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THE

OREGON CONTROVERSY

REVIEWED.

IN FOUR LETTERS.

BY

A FRIEND OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

NEW-YORK:
LEAVITT, TROW, AND COMPANY,
194 BROADWAY.
1846.

NOTICE.

These letters were prepared for the press in their present shape, with the exception of a few notes, when the news by the British steamer of February 4th arrived. The aspect of the Oregon controversy, after the arrival of this very pacific news, discouraged the writer from publishing at that time. All danger seemed to be past, and the community showed manifest symptoms of being surfeited with the subject of Oregon. Recently these letters have been shown to an intelligent friend, who has strongly advised their publication, even at this late hour, on the ground that a large portion of the matter contained in them, has not been presented to the public—at least in connection with this subject—and that much of it possesses interest independent of the question by which it has been elicited.

Even the review of Mr. Buchanan's argument on the Spanish title, in the second letter, though now perhaps unnecessary with the majority of thinking men, may still be useful by reconciling some part of the community to the only terms on which the controversy, as it appears to me, can be peaceably settled.

It may also be stated as a reason for now soliciting attention to this subject, that the question at present seems farther from a final settlement, than it did at the time when these letters were first ready for the press. Indeed it appears at the present moment scarcely possible that the Oregon controversy should be finally settled under the present administration. This delay is much to be regretted, especially after the discussion of the subject has been advanced so far, and at the expense of so much irritation and alarm to both countries. If in the mean time, whilst this question is made the sport of party politics, and the feelings of the community on both sides of the Atlantic held in a state of feverish excitement, any collision should occur between the settlers of the respective nations west of the Rocky Mountains, the consequences might be very serious. The reasoning and influential part of the public ought not therefore to dismiss this subject from their thoughts, as if all danger were past, because the Senate, backed by the enlightened part of the community, has interposed its influence to prevent the hasty adoption of a hostile course of action.

For these and other similar reasons the writer of these pages has concluded, even under the disadvantage of coming before a community wearied with the agitation of this subject, to submit his opinions of the Oregon controversy to the public, with the hope of helping to disseminate correct and reasonable views of this much disputed question, and of thus subserving the best interests of his native and of his adopted country.

Since the above sentences were written, the President's late message to the Senate, recommending an increase of the military and naval force of the country, has been received. Whatever may be thought of the influence which this message may ultimately exert on the pending controversy, the document cannot fail to excite a deeper interest than has been felt for some weeks past in the matters discussed in these sheets. The present aspect of our relations with Great Britain calls loudly for the renewed and anxious attention of the community.

THE OREGON CONTROVERSY.

LETTER I.

New-York, Februray, 1846.

DEAR SIR:

In compliance with your request that I would commit to writing the views which I presented to you in our late conversation on the Oregon controversy, I propose in the following letters to give you a dispassionate and impartial statement of the principles on which this controversy ought, in my opinion, to be decided,—embracing a review, so far as necessary to my purpose, of the grounds on which the respective parties rest their opposing claims to the territory in dispute. This will be followed by some remarks upon the course of policy recently pursued by the Executive of the United States in reference to this unhappy controversy, and some notice of the dangers and of the calamities into which it may sooner or later plunge this country, as well as Great Britain, if prosecuted in the same unfair spirit and with the same arrogant temper, which seem to have influenced our public councils in reference to foreign affairs, since the accession of the present administration.

You will not think me less competent to the impartial performance of this task on account of my position in reference to both countries; or because I make no pretensions of exclusive patriotism. I pretend not to feel such a love for any particular country, as is inconsistent with a proper regard for the rights and for the happiness of other nations. I consider much of the vaunted patriotism of our times as nothing better than a more disguised selfishness, and as often productive of evils, which, if, on the one hand, of less frequent occurrence, on the other, when they do occur, extend much more widely their malign influence. I heartily deprecate as unsound morality the last clause of the celebrated exclamation, "Our country, our whole country, *and nothing but our country*." The first

and second clauses cannot be too highly applauded; but the third I have always considered a great blemish on an otherwise excellent and appropriate formula of American patriotism. The sentiment, —"and nothing but our country," unfortunately needs no inculcation any where, and particularly among us. It is to be feared that this is the part—this last unchristian sentiment—which we are most likely to adopt, and to push, even beyond the intention of the orator, not only to the exclusion of the rest of mankind from sharing in our benevolent wishes and our benevolent efforts, but to the adoption of hostile feelings to the nations with which it is both our interest and our duty to cultivate a friendly intercourse.

