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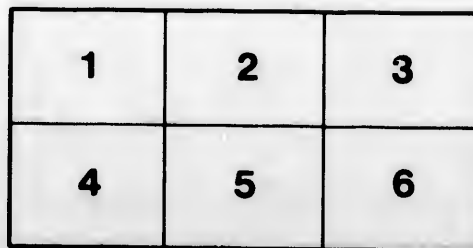
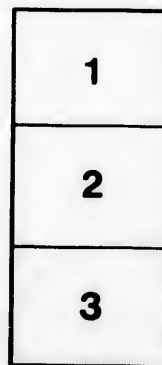
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SPEECH

OF

HON. C. GOODYEAR, OF NEW YORK,

ON

THE OREGON QUESTION,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 1846.

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WASHINGTON:  
BLAIR & RIVES, PRINTERS.  
1846.

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## THE OREGON QUESTION.

he Resolution authorizing the President to give the notice for the termination of the joint occupancy of the Oregon Territory being under consideration in Committee of the Whole—

Mr. GOODYEAR spoke as follows :

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I observe that the interest in its discussion, though not in the subject, has necessarily, from its protracted character, very much abated; and I cannot hope to claim the attention of the House to any lengthened exposition of my views in regard to it. I therefore propose simply very brief detail of the considerations which will control my action in connexion with the vote which shall deem it my duty to give upon the final disposition of the question. In the early part of this debate the matter seemed to take a sectional, and somewhat local character; it was said to be a western measure, so far as any advantages arising from an addition of territory and safety from foreign invasion is concerned; and to have a southern aspect so far as the desolating effects of war were to be apprehended from its prosecution. It might be difficult to give any very good reason for either view of the matter: I cannot conceive how the West can claim any advantages over the rest of the Union, either by way of exemption from military burdens, in case of war, or by the addition of a tract of uninhabited territory upon the outer verge of its already almost boundless wilderness; nor how the South, unless she may be deemed more vulnerable in consequence of her own peculiar institutions, can claim any exclusive interest in the peaceable settlement of this controversy over other States equally exposed, and with far more valuable interests at stake. But however that may be, the West and the South had, for a time, the debate almost exclusively to themselves, and conducted it as if they alone were interested in the issue; and yet, sir, in looking over the map of this confederacy, even a casual observer would be likely to discover that New York, as well as other Atlantic States, must necessarily have some slight interest in any question, the agitation of which threatened a rupture of our peaceable relations with foreign Powers. With a lake and Atlantic coast more extensive and exposed than that of any other State, and with a commerce more valuable than that of the whole residue of the Union together, a war with Great Britain, at this time, would fall upon her interests and resources with a blighting and blighting influence; and yet, sir, I stand not here to ask for the State of New York any peculiar sympathy on account of her doubly exposed condition, nor to claim, in imitation of the example of

most gentlemen who have spoken upon this subject in behalf of their respective States, any particular merit for patriotic devotion. It is sufficient for me to say, that she asks no exclusive regard for her interests, and that now, as at all times, she is ready to discharge her whole duty to the commonwealth. And if national rights, interests, or honor, shall demand the sacrifice, she counsels no craven policy, though the issue should involve the annihilation of her commerce, the decimation of her citizens, and the exposure of her towns and cities to plunder and conflagration; she is even now speaking upon this momentous subject through the medium of her own State Legislature, and I doubt not that her voice, when heard, will awaken a sentiment in every bosom, and an echo from every lip, worthy in all respects of the Empire State.

But, sir, without regard to any action of my own State upon the subject, I had, in the early stages of this debate, for reasons satisfactory to myself, come to the conclusion that this resolution should pass this House, and that the President should take immediate action under it. Thirty years of unsuccessful negotiation would of itself seem to demand some more efficient action. Diplomacy has exhausted its skill, and a more auspicious period has been sought in procrastination; but the one has only added to its embarrassments, and the other multiplied its difficulties and dangers.

