

we could treat no further was but a feint, partly for domestic politics and partly that, by holding out strong legislative measures as to Oregon, and the hope of a free-trade tariff, we might both intimidate and bribe Great Britain into large concessions, which might make a boast for this Administration. This dangerous game of intimidation Congress was to help play. Even now we are kindly told by the "organ" that unanimity in Congress is all that is wanting to enable the Executive to carry triumphantly his point. What that point is none of us know, and about which scarcely two of his friends on this floor agree. One while lecturing and then cajoling us, the "organ" bids us see that all we *have* obtained (I should like to know what it is, by-the-by) is by threatening demonstrations. I make no doubt that, from the strong desire of peace displayed by England, something might have been gained in this way; but they who devised this reputable plan should have had some prudence, some moderation, and known when to strike. They have pushed it too far, have awakened her pride, and will probably get nothing by their game of brag. At all events, the method is a most hazardous, and by no means a reputable one.

I consider it perfectly clear, from the contemporary recommendations of the Subtreasury and of the reduction of the tariff, that *no armed* difficulty with England was designed or expected. The supineness of the Cabinet as to urging on Congress to the military and naval readiness which it recommended, is a further but a needless proof that peace only was looked for. Indeed, when a war is really apprehended, a wise and discreet Government does as Great Britain has been doing; it says nothing of it, but goes about preparation quietly and vigorously; and if suspicion is excited, and questions are asked, it answers evasively.

To the other coercive steps proposed by the Executive, I need but little advert. Except the notice that the existing convention of joint occupation shall terminate after a year—a step which may probably be harmless, and which the action of the Executive has rendered necessary—they all have three grand faults; they are parts of a hostile system, and hostilities are not really designed; but the talking of them cannot fail to produce more ill blood. We have to deal with a people more prudent, but not a whit less resolute than ourselves. We should certainly take fire at such measures; so will they. We should only yield less, instead of more, in consequence of all measures meant to make us give back; and every reflecting man must know that the effect on John Bull will be the same. Almost equally do I believe, as a gratuitous departure from the proper course on matters under negotiation, the President's introduction into the message of a declaration that the free navigation of the Columbia is not to be given up. It is really as much out of place as his original declaration about Oregon in his inaugural. Sir, suppose we were met in the same way? And why should we not be? If nations proceed in that way, how can they ever settle their difficulties but by the sword? Nay, when tired of fighting, what are they to do? Recommend the game of hot and downright assertion? Have we not repeatedly offered this navigation? So our Secretary was obliged to admit.

This correspondence and the message place the thing on a very different footing; and thus does this Administration constantly shift its grounds in the whole question. Is there any principle involved? None which preceding Administrations (as wise and patriotic as this one) could see, when they *voluntarily* offered it. Have we not claimed the same principle as to the St. Lawrence? Did we not obtain it in earlier times of Spain, as to the Mississippi, with even a privilege of deposit at New Orleans, then Spanish? Were we not near going to war for it just before the purchase of Louisiana? And has not England lately conceded it to us in the St. John's? There is, then, no principle involved. As to interest, the *exclusive* navigation of the Columbia, and that of Goose Creek, (now classically Tiber,) which flows through this city, are about equally valuable.

The allusions in the message to the European Governments are anything but

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