Perhaps I do not view this subject from exactly the same point as a native of the United States would view it. This you have been pleased to consider rather as a recommendation of my opinions, than a disparagement of them; as my position is, you allege, favorable to impartiality. You hold that, at all events, it may be useful to have the conclusions of different classes of inquirers on this subject. We have the views of native Americans and of Britons, and why not of those who, occupying an intermediate position, are likely to be exempted from some of the strongest prejudices of both.

I was born, as you know, a British subject, and spent my life till manhood under the protection of British law. Yet the larger and more active part of my years has been spent in this republic. Here I have many dear friends, whose interests and prosperity are inseparably connected with the interests and prosperity of this republic. I cannot, therefore, but feel alive to these interests—to this prosperity. Nor am I less alive to what I conceive to be the true honor of the country; though, as to the question wherein true honor consists, I may differ widely from some of the noisy professed patriots and demagogues of the day. In regard of a nation, as in regard of an individual, I consider it more honorable and more magnanimous to cede some portion of a just claim, when the party to which the cession is made does not manifest an intention to practice deliberate imposition, than to obtain more than is just, whether by obstinacy, by importunity, or by blustering and bullying. In a word, if wrong is done—especially injury unaccompanied with insult—I count it more honorable to be the sufferer than the aggressor.

But at the same time that I feel thus interested in the prosperity and in the reputation of this country, I feel also a very strong interest in the land of my birth. I have left in that land many dear

and kind friends, in whose joys and sorrows I sympathize, whose prosperity and adversity I cannot contemplate with indifference. Nor do I wish to disguise the fact that I still feel a deep respect for the institutions of the British empire, and that I rejoice in Britain's prosperity and glory, and would grieve for her calamities or her disgrace. And can any considerate man, who really feels within his *heart* that love of country, which is so often on the *lips* of demagogues, blame me for this? What would be thought of the American, who in a foreign land could forget, abuse, or profess to hate his country, however identified his interests might become with those of another nation? Is a man incapable of becoming a useful citizen of this country without *repudiating* the land of his birth—its institutions, people, &c., by wholesale, and without discrimination? May not he, who, holding that different institutions suit different conditions of human society, admits the excellence of the institutions of his adopted country without disparaging those of the place of his birth, contribute to the furtherance of the highest interests of the country, which he has chosen for his home, and yield faithful allegiance to its laws and constitution? These interrogatories suggest matter of reflection perhaps worthy of more consideration than they usually receive in this country. The most trustworthy citizen may not always be the one that makes the loudest professions of exclusive patriotism in reference to the country of his choice, and of hatred to the institutions under which he was born. If it should appear that such professions are available and necessary to propitiate the favor of those around them, the less scrupulous will find them a cheap means of recommending themselves. The emigrant least worthy of the esteem both of the country which he has forsaken and that to which he has transferred his allegiance, may sometimes be found the most profusely lavish of these compliments to the national vanity.

But not to talk too much of myself, let me say in one word, that I feel a sincere desire for the happiness of *both* countries—the United States and Great Britain. I believe there are many natives of this country, who, at the same time that they feel the most loyal attachment to their own country, share with me this sincere desire for the happiness of the people of the British isles. Nor are the interests of the two great Anglo-Saxon nations on either side of the Atlantic, in my opinion, so opposed that I cannot consistently love them both. On the contrary I believe these interests to be closely

entwined together—more closely, perhaps, than those of any two independent countries, which have existed since the world began. One obvious measure of these common interests is the extent of their commerce with each other—an extent which has never before been reached by the commercial intercourse of any other nations. Need I advert to a common religion, a common language, a common literature, common principles of jurisprudence, and the bonds of affinity and of friendship which unite so large a proportion of the citizens of both countries?

I do not say that a cause might not arise to justify one of these nations, occupying both at present a position so commanding and conspicuous among the powers of the civilized world, in waging war against the other. I do not advocate the doctrine of absolute non-resistance to injury. A tame submission to wanton aggression and insult I believe to be both dishonorable and dangerous to a nation. A manly resistance to injury is eventually more serviceable even to the aggressor. A proper self-respect and a dignified resentment of wrong and designed insult, as well as a scrupulous regard for the rights and feelings of others, are absolutely necessary to the advantageous maintenance of amicable relations between communities, as well as individuals.

But surely every man will admit, that it is no small cause which ought to endanger the peace of two nations connected as are the United States and Great Britain. Nothing but persistence in wrong —wilful wrong—or manifestly intended and deliberately avowed insult on the part of the one, would justify the other in having recourse to arms.