May I be permitted to ask gentlemen who counsel further delay, when they propose to terminate this controversy? Are we to bequeath this deferred quarrel, rendered doubly complicated by delay and unsuccessful negotiation, as a legacy to our children? Ah, sir, even if that timid and tardy policy could be deemed honorable and patriotic, it is no longer practicable. The time has gone by when safety might be found in supineness. The relations of the two countries growing out of this controversy have assumed a critical and alarming attitude. The feverish and excited state of the public mind demands immediate action, and mighty interests await the result. The provisions of the joint convention will not be observed, in fact, though they be continued in form. The efforts of the two countries will be stimulated by recently excited jealousies, to fortify and defend their respective claims. Confidence and friendly intercourse will be destroyed, and all the commercial relations of the two countries, and with the rest of the world, will be constrained and embarrassed by the ever-recurring danger of an immediate and fatal collision. The effect of the existence of this state of things between two of the greatest commercial nations upon earth is



too apparent to leave room for a doubt that it cannot long continue. Every nerve and fibre of the body politic is tremblingly alive to the slightest indication of menace or aggression; enterprise is restrained, business at a stand; the public pulse is madly bounding with excitement; and if the adjustment of the difficulty be much longer deferred, either a surrender of the whole territory, or war, with all its consequences, will be sought as a relief from this wild fever of apprehension and suspense.

Beside, sir, I said there were mighty interests awaiting the issue. The progress of events within the few past years has vastly enhanced the value of this territory. When the convention was first entered into, the disputed domain was deemed of little moment; it has even been questioned whether it would not more properly constitute an independent sovereignty than a part of our confederacy. But recent improvements in the facilities of transportation and intercourse have rendered the ports on the Pacific coast contiguous to our territory of immense importance. It can no longer be doubted that, unless the onward progress of our country is checked by a devastating war with Europe, the mouth of the Hudson and the Columbia will, ere long, by means of the railroad and magnetic wires, be brought into close communion. However stupendous the project may appear, its early accomplishment is nevertheless within the limits of the enterprise and highly stimulated energies of the day. The late revolution in the foreign policy of China has awakened the attention of the public to the importance of this overland communication between our Pacific and Atlantic coasts. I can conceive that the whole trade of the Celestial Empire may be diverted through this channel, and that Europe may find her India market where she now purchases her cotton, tobacco, and corn.

But the first step in the prosecution of this vast enterprise cannot be taken until this convention for a joint occupancy is abrogated. Again, sir, our citizens are flowing into that territory in one continuous tide of emigration. They leave behind them the graves of their ancestors, but carry with them, together with our language, our manners and customs, and all those natural affections which attach them to the land of their birth. They demand the protection of our laws; but this we cannot grant them during the existence of this treaty for joint occupancy. Perfect protection to the citizen admits of no divided sovereignty. And yet we cannot deny it them, without being recreant to our duty, and faithless to our trust. Sir, I admit that the Roman Republic, although frequently alluded to by gentlemen in the progress of this debate, furnishes no model for our imitation. I should deeply regret to read our future in the page of blended virtue and crimes—of justice and oppression—of magnanimity and meanness—of fidelity and treason—of profuse generosity and the most grasping cupidity—of glorious victories and wide-spread desolation, which mark her pathway to universal empire. The deep shadows of her decline and fall stand out too ready and pertinent a commentary upon the crimes which contributed to her elevation. The justice which broke the sceptre of her power was too prompt and retributive, and her final degradation was too dark and despairing, to make her career the object of rational ambition. I

cherish the hope of a brighter page for my country's history—one less bespotted with blood, sullied with tears. But the varied page is before us; and, with a disposition to profit by the teachings of the past, we may select the virtues and reject the crimes. If in the whole history of Roman greatness there is any one trait which, more than any other, challenges imitation and approval, it is the protection which her policy, in conjunction with her power, afforded her citizens. In that even of lawless violence, Roman citizenship—admitted in the wilds of Europe, the wastes of Asia, and the deserts of Africa—was a talisman which vested its fortunate possessor with an invulnerable panoply. Our citizens, to say the least of it, are entitled to a like protection within our own territory and upon our own soil.

