

bill of sale, for a sum of money, to the British company, who purchased it, by the American company, who sold it of *their own free will*.

It is true that a British sloop of war had, about that time, been sent to take possession of that post, but she arrived subsequently to the transaction above mentioned, between the two companies, and found the British company *already in legal occupation of their self acquired property*.

In consequence, however, of that ship having been sent out with hostile views, although those views were not carried into effect,* and in order that not even a shadow of a reflection might be cast upon the good faith of the British government, the latter determined to give the most liberal extension to the terms of the treaty of Ghent, and, in 1818, the purchase which the British company had made in 1813 was restored to the United States.

Particular care, however, was taken, on this occasion, to prevent any misapprehension as to the extent of the concession made by Great Britain.

Viscount Castlereagh, in directing the British minister at Washington to intimate the intention of the British government to Mr. Adams, then secretary of state, uses these expressions, in a despatch dated 4th February, 1818:—

"You will observe, that, whilst this government is not disposed to contest with the American government the point of possession as it stood in the Columbia River at the moment of the rupture, *they are not prepared to admit the validity of the title of the government of the United States to this settlement*.

"In signifying, therefore, to Mr. Adams the full acquiescence of your government in the reoccupation of the limited position which the United States held in that river at the breaking out of the war, *you will at the same time assert, in suitable terms, the claim of Great Britain to that territory, upon which the American settlement must be considered as an encroachment*."

This instruction was executed verbally by the person to whom it was addressed.

The following is a transcript of the act by which the fort was delivered up, by the British, into the hand of Mr. Prevost, the American agent:—

"In obedience to the command of H. R. H. the prince regent, *signified in a despatch from the right honorable the Earl Bathurst, addressed to the partners or agents of the North-West Company, bearing date the 27th of January, 1818, and in obedience to a subsequent order, dated the 26th July, from W. H. Sheriff, Esq., captain of H. M. ship Andromascho, We, the undersigned, do, in conformity to the first article of the treaty of Ghent, restore to the government of the United States, through its agent, J. P. Prevost, Esq., the settlement of Fort George, on the Columbia river.*

"Given under our hands, in triplicate, at Fort George, (Columbia River,) this 6th day of October, 1818.

"F. HICKEY, Captain H. M. ship Blossom.

"J. KEITH, of the N. W. Co."

The following is the despatch from Earl Bathurst to the partners of the North-West Company, referred to in the above act of cession:—

DOWNING-STREET, 27th January, 1818.

"Intelligence having been received that the United States sloop of war *Ontario* has been sent by the American government to establish a settlement on the Columbia river, which was held by that state, on the breaking out of the last war, I am to acquaint you, that it is the prince regent's pleasure, (*without, however, admitting the right of that government to the possession in question*) that, in pursuance of the first article of the treaty of Ghent, due facility should be given to the reoccupation of the said settlement by the officers of the United States; and I am to desire that you would contribute as much as lies in your power to the execution of his royal highness's commands.

"I have, &c. &c.,

"BATHURST.

"To the Partners or Agents of the North-West Company,
residing on the Columbia river."

The above documents put the case of the restoration of Fort Astoria in too clear a light to require further observation.

* Those views were carried into effect. The place was regularly taken possession of in the king's name on the 1st December, 1813, and the British flag was run up with all the formalities of conquest, in place of the American standard