That the controversy about the Oregon territory ought not to lead to war, and *cannot* lead to war without the most flagrant misconduct on the part of the *American government and people*, I expect to prove to the satisfaction of any reasonable man like yourself. Great Britain has done much to clear herself of blame for the consequences of this controversy, by her earnest and persevering endeavors to have it settled, before the question should, by the natural progress of human affairs, become more difficult of adjustment, and by declaring finally her willingness to submit the subject in dispute to an arbitrator. Disinterested parties will, on the one hand, infer from the acts of Great Britain that she is desirous of maintaining a good understanding between the two nations, and that she is willing to accept what a disinterested umpire may consider justice; and, on

the other hand, that the government of this country is willing to hazard the awful consequences of war for a mere trifle, and is at the same time so conscious of the unreasonableness of its claims, that it dares not submit them to arbitration.

The reasons commonly alleged for refusing submission to arbitration do not mend the matter. They are only calculated to place the cause of this country in a worse light. They cannot but be considered by unprejudiced and intelligent foreigners, as utterly groundless, and at the same time manifestly invidious, and even slanderous. They are insulting to foreign sovereignties. The princes of Europe, are, forsooth, all so very partial to Great Britain, that we cannot trust a matter of dispute between her and us, to their arbitration! What was the result of the arbitration of Russia in reference to the slaves deported from the Southern States during the war of 1812? Was it more agreeable to the wishes and consonant to the expectations of Great Britain, than to those of the United States? And are Great Britain and Russia at the present moment on more amicable terms than when this arbitration was effected?—Were the courts of St. Petersburg and London ever more cordial than during the period which followed their successful co-operation in checking the ambitious projects of Napoleon? And did this cordiality prevent the emperor Alexander from doing full justice to this country, and much more than what her opponent and his most powerful and most generous ally considered justice?

The private individual who would refuse the reference of a disputed claim to arbitration on such shallow pretences, would draw suspicion on his own integrity, as well as display distrust of the justice of his cause. By advancing this plea of the danger of submitting our claims to the arbitration of a government different from our own, do we not tacitly admit that we ourselves would *not* do justice were we chosen to arbitrate between a monarchical government and a republic like our own? May we not be suspected of measuring other governments by our own foot-measure?

If we impeach the justice of other powers in the manner in which we have done in this case, we may soon place ourselves in such a position towards them, as to have just grounds to fear that in resentment of the gratuitous declaration of our hostility to their institutions, and distrust of their impartiality and integrity, they may be led to treat us according to our own jealous, mistrustful apprehensions. What man of sound judgment believes that, before the late

censorious and imprudent remarks of our Executive on the conduct of Louis Philippe and his cabinet, this dispute about Oregon might not have been submitted to him with the fullest assurance that he would have zealously and honorably endeavored to do justice to both parties? I have not the slightest doubt that he would do so still, if he could be induced to undertake the task. This has been rendered improbable by our own unjustifiable conduct towards him.

In my next letter, I will proceed to the direct examination of the matter in controversy, and the claims advanced by the parties.

Yours, &c.

P. S.—Since writing the last paragraphs of the above letter, the public has been put in possession of the correspondence between Mr. Pakenham and Mr. Buchanan since the meeting of Congress. By this correspondence, it appears that Mr. Pakenham has twice repeated the offer to refer the matter in dispute between the two nations to arbitration; and that he has endeavored to accommodate his offer, in every way that he possibly could, to the views of Mr. Buchanan. To remove the objection against a reference to a sovereign or a state, he has proposed to commit the controversy to the adjudication of a mixed commission, &c. But all in vain—every proposition rejected peremptorily. Many of the remarks made above apply with greatly increased force to the conduct of our government in these recent transactions. What reason can Mr. Pakenham have to expect that any other offer which he might make, short of surrendering every claim to any part of the disputed territory, would meet with a different reception? Is it reasonable to hope that he will subject himself to another similar repulse? or that he is likely to offer any thing, save a declared ultimatum, to be followed with at least an implied defiance, and possibly a suspension of diplomatic intercourse? May all such apprehensions prove utterly unfounded, I pray, for the sake of humanity, and the dearest interests of political and religious freedom. If an appeal to arms should now be the result of this controversy, not only all intelligent and impartial men in other nations will, without hesitation, attach the blame to Mr. Polk's obstinacy; but in this country, all men of moderation, candor, respectability, all the lovers of upright dealing, as well as the lovers of peace, will charge the whole blame to their own government. It may be safely predicted that the war would now be the most unpopular that ever has been waged,—and especially un-

popular amongst that class of men who alone can supply the sinews of war. Mr. Pakenham seems to have succeeded, if hostilities there shall be on account of this question, in throwing all the odium on the government of this country.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR:

In the conversation to which I alluded in my last letter, I endeavored to maintain that the views commonly—I fear too generally—entertained by the citizens of this country, in regard of our claims to the Oregon, are erroneous, and altogether unreasonable. These erroneous views—these unreasonable claims—are the great obstacle to a peaceful adjustment of the controversy. And, if so, it is the duty of every individual, in conversation or through the press, to contribute according to his abilities to enlighten public opinion on this very important subject—important, I mean, in reference to its possible results—and to endeavor to inculcate sober and moderate views, in place of those which at present prevail.