But it is said, sir, that all our purposes may be accomplished by delay. As far as I have been able to ascertain the state of parties upon this subject, there are, among others, two, both of whom claim the whole of Oregon, but widely differ in the means of obtaining it. The one proposes to give the notice, and immediately on its expiration to take a forcible possession of the whole territory; the other, to defer the notice, and, by a masterly activity—or, in the more expressive and meaningful phrase of the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. BURTON,] by a quiet but efficient action—accomplish the same purpose. The first, as I shall attempt to show hereafter, would, in my view, be inexpedient and unjust; the other, utterly impracticable. Were England awakened to the subject—England, that never slept upon her rights or left her interests unguarded—it would be worse than folly, it would be madness, to hope to gain by stealth what we dare not demand by open defiance. Hasten on, you please, the emigrant armed with the axe and the rifle, and for every hundred men who cross the Rocky mountains, England would erect another fort, mount it with her cannon, and garrison it with her troops; she would draw around her closer alliance the Indian tribes, and arm them with the implements of their savage warfare; and after the lapse of any given period of “masterly inactivity,” we should find either the British in quiet military possession of the whole territory, or the war precipitated with all its horrors, which the gentleman so much deprecates and dreads. Then indeed, in the gentleman's own eloquent language, might we hear burdening every breeze from the west, the savage yell and the shriek of torture then might we see, not in imagination but in fact the bones of the emigrants whitening the prairie and his own favorite eagle uttering his wild cry above their mutilated, blackened, and festering bodies. No, sir, if we wish to avoid the horrors which the gentleman has so eloquently depicted we must settle this question of disputed boundary before our people are madly thrust upon the danger. What, sir, is it proposed to send our citizens forward into the wilderness, far beyond the reach of aid, expose them to all the vicissitudes of a forest life, and the more terrible weapons of a powerful nation, united with a savage foe—and when their prowess and fortitude shall have overcome all obstacles, and their industry made the forest bloom around them, to exemplify the benign influence and protecting care of our Government by kindly extending over them our laws, and visit-

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ing them with the tax-gatherer? Such was the protection which England vouchsafed to her colonies, and which they indignantly hurled back upon her. In my judgment, this policy pursued, the war will be speedy and inevitable; and by giving the notice, it will be equally certain to be avoided. The notice, if given, will be in pursuance of a treaty stipulation; and its effect will be simply to throw into our exclusive possession a large portion of this territory, the title to which is undisputed, and leave the residue to be settled by negotiation, accompanied, however, with an admonition which may not be disregarded as to the necessity of its speedy adjustment.

War cannot be the direct or necessary result of the notice to abrogate this convention. That contingency will depend upon another and far more important question, to which I shall presently allude. I confess that, if war were to be the necessary consequence, as some seem to apprehend, of the passage of this resolution, I should hesitate, at all events until a certain other measure had first found its way through this House—that of providing for the public defence. I do not subscribe to the oft-repeated doctrine, that the genius of our institutions must necessarily subject us to defeat in the commencement of a war. We need not be prepared for offensive operations; we want no standing army, but the material for defence should, at all times, be complete; we should be satisfied by the report of competent engineers, that the requisite number of guns are mounted upon our defences and fit for service; we can at all times find hands to man them. I could not consent that, by any hasty action of ours, the important seaports of the Atlantic coast should be exposed to a sudden and fatal attack, nor that our country should ever again be disgraced by having the very walls of her Capitol blackened by the torch of an invading foe. But no war need be apprehended from this measure. These conflicting claims existed before this convention was entered into, and no war ensued; they may exist again upon like terms. But the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. YANCEY] says the convention was a substitute for war. No, sir; it was a wretched substitute for firm and efficient negotiation; it was this putting off the encountering of difficulties, which time alone has rendered formidable. There have been several periods at which this controversy might have been favorably adjusted. It is now well known that Lord Ashburton had full instructions from his government upon this question, and it is believed that he was prepared to make liberal concessions in the northwest for the advantages which he actually gained in the northeast without them. If the Government had, at that time, firmly insisted upon connecting the two questions, we should not now be troubled with this; but the then Administration preferred the continuance of this substitute for diplomatic firmness and efficiency. Happily we have at length arrived at a period when neither the state of the affair itself, nor the inclination of the Administration will admit of longer delay.

But I proceed to the consideration of the more important question—that of the extent to which our right to the possession of the territory should be asserted under the notice. It is the uncertainty of the policy of our Government upon this question, which has alone multiplied the chances of war.

