

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 ten 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 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 hostility; 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. Packenham are published with those of Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Buchanan, and are 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 the mere weight of an ordinary legislative debate, but with all the evidences of deliberation and arrangement; and, therefore, calculated to be more dangerous in propagating error.

It was now three o'clock, and Mr. D. gave way to a motion of Mr. Sevin to adjourn.

THURSDAY, February 19, 1846.

Mr. DIX was about to resume his remarks which he had not concluded at the hour of adjournment yesterday, but yielded the floor to

Mr. J. M. CLAYTON, who said he desired an opportunity to offer a few remarks relative to an allusion made to him by the senator from New York, (Mr. Dix,) in the opening of his speech yesterday. He is reported to have said:

"In entering into the debate on the question under consideration, I feel constrained to differ in opinion with two distinguished senators who have preceded me, in relation to the manner in which the discussion should be conducted. I allude to the senator from Ohio, (Mr. ALLEN,) who opened the debate, and the senator from Delaware, (Mr. CLAYTON,) who followed him. Both took the ground, and with equally strong language, that the title to Oregon ought not to be drawn into this discussion, but for totally different reasons—the senator from Ohio, because the time for discussing it had gone by, and the senator from Delaware, because the time for discussing it had not arrived. With the unfeigned respect which I entertain for both senators, I dissent from their opinions with great diffidence of my own."

As the senator said, he (Mr. C.) was temporarily absent from his seat, but came in a few minutes after the senator had made that remark. He had mistaken his (Mr. C.'s) position. When he had the honor of addressing the Senate on the 12th inst., he did object to the discussion of the title in open session, but he avowed distinctly at the time his perfect willingness to enter at any moment on that discussion in executive session. He did not mean to say, nor did he think that he was generally understood at the time as meaning to say, that he objected to the discussion of the question at that very moment. On the contrary, he thought that he expressed his willingness to go into it then, if his associates in the Senate wished to do so—but in executive session. And he begged the senator to recollect the reason, which he assigned why the discussion should be so conducted. He said, that, if the question were to be settled by treaty between the two governments, the remarks made in open session were calculated to prejudice, and must necessarily prejudice, the

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