As soon as we had purchased the claims of Spain to the territory west of the Rocky Mountains, above the forty-second degree of North Latitude, all our makers of maps and compilers of school geographies, took immediate possession of the whole territory. Instead of stating the truth, that the title to this region was a subject of controversy between Great Britain and this country, they exhibited the territory to the whole rising generation, as an undoubted and indisputable possession of the United States. This course was, no doubt, deemed by these parties both patriotic and politic. But the results, it is to be feared, may prove that, like many other acts of low cunning and spurious patriotism, it was as much opposed to sound policy, as it was to a manly and upright course of procedure. Nothing—considering the nature of our institutions—can be conceived, more calculated to lay the foundation for a misunderstanding, and eventually a quarrel between the two nations interested in the territory—nothing more calculated to render this misunderstanding difficult to be satisfactorily adjusted.

This unwarrantable step of the map-makers and geographers, has now been followed up by the formal declaration of our executive, that this country possesses an undoubted title to the whole territory between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, from Lat. 42° North to 54° 40′. This claim has been elaborately defended by Mr. Buchanan, especially in his letter to Mr. Pakenham of August 30th, 1845. To this letter, Mr. Pakenham, I presume, felt himself precluded from making any reply, by the new turn which the negotiation had taken—by the withdrawal of the compromise offered by Mr. Buchanan, and the assertion of a claim to the whole Oregon territory. The total change of the aspect of the negotiation, no doubt, rendered it necessary for the British minister to apply to his government, before he took any further step. This has afforded Mr. Buchanan the opportunity, (as he must have foreseen when writing this letter that it would,) to have the last word. And the consequence is, that Mr. Buchanan's arguments because *unanswered*, appear to the great bulk of the community *unanswerable*. There is certainly no other reason for thinking Mr. Buchanan's reasoning unanswerable; though the greater portion of the representatives of the people, (if we are to believe the assertions made in their speeches,) as well as their constituents, consider it absolutely conclusive, and as having established the perfect right and title of this country to the whole region along the Pacific, up to 54° 40′. I think that it will not be difficult to convince you, or any intelligent and unprejudiced man, that these arguments of Mr. Buchanan, however plausible and ingenious, are destitute of any solid foundation, on principles of national law, and, consequently, utterly inconclusive, and that the claim of the United States to the northern portion of the Oregon territory is altogether unreasonable.

It does not appear, from the published correspondence, that this claim had ever been seriously urged by this government, previous to the negotiation between Mr. Pakenham and Mr. Buchanan. The utmost demand pressed before this, was that Latitude 49° North should be considered as the boundary between the United States and the British possessions from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. It will be observed that this fact affords strong presumption against the justice of the claim. For preceding American negotiators in this controversy were not very likely to fail, either of perceiving or of stating the whole extent of the just claims

of their country. But waiving this objection, let us examine the merits of this claim, unprejudiced by the fact that it was never asserted—at least with any show of earnestness—by this government till the year 1845; and that the repeated offers to accept e 49th degree of north latitude as a boundary, ought to have been considered by a high-minded government as for ever barring the introduction of such a claim.

I confine my attention almost exclusively to the claim founded on the cession of the Spanish title by the treaty of Florida; first, because this Spanish title is the question on which the two governments are most opposed in their views; and secondly, because an examination of this will necessarily lead to a discussion of the principles on which the whole controversy ought to be, and might be, readily adjusted. It is also the question on which the American public appear to stand most in need of illumination.

It seems to me that the incorrect views entertained by our citizens at present of our claims under this title—deepened as the impressions on the public mind in regard of this matter have been by the correspondence of Mr. Buchanan—are the most serious impediment (at least with honest men) to the speedy amicable settlement of the controversy between the two nations.

Let us take for our guide the laws and usages of nations in regard of claims to unoccupied countries, and by the help of these examine the title of Spain to the disputed territory at the date of the treaty of Florida. And here, waiving all argument as to the claims of the Indians inhabiting the territory, let us consider the country as if it had been a desert before the time when it was discovered by Europeans—as if the aborigines had no rights whatever in their native wilds, more than the beasts of the forests—since this is the light in which civilized nations, appealing not to the law of right, but to the law of might, have thought fit to regard countries peopled by savages.