Upon this branch of the subject, after looking over the whole ground, I cannot rid myself of the conviction that England has some rights in Oregon—rights commencing in some pretensions to early discovery, continued by a partial occupation, and confirmed by thirty years' negotiation and numerous treaties—negotiations entered upon and conducted with the avowed purpose of settling a boundary, not the title, and terminating in treaties for the joint occupation of the whole territory, but conceding no superior rights or paramount title to either party. It is with this view of the matter that I arrive at the conclusion that the action of our own Government has conceded to England some rights in the territory of Oregon. But the extent of those rights—we having the better title—must depend entirely upon our sovereign will and pleasure. The determination of that will has been repeatedly expressed by our Government, and recently signified to the British minister resident in this city, by a proposition to divide the territory by the 49th parallel of latitude. This, sir, I take it, is the extreme limit to which concession will be carried. This division of the territory has been repeatedly offered to Great Britain; and those offers constitute almost the sole foundation of her title. Whether it be viewed, then, in the light of a gratuity, or a concession for compromise, the just pride and acknowledged power of the nation alike forbid the resumption of the gift. The American people should scorn to retract the charitable boon. But I have said that Britain has claims to this territory which, by our own concessions, have ripened into rights. Let us for a moment reverse the picture, for the purpose of ascertaining the more clearly whether this position be tenable. Suppose (which is the truth) the two countries had conflicting claims to the whole of this territory, claims resting somewhat in illy authenticated journals of navigators and in vague tradition; suppose (which is also the truth) that, for the purpose of settling these conflicting claims, negotiation should be resorted to, and should result in unsuccessful propositions on both sides to divide the territory, but by different lines, and should finally terminate in a convention for the joint occupation of the whole territory, conceding exclusive rights to neither; that this state of things should continue for the period of some thirty years, and in the mean time the citizens of both countries should make partial settlements upon those portions of the territory which, by all the propositions on both sides, were conceded to be the exclusive property of their respective countries. Suppose, then, that Britain, with the same show of better title which we now exhibit, should turn upon us and claim the whole: what would be our answer? We would say: you have conceded to us rights; our citizens have taken possession accordingly; they are entitled to our protection, and an impartial world will justify us in maintaining those rights, if necessary, by a resort to arms. And we would do it. We would feel it unnecessary to go further back for title, but would unhesitatingly hurl back the threats of England by a stern defiance.

I am aware, sir, that a claim in our favor paramount to all others has been set up—that of manifest destiny. It runs thus: God hath given to this nation the western continent and the fulness thereof. This, as I understand it, overrides all titles,

and sets at defiance all reasoning. This claim to universal dominion was put forth in the commencement of this debate, and has been frequently urged in the course of it; and more particularly by the gentleman from Michigan, [Mr. CHIPMAN,] as a final and conclusive argument. I regretted to hear the sentiment avowed in an American Congress, because it implies a doubt of the validity of our own perfect title, and because it has ever been used to justify every act of wholesale violence and rapine that ever disgraced the history of the world. It is the robber's title; but its record is accompanied by the instructive lesson that it ultimately meets the robber's doom. The Macedonian conqueror consulted the Delphic oracle, and having obtained from the priestess an equivocal answer, which, in his construction, gave him the right, by *manifest destiny*, to conquer the world, he pursued his career of victory amid sighs and tears and blood, over homes and hearths made desolate, cities wasted, and prostrate thrones, until, standing on the verge of the then habitable globe, he wept that he had not another world to conquer. Confident in the omnipotence of his fate, he drew around him his imperial robes and proudly boasted of the endless duration of his dynasty and his throne. But death struck the conqueror in a drunken revel, and his fated empire was broken into fragments, and disappeared from the earth, like the sand before the simoom of the desert. Rome, too, consulted her oracles, and sought in omens and signs her title by *manifest destiny* to universal empire. The response of the priest was propitious, and her legions proceeded to execute the decree. The title lost nothing of its force while there was wealth to plunder or nations to subdue; under it, the rapacity of the Roman prætor knew no bounds, his cruelty no remorse. She checked not her career of victory until the spoils of every nation, from the pillars of Hercules to the Indian ocean, swelled the triumph of her conquerors, and contributed to the luxuries and magnificence of what she fondly termed the Eternal City. "While the Coliseum stands Rome shall stand," was her proud boast. The Coliseum still stands, majestic in its ruins; but the Eternal City, long since despoiled of its glory and its power, is now only known to the traveller as the city of shattered columns and mighty recollections. The modern conqueror—the man of unbeating heart and iron nerve, who pursued his purposes with like unbending firmness upon the sands of Egypt and the snows of Russia—whose eye never quailed, and whose heart never faltered—who asserted and proved his title at the cannon's mouth, until victory, even, seemed the doomed minister of his stern and unrelenting will—he, too, pointed to his star and talked of destiny; but that bright luminary has set in perpetual night, and the eye that gazed upon its brightness was closed forever upon a barren rock in the steep Atlantic wave.

