social condition of our people, and in their political institutions." He then adverts to the consequences of such a war, drawing after it a Mexican war and an Indian war. He thinks we should need two fleets, six or seven armies, one hundred million of dollars annually, and a proportionate system of taxation. He then continues, after showing the destruction of the State governments, and the consolidation of all power in the central authority, "and our very existence would endanger a spirit inconsistent with the genius of our Government: "It would then be a straight and downward road, which leads to where so many free States have terminated their career—a military despotism. In the mean time we should have to provide for three or four successful generals, who would soon be competing for the Presidency, and before the generation, which would have waged the war should have passed away, they might possibly witness a contest between hostile generals for that supreme office—a contest between him who might conquer Mexico and him who might conquer Canada, terminated by the sword."

But permit me to ask the Senator from South Carolina, if all this were so, if his anticipations were certain, instead of being purely gratuitous, ought the assurance of such events to come from him, from such a high authority, in so high a place? In the Senate of the United States, and from one who has filled some of the most important positions in our Government; whose services and talents, and character gave him great consideration with his countrymen; who possesses a European fame; and whose opinions are quoted at this moment in London and Paris as indications of our policy, and of the final result of this controversy? Is it well thus to announce to the world our incapacity to defend ourselves? For that is in fact the result. A Government dissolved, or rather changed to a despotism, a country ruined, and eventually its fragments a prey to ambitious generals, as the empire of Alexander was partitioned among his lieutenants! War, then, becomes not a measure of safety, but a signal of destruction to the American people. We are powerless to defend ourselves. If we are struck upon one cheek, we must turn the other; not in a spirit of Christian charity, but in the despair of helplessness. We are bound together by a fair-weather Government, incapable of riding out the storms of foreign aggression. Submission must be our refuge, for beyond submission is destruction. We shall exhibit the extraordinary spectacle of a great people, great in all the elements of power and prosperity, saying to the world, in effect, we cannot contend with England. We are at her mercy, for even success would ruin us.

Now, sir, this is not so. There is not one man within the sound of my voice whose heart does not tell him, *such has not been your past—such will not be your future.* The honorable Senator, in looking at the real calamities of war, which I seek neither to conceal nor to deny, has suffered himself to overrate them. They have struck him more forcibly than they should do. The experiment of two wars with England, into which we entered, and from which we issued gloriously, puts the stamp of error upon these sad forebodings. How they pushed us forward, in character and position among the nations of the earth, I need not tell; nor need I say, that the march of this country in all that constitutes the power and happiness of a people, is a practical proof, that those conflicts left no wounds upon our institutions, and but temporary checks upon our prosperity.

The honorable Senator has appealed to his past history in proof, that in presenting these views he acted in no unmanly fear for himself, and that if war comes, he would be among the last to flinch. No, Mr. President, no one in this nation doubts that his course would be firm and patriotic, should war be forced upon us. But he will permit me also to appeal; to appeal from the Senator of 1816 to the Representative of 1812. He is the *Ultimus Romanorum*—the last of the Romans; the sole survivor among us of a generation of statesmen, who have passed from the legislative service of their country. The last of the actors, not of the signers, who gave to the