The original title of Spain to the sovereignty of all the countries on the Pacific Ocean is founded on the Bull of Pope Alexander VI., dated May 4th, 1493; in which his Holiness "*de apostolicae potestatis plenitudine*" grants the whole of the New World to Ferdinand and Isabella, sovereigns of Castile and Aragon. Mr. Buchanan ought, in candor and consistency, to have noticed this much-cherished title of Spain to the territory in dispute, since it is the only title to which his language will apply, when he says, "The undersigned"

(I quote from the letter of Aug. 30th, 1845,) "had stated as a historical and striking fact, which must have an important bearing against the claim of Great Britain, that this convention, (the Nootka,) which was dictated by her to Spain, contains no provision im pairing the ultimate sovereignty which that power had asserted for *nearly three centuries* over the whole western side of North America as far north as the 61st degree of latitude, *and which had never been seriously questioned by any European nation.*" Under what title but that conferred by the Bull of Pope Alexander VI. could Mr. Buchanan have conceived that Spain had asserted the ultimate sovereignty over the Western side of North America for nearly three centuries? This was the only title possessed by Spain, and asserted in the face of Europe for any thing near three centuries; and neither this nor any other title asserted by Spain to the western coast of America beyond the regions *contiguous* to her actual settlements was "acquiesced in by all European governments," as Mr. Buchanan affirms, but was merely permitted to pass unnoticed, so long as it did not interfere with their trade and settlements. But of this more presently.

Let us pass to the claim set up for Spain founded upon discovery, taking possession, settlement, &c. Here let me commence by quoting a passage from Vattel's Law of Nations, which may be recommended to the serious attention and careful study of all who wish really to understand the subject under consideration—a passage to which I am astonished that so little reference has been made by either side in this controversy. Vattel, as every body knows, is the very highest authority in such matters, and in the present instance his opinions are so reasonable, so accordant with common sense and sound philosophy, as to claim universal assent. The passage may be found in Book I., chap. 18, at page 99 of the fourth American edition.

"All mankind have an equal right to things that have not yet fallen into the possession of any one; and those things belong to the person who first takes possession of them. When, therefore, a nation finds a country uninhabited, and without an owner, it may lawfully take possession of it; and after it has sufficiently made known its will in this respect, it cannot be deprived of it by another nation. Thus, navigators going on voyages of discovery, *furnished with a commission from their sovereign*, and meeting with islands or other lands in a desert state, have taken possession of them in the name of their nation: and this title has

been usually respected, *provided it was soon after followed by a real possession.*

"But it is questioned whether a nation can, by the bare act of taking possession, appropriate to itself countries which it does not really occupy, and thus engross a much greater extent of territory than it is able to people or cultivate. It is not difficult to determine that such a pretension would be an absolute infringement of the natural rights of men, and repugnant to the views of nature, which, having destined the whole earth to supply the wants of mankind in general, *gives no nation a right to appropriate to itself a country, except for the purpose of making use of it, and not of hindering others from deriving advantage from it.* The law of nations, will, therefore, not acknowledge the property and sovereignty of a nation over any uninhabited countries, *except those of which it has really taken actual possession, in which it has formed settlements, or of which it makes actual use.* In effect, when navigators have met with desert countries in which those of other nations had, in their transient visits, erected some monument to show their having taken possession of them, they have paid as little regard to that empty ceremony, as to the regulation of the popes, who divided a great part of the world between the crowns of Castile and Portugal."

The principles laid down here are those which have generally guided the conduct of European nations in regard of their discoveries on this continent.

The Spanish monarchs laid claim to the whole of the eastern as well as the western coast of North America by the right of their prior discovery of the New World, and under the title granted by Alexander VI., a title which, however absurd now—too absurd for Mr. Buchanan to make the least allusion to it in his argument—appeared in a very different light to the nations of Christendom in the end of the fifteenth century.*

In 1497, Henry VIII. of England commissioned John and Sebastian Cabot to attempt the discovery of a north-west passage to India. The Cabots discovered New Foundland, and afterwards coasted this continent from 67° north latitude, down nearly to the coast of Florida. The English monarchs, I believe, have on some occasions asserted a claim to the possession of the eastern side of this continent by right of this discovery. But what respect has been paid to these claims, whether of Spain or of England, may be judged from the history of the settlement of this part of the continent. When

* The Pope's grant was in fact eagerly sought by Ferdinand and Isabella, who sent an ambassador to Rome on this special errand. See Robertson's America, B. 2nd, page 65 of Harper's edition.

the English proposed to plant colonies on this coast, what respect did they pay to the prior discovery of Spain, or the title derived from Alexander VI.? And, when the French entertained the project of planting a colony on the St. Lawrence, and on the Mississippi, what attention did they pay to the claim, whether of the Spanish or English monarchs? Again, when the Dutch chose to plant a colony at the mouth of the Hudson, did they listen to the claims of those who had visited this continent before them? The same inquiry may be made in regard of the Swedes, who planted themselves at the mouth of the Delaware.