Who hath read the book of fate, or fathomed the purposes of the Almighty? Sir, we may read the future by the past. I have no doubt of our destiny, if we limit our ambition to the development of the human faculties and the cultivation of the arts of peace. With a territory capable of sustaining a larger population in comfort and opulence than any other country under one Government upon earth, the human mind can scarcely limit the pro-

gress of our dominion, either in duration or extent. But if, on the other hand, we should be stimulated to territorial aggrandizement by the prospect of successful war, I have as little doubt that the western continent would soon be found too narrow a sphere for our conquests. But with this brilliant prospect before us, we should remember that all history comes burdened with the admonition, that the nation which is destined to extend its territory by conquest, is equally fated to perish in the midst of its victories. It is due, sir, to the American people to know that their title, in this instance, admits no such equivocal alliance. In the appropriate language of the gentleman from Tennessee, [Mr. STANTON,] our right is our destiny, not our destiny our right. But we are led to consider, in this connexion, the duty of our Government, in case England should propose to renew the negotiation upon the basis of the division of the territory in the spirit of amicable adjustment. I answer, she should be met in the same spirit; and, in case she should offer the terms recently tendered and withdrawn by this Government, they should be unhesitatingly accepted. If it was consistent with the duties of Government to make the offer then, it is proper to accept it now. The interests and rights of the two countries have in no respect changed in regard to this territory. I do not say that the negotiation should be reopened at our instance, nor that any more favorable terms should be offered or accepted. On the contrary, I think our Government, in the manifestation of its disposition to adjust this difficulty, has approached the extremest limit which the rights, the interests, or the honor of our country will warrant; and if England should prefer to try the issue of a resort to arms, we shall then be restored to our belligerent rights, and may claim and take the whole. England well knows that war is a game which more than one can play at.

Sir, the inference I draw from this view of the matter is, that the notice being given, the joint occupancy terminated, and England remaining quiet, our rights to exclusive jurisdiction should be asserted only up to the 49th parallel of latitude. This being understood to be the policy and determination of our Government, the chances of war are entirely removed. England will not incur the hazards of a war for an inconsiderable tract of unproductive wilderness, the title to which she knows is clearly and unquestionably in us. This being known, the excitement upon this subject, as well in England as in this country, would entirely subside, and we should hear little more of Oregon.

But if the extreme policy, of the whole or none, urged by a few gentlemen upon this floor, is to be carried out, I cannot see how a war can be avoided. England cannot, consistently with her national honor, accept less, in the division of this territory, than has been repeatedly offered her; and, however reluctant she may be, I see not how she can escape a resort to this last dread alternative.

I proceed to consider for one moment whether it is our interest to drive her to this extremity.

Our national honor is no way concerned in the matter. By adopting the 49th parallel as our boundary we make our own terms, and dictate them, too, somewhat imperiously to the haughtiest and most powerful nation upon earth. It is, then, a

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mere matter of expediency, and as such I propose to consider it.

