

The fur traders, now as always, are still ready for a war which gives them a little while longer the monopoly of beaver; but their power is not equal now to what it has been. They set the Indians upon us in the war of the Revolution, and in fact began the war at Point Pleasant (mouth of the Kenhawa) in October, 1774. They instigated and kept up the long Indian wars in the northwest, terminated at last by Wayne's victory under the guns of a British fort. One of the causes of the late war had its root in their love of beaver; and their savages, as in the war of the Revolution, fought the first battle in the bloody drama that was to follow. As an interlude, when not at war with us, they fought each other; and nothing in the long catalogue of Indian massacres can be more shocking than those perpetrated upon each other, through the instrumentality of savages, by the Hudson Bay and Northwest Companies; and all from the love of beaver. The act of Parliament which united these two companies under one charter, assigned it for a reason of the junction, in the face of the act, the necessity of joining them together to prevent their destruction of each other. This company would still find, in their opinion, judging from their past acts and present writings, a compensation for national war in their own further monopoly of beaver; but I see no sign of their success with the Government; and, for the rest, let them beware! The next war with Great Britain will leave them not a fort standing, from the Lake of the Woods to Hudson's Bay—from the Saskatchewan to Fort Chipewyan—from the mouth of Frazer's river to Bear lake. But they have no longer power to make war. After doing all they can to give that blessing to the two nations, they will probably set up for the innocent and injured party—demand indemnity for losses—claim the navigation of the Columbia—and require time to remove. I should be willing to be a negotiator for half an hour when they should come forward with such reclamations. I would remind them of something that might stand as a set-off, and that without going back to the war of the Revolution, the wars of the northwest, or the war of 1812. Leaving out old scores, and confining myself to the unsettled account which has grown up between us since the war of 1812, and the five hundred men killed on the Missouri and the Columbia, the five hundred thousand dollars worth of property plundered there—the thirty years' ravaging of all the fur regions in the valley of the Columbia under the reciprocity convention; which expelled our traders from our own territories instead of admitting them into the territories of the British: confining myself to these modern items, and I would soon find enough to silence the demand for indemnities, and rejecting the prayer for future favors. But, enough of this. There is no longer a party, either in the United States or Great Britain, which can make a war either upon a mistake, or upon fanaticism, or on beaver.

The treaty of settlement and limits will probably be concluded before the expiration of the twelve months which the abrogation of the convention requires: if not, the effect will be the same to us, though not to Great Britain. Under the first article of the Ghent treaty we shall receive the possession of the Columbia; and, as an incident of that

possession, as well as by the admission of Lord Castlereagh in 1818, we shall have the right to hold and govern it until the question of title is decided. This brings me to the practical question of providing for the establishment of government, and the administration of law, in the country which we claim. The President, in view of this question, and with due consideration of what we can do pending the convention, and what after its abrogation, and confining himself to the first class of these measures, has recommended five, namely, the notice—the extension of law and government to the American settlers to the same extent that the British Government has extended law and government to British settlers—the protection of the emigrants by a mounted regiment—block-houses on the way—a monthly mail. These are the measures recommended by the President. Four of them have been granted (for the mounted regiment will furnish the best mail-carriers;) one only remains, that of the temporary provision for the government of the settlers; and this might have been passed in as little time as it would have taken to read the bill three times, if presented in the form recommended by the President. He recommended an extension of our law to our settlers to the same extent that the British had extended it to theirs. This might have been done by the easy process of copying their act, with the modifications which would have adapted its application to our citizens; and by this means an adequate temporary Government would have been provided, with the advantage of being free from the possibility of objection, or cavil on the part of the British authorities.

The bill from the House is not a modified copy of the British act, and is therefore objectionable. It also provides for what is already done, and therein is objectionable again. A bill for the mounted regiment, and the chain of block-houses, for the protection of the emigrants, passed the Senate five months ago. Not being presented as a war regiment, for the conquest of the country up to 54° 40', it passed with so little notice, that the event seems to have been almost unnoticed. It has lately passed the House of Representatives, and is now the law of the land; and if all the other measures recommended by the President had been brought forward in the same way, they would have passed as easily, and the whole five measures, notice and all, finished four or five months ago. But they were brought forward as war measures—war for "all or none"—clear up to 54° 40'. This was the cause of the delay, and the reason why one of the measures—that of the temporary government—remains unacted upon to this day. The provision in the bill from the House for the regiment and the block-houses, is, therefore, not merely unnecessary, but a work of supererogation—a sort of superfetation in legislation. Equally supererogatory, and absolutely impracticable, is the provision in the bill for the establishment of a monthly mail between Missouri and Oregon. Mails in an uninhabited country of more than two thousand five hundred miles, traversed by savages, and running over mountains of seven or eight thousand feet, where deep snow lies for more than a thousand miles more than one-half the year, could not be carried by the solitary conveyance of a contract-