If the claim of Spain to the whole western coast of this continent —a claim neither better nor worse than her claim to the eastern coast—remained for a long period unquestioned, it was simply because no European power thought of establishing settlements, or even of trading on that coast till late in the last century. But that European nations regarded in the same light the claims of Spain to the western coast, as they did those to the eastern coast of North America, is obvious from the fact that in the charters of several of the English colonies in this country, a territory is granted extending across the whole continent to the South Sea or Pacific Ocean. How, then, can Mr. Buchanan consistently, with the facts of the case, assert that the title of Spain was "acquiesced in by all European governments?" It was in no other way "acquiesced in" than the exactly similar claim of Spain to the eastern coast of the continent was acquiesced in for more than a century, till the English, French and Dutch resolved to extend their trade and send their colonies to this side of the Atlantic. Until near the close of the last century there was no practical utility in contesting the Spanish title to the unsettled portion of the western coast. And yet even before any motive arose for questioning this title, we find that it was treated as nugatory in the charters granted by England to her colonies in this country—treated with the same disrespect as the title to the eastern coast, granted by the same Bull of Alexander VI.

When the English, at the close of the last century, began to extend their trade to the northwestern coast of this continent, they treated the exclusive claims of Spain in that quarter, as equally chimerical with those which she had formerly asserted to the eastern coast. This conduct of England was resisted by force on the part of the Viceroy of Mexico, and by argument on the part of the

Spanish court, and ended in a virtual abandonment of the *exclusive* claims of Spain by the treaty of the Escurial.

The United States too have pursued the same course as Great Britain in regard of the Spanish title. All the claims set up by Spain to the exclusive sovereignty of the western coast of America, were treated as chimerical by Mr. Jefferson, when he commissioned Lewis and Clarke to explore the countries watered by the Columbia; that is, if he intended that this country should, by the discovery and exploration of the regions west of the Rocky Mountains, establish any claim to the possession of them. If not, there is an inconsistency in our negotiators setting up any title to the country on the banks of the Columbia, in consequence of the discoveries and exploration of Lewis and Clarke. But passing this, it is plain that, by the convention of 1818 with the British government in regard of the Oregon territory, this country treated the *exclusive* claims of Spain to the unoccupied parts of the western coast as chimerical, as deserving no respect, as unsanctioned by the principles of public law, and the usages of civilized nations. By entering into that convention, the government of the United States distinctly recognized the principle that the territory was still open to the occupation of others, notwithstanding the claims of sovereignty asserted by Spain. Of Mr. Buchanan's inconsistency in asserting claims founded on principles irreconcilable, and which consequently nullify each other, and of the damage which he has in this way done to his cause with every honest and sound reasoner, and of the sophistry by which he attempts to defend himself, when charged with this inconsistency by Mr. Pakenham, I intend to take notice hereafter. The remarks now made will suffice to show that the doctrine laid down in the passage above quoted from Vattel accords with the principles which have generally governed the conduct of nations in regard of the right of prior discovery, and of forming settlements on this continent.

Let us then pass in review some of the principles laid down in this passage, and make their application to the subject in debate.

1. That a claim founded on the right of discovery be reckoned valid, the discovery must be made by parties furnished with a commission for this express purpose from the sovereignty of the country which advances the claim. This is a principle obviously conformable to common sense. In all the ancient claims founded on the right of discovery by the European nations, this principle seems to have been fully recognized. To suppose that a private adventurer

trading with a savage country can, by the simple fact that he has been the first of the European race that has touched upon a certain coast, or entered a certain river, establish a title to the sovereignty of all the adjacent territory for the country whose flag he carries, is manifestly absurd.

2. The discoverer, fortified by a commission from his own government, must have taken formal possession of the unappropriated territory, in the name of his sovereign or nation. The fact that possession has been thus formally taken must also be "sufficiently made known" by the claimant to those whom it may concern. This was usually done by the erection of some monument surmounted by the flag of the nation taking possession, and by notice to the courts of friendly powers.