The value of the territory in dispute, compared with the expenses, the sacrifices, the sufferings, bloodshed, and horrors of a war, is the question at issue. Sir, I address not my arguments to those sublimated gentlemen who assert that the existence of a right precludes the consideration of consequences in its assertion. The gentlemen have forgotten, or haply never learned, that a regard to consequences is the first duty of a statesman; that it is that alone for which impartial history will give him credit for sagacity and wisdom. The notions of these gentlemen are somewhat too abstract and transcendental for my present purposes. On this branch of the subject, I prefer addressing the gentlemen upon this floor who have been educated in a less ethereal school of statesmanship.

First, then, the territory comprises some six degrees of latitude north of parallel of 49. The climate in that latitude must necessarily be severe, the face of the country is broken, and we have no evidence that any part of it possesses any peculiar advantages for purposes of cultivation. Indeed, in that view the territory is entirely valueless to us. We have now a territory which centuries of the most uninterrupted national prosperity cannot populate to the full extent of its capability. I am well aware of the adventurous spirit and impatience of contiguity of the West; but I think if the most zealous pioneer will join a caravan for the mouth of the Columbia, and pursue his pilgrimage for some six months over a boundless expanse of forest and prairie, without the sign of a human habitation and scarce the sign of human life, where the wild horse and the buffalo have revelled for centuries in the profusion of nature's bounties, he will be most effectually cured of all scruples on the score of density of population. Nor is this portion of the territory of any greater value with a view to that commerce which I have heretofore alluded to. The 49th parallel secures to us the Straits of Fuca and Puget's sound—thus furnishing, for all the commerce of the East, the best harbors on the coast of the Pacific; and for this territory, so valueless, in every respect, to the United States, gentlemen propose to take the chances of at best a disastrous war with Great Britain.

Sir, I am not satisfied by the remarks which have fallen from the gentlemen who insist upon the whole or none of the territory, that they themselves have any very clear conception of the means necessary to accomplish their purpose. The one portion of these gentlemen propose what has been termed a "masterly inactivity;" the other, immediate and coercive measures. Though I question not gentlemen's sincerity, nor doubt their valor, yet I much fear that the lofty pretensions of the first, compared with their supineness of action, will pass in the eye of the world as a very shallow covering for timid counsels—a sort of whistling to keep one's courage up. The other has more of the bravado in it, but seems equally wide of its purpose. True, the gentleman from Michigan [M. CHIFMAN] pledges the State of Michigan alone to take Canada in ninety days. This, at all events, looks like action; but it might have occurred to that gentleman that in the last war General Hull proposed a somewhat similar feat, and issued a like boastful proclamation; and in less than twenty

days thereafter he and his gallant army passed beneath the caudine forks. I intend, sir, no improper comparison between Michigan then and Michigan now; I merely allude to it for the purpose of showing that lofty pretensions and high-sounding promises are not always the best evidences of faithful and efficient performance. Perhaps the gentleman will make the application. Another gentleman seems to think there will be a great deal of valorous bush-fighting in Oregon, and, in the exuberance of his fancy, talks about the fountains of the Pacific coast spouting blood until they shall have tinged the broad ocean with their crimson currents. Sir, there will be no fighting in Oregon. The few inhabitants of that vast forest will be content to remain quiet and await the fearful shock which is to uproot and unsettle the nations of the earth. The war will be in Canada, in the British colonial islands, on our own frontiers, on the ocean, wherever the two nations may be deemed most vulnerable, or can meet in deadly and mortal combat. The blood and resources of the two nations will be exhausted in the fruitless struggle. All the worst passions of the human race will be aroused and brought into fierce action; commerce will be destroyed, civilization retarded, and the progress of improvement rolled back for half a century; the bonds of society will be ruptured and the affections crushed; the page that records the triumph will be streaked with blood, and the cheer that hails the victory will meet with no response at the desolate fireside and in the breaking heart.