These principles seem to have been forgotten or overlooked by both parties in the late negotiation. And yet they manifestly annihilate the claim set up by this government to the possession of the mouth of the Columbia in consequence of the discovery of Captain Gray. Mr. Pakenham, for what reason I cannot see, whilst objecting to the claim of his opponent founded on the discovery of Gray, has not given that force to his objection which he might have done by appealing to these principles, and to the passage from Vattel on which I am commenting; and he has himself introduced among the grounds of claim possessed by Great Britain, a case still more objectionable on these principles than even that of Gray's discovery. I allude to the statement in Mr. Pakenham's letter of the 29th July, 1845, that "In 1787, Captain Berkley, a British subject, in a vessel under *Austrian* colors, discovered the straits of Fuca." Mr. Pakenham indeed founds nothing on this discovery of Captain Berkley. Still it is dangerous to a cause to introduce irrelevant statements like this. The weakness of this statement has been discovered by some, who have not sufficient penetration to detect much more important irrelevancies, and specimens of the most unsound reasoning in the correspondence. It tends to strengthen the claim founded on Gray's discovery. Mr. Pakenham is not the only party in the negotiation who has weakened and injured his cause by bringing forward what had better been passed over. Were I to speak of the correspondence purely as a logical exercise, I would pass the same censure upon Mr. Buchanan's whole argument from the Spanish title. With all clear-headed logicians this argument would certainly prejudice his cause. But Mr. Buchanan well knew that his appeal

was not exclusively to logicians, or to men of calm and unbiassed minds. I have noticed Gray's discovery of the mouth of the Columbia only in passing, and by way of illustration, without the design of building any argument upon it. My intention at present is to show the exact worth of the Spanish title, on which Mr. Buchanan seems disposed in the correspondence to rest the whole weight of his claim in favor of the United States; and on which alone, indeed, any claim can be rested so far as regards an *exclusive* title to the northern part of the territory in dispute.

3. It is laid down in this passage from Vattel, that in order to render a title acquired in this way worthy to be respected by other nations, it must be "soon after followed by a real possession," that is, by actual settlement. This possession, like the discovery, in order to afford foundation for an indisputable title, should be made by the authority of the nation so claiming the title, not by mere private adventurers. All the colonies planted by European nations on this continent, were established in this way. It is manifestly unreasonable that a nation should claim a territory because it has been partially settled by the natives of that country, merely in the character of private adventurers. Especially will this hold if we admit, what this country with great propriety maintains, that an individual, removing himself beyond the bounds of his native government, may withdraw his allegiance and expatriate himself. If this view of the subject be correct—and surely the passage before us, and the universal practice of European nations in forming settlements on this continent countenance it—the United States have as yet established no title to any part of the Oregon territory by a settlement regularly sanctioned and protected by the government. It is true the present settlers south of the Columbia may transfer to their own government the claims which they have established for themselves by settlement. They have proposed to do so, and this I look upon as the best and least objectionable claim which the United States can set up to an *exclusive* possession of any part of the territory west of the Rocky Mountains.

This reasoning in regard of the necessity of a settlement being *formally* authorized and sanctioned by the government which claims territory in consequence of the formation of such settlement, you may receive or reject, as you please. To me it appears sound. Yet, as I intend to rest no material conclusion upon it, I leave this an open question. I only contend strenuously for the principle expressly

stated by Vattel, and as stated by him, that a title from discovery, in order to be respected by other nations, must be "*soon after followed by actual possession,*" and the formation of settlements.

4. A nation has no right to claim exclusive title by discovery and taking possession to a territory immensely larger than it can really occupy, "and thus engross a much greater extent of territory than it is able to people or cultivate."

The reasonableness of each of these principles is so manifest, as, in my opinion, to require no further illustration. By these I proceed to try the worth of the Spanish title to the territory from the 42° of North latitude between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, ceded to the United States by the treaty of Florida.

And here, for the purpose of abbreviating my remarks, I suppose it granted that Spain had acquired all the claim to the title of the territory up to 61° of North latitude, which prior discovery in national vessels could confer, and all the claim which landing on certain parts of the coast and taking formal possession of them in the name of his Catholic Majesty, could add to the right of discovery. There need be no dispute about these facts, no more than about the title conferred by Alexander VI., which Spain, no doubt, considered for a long time her most valid title. If the doctrine here laid down by the great authority on all such matters, and confirmed, as I have shown, by a reference to the conduct of the European nations in making settlements on this continent, be sound, Spain had utterly forfeited her title, whatever it might be, by *non user* She had never made a single permanent settlement in any part of the disputed territory during the *three hundred years* that she had claimed it. Her settlements for a great distance to the South of 42° of North latitude were exceedingly sparse, so that she could scarcely lay claim even to the southern portion of the territory by right of contiguity. The latter part of the quotation from Vattel applies with full force to the claim of Spain to the territory watered by the Columbia. "*Such a pretension would be an absolute infringement of the natural rights of men, and repugnant to the views of nature, which, having destined the whole earth to supply the wants of mankind in general, gives no nation a right to appropriate to itself a country, except for the purpose of making use of it, and not of hindering others from deriving advantage from it. The law of nations will, therefore, not acknowledge the property and sovereignty of a nation over any uninhabited countries, except those of which it*