It is well said, that no little war can hereafter be waged between these two great and powerful nations; no war of outposts and detachments. It will be England, with all her tremendous military resources, matched with the aroused and terrible energies of a nation of freemen—the long-deferred contest for the dominion of the western continent and for maritime supremacy—the fearful death-struggle with which foe grapples foe, and falters not nor yields, until death unnerves the muscle and relaxes the grasp. It would be well for gentlemen who talk thus flippantly of a contest where blows are to be given and not received, where laurels are to be won without the cypress, to turn their attention for a little to the magnitude of hostile preparations, and learn to look the realities of war steadily and sternly in the face. The time for the exercise of all their courage and patriotism may be nearer than they suppose. War will not ensue from any disputed boundary in Oregon, unless it be precipitated by our own indiscretion. If we yield to England the territory north of the 49th parallel—and more than that she should not have—and war then ensue, the disputed boundary will be the pretext, not the cause. If, in her newly-awakened apprehensions for the safety of her colonies on the western continent, it is the purpose of England at this time, in conjunction with other European Powers, to humble the pride and cripple the resources of this Republic, concession on our part would be worse than useless. Give her the whole of Oregon, and she will find a pretext for the quarrel; she will find it in California, in Mexico, on the reefs of Florida, or the banks of Newfoundland. She will find it wherever the red cross meets the flag of the Union on the ocean. Concession on our part would not prevent nor long postpone the struggle; and the more resolutely we meet

it in the assertion of the principle of demanding nothing but what is clearly right, and submitting to nothing wrong, the more readily may we hope for a speedy and favorable issue.

Sir, the danger may be remote—apprehension may be causeless. I am inclined to think that the time has gone by when the combined interests of European monarchies could seriously think of arresting the progress of human rights, at least on the western continent. But “coming events cast their shadows before.” The insidious suggestion of a balance of power upon this continent manifests a trembling apprehension that the Atlantic is not broad and deep enough to protect the East from the all-encroaching influences of rational but progressive Democracy. The political atmosphere of Europe has become dark and lurid; elements never before combined are now found in close alliance. Our ancient friend and ally is prompt to suggest to its ancient and hereditary enemy the readiest means of checking the progress of the far-reaching Republic. The gathering storm is preceded by the deep mutterings of the distant thunder. No human foresight can foretell the fearful catastrophe which may be produced by the bold assertion of a political right, when the contest is stimulated by the passions engendered in the warfare of conflicting principles. Hampden, by resisting the collection of a sixpenny tax, aroused a spirit in England which never again slept until it had overturned the throne, and brought the head of its monarch to the block. The colonies, by resisting an equally trifling tax upon tea, dismembered the British empire, and laid the foundation for a great and now powerful Republic. What mighty revolutions may now be on the verge of their accomplishment, it is impossible for us to foresee. In the mean time, it is our policy to await coolly the progress of events, with a firm reliance upon our undoubted rights, and a stern determination to maintain them at all and every hazard.

Sir, my allotted time has nearly expired, and I have but a word more to say. I hope that the boundary of the 49th parallel may be understood

to be our ultimate offer, and that it will not be renewed, but that it will be considered the limit of our claim, whilst the peaceful relations of the two countries remain unbroken; but if, contrary to my judgment and my sense of justice, the doctrine of the whole of Oregon or none should prevail with the Administration, I would then say that I am fully aware of the objections to engaging in a war with Great Britain upon the issue presented in this controversy. Perhaps no American citizen now living could be personally benefited by the result of the contest, however favorable. It would imply, then, a large draught upon our national feelings to expect a cordial and unanimous assent to measures which must, of necessity, involve such a mighty sacrifice. But, sir, I can easily understand that there may be conditions of national rights and national honor which imperiously demand this last evidence of devotion to one's country. Fully impressed with the fearful responsibility resting upon the representatives of the people, I would then cease to inquire into the justice or expediency of maintaining the stand taken by the Executive; I would merely counsel the most prompt and liberal appropriations for the public defence, and, if war be inevitable—as I believe it would be in that contingency—for prosecuting it with vigor; for, while my sanguine hopes for her future prosperity prompt the patriotic sentiment—“My country, may she ever be right,” yet the knowledge that my fortunes, by inclination, if not necessity, are inseparably connected with hers, impels me to add, “but right or wrong, still my country.” My feelings and sympathies are associated indissolubly with the land of my birth; and if her fair promise and high hopes are to be realized in her future greatness, I shall, in common with the rest of my countrymen, enjoy the glory of the alliance; but if the cloud which is now lowering is to burst with fatal fury, and her bright star is destined to set in darkness and gloom, I cannot, I seek not, to separate my fortunes. I and mine, and all that I prize and love, must share her fate.

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