has really taken actual possession, in which it has formed settlements, or of which it makes actual use." This language exactly expresses the view which the British government seems to have taken of the pretensions of Spain in the settlement of the difficulty at Nookta Sound, by the convention of the Escurial. Such obviously was the view taken of these same pretensions by the government of this country, when it claimed from Great Britain the restoration of the settlement made by Mr. Astor, and when it agreed to the convention of 1818; and the same seems to have been the view entertained by Mr. Jefferson, when he commissioned Lewis and Clarke to explore the country west of the Rocky Mountains.

In whom then was the exclusive sovereignty of the territory vested? It is, in my opinion, unnecessary to answer this question. It might not be easy to answer it, if we admit as sound the principle on which the Europeans have acted in reference to the title of the Aborigines of this country to their native forests. Common sense and natural law would say that the sovereignty belonged to the hitherto undisputed and undisturbed possessors of the country, so far forth as that possession extended. It might not be right to assert that the occupation of a territory by *hunters* is of the same nature as the occupation of it by *husbandmen*, who distribute its lands into fixed and separate divisions for the purpose of tillage and improvement. Common sense will lead us to conclude that title to a territory is much strengthened by the investment of capital and labor in improving it. But, waiving all further discussion of this point as irrelevant, it is easy to answer the above question negatively: when the English first commenced their settlements in the disputed territory, the sovereignty of said territory agreeably to the principles of natural and national law (having their foundation in the sound common sense of mankind) belonged as yet to no European power.

Farther, I believe with some, who have expressed their opinions on this matter, that no civilized nation, as yet, has a just claim to the exclusive sovereignty of any part of the territory, save so much as has been actually settled by civilized inhabitants, allowing such settlements as have been formed a reasonable extent of contiguous territory. I consider the portions of the territory distant from the English and American settlements as open, to this day, to be colonized by any nation, that may think proper to engage in such undertaking—nothwithstanding the *brutum fulmen* of Mr. Monroe,

repeated by Mr. Polk. And were France, or any other nation, to plant a colony at a sufficient distance from the present settlers, and especially not on any of the waters passing the already formed settlements, the laws and usages recognized by civilized nations would, in my opinion, afford no pretext for excluding them; and the expulsion of such colony when formed would be an injnry to be resented by the French government. This seems to be the opinion of dispassionate observers, judging from the remarks in some of the French gazettes. And it may be observed that Great Britain in the whole of the late correspondence appears to have set up no claim inconsistent with the views of this subject now stated.

If the foregoing reasoning be sound, it follows that the British Government possesses claims stronger and more legitimate to *certain* portions of the disputed territory than the United States can justly assert to *any* portion of it; at least till such time as the settlers from this country formally surrender to the government the claim which they have acquired by occupation. If, therefore, after giving notice of the termination of the convention of joint occupation, an attempt should be made under the authority of the United States to intrude on the territories occupied by the British government through the Hudson Bay Company, and, much more, if an attempt should be made to dispossess the British occupants, it would give just cause for resistance of the intruders or assailants; and should war ensue—as it certainly would—all intelligent and impartial men would justify the resistance, and lay all the blame to the charge of the intruders. The sympathies of all clear-headed and sound-hearted men would be on the side of the party attacked. The intrusion into the regions occupied, or expulsion of the occupants, would be an undoubted and a most flagrant breach of the laws of nations, as hitherto understood, and acquiesced in, not only by the European nations settling countries on this side the Atlantic, but by these United States, on the occasions already noticed; and the party that would dare to pursue such a course, and thus engage two powerful nations in a desperate conflict, and interrupt the peace and the commercial intercourse of the civilized world, would deserve and receive the execrations of universal Christendom.

It will be readily perceived that the view now given of the value of the Spanish title, sets aside altogether the quibbling of Mr. Buchanan regarding the terms of the convention of the Escurial, and the alleged termination of this convention by the war which followed

between Spain and Great Britain. This convention, and the events which preceded it, are simply to be considered, in reference to this controversy, as an emphatic declaration on the part of Great Britain, that she did not, and would not admit the claim set up by Spain to the whole western coast of North America, and enforced in the case of Meares by the viceroy of Mexico. The consequence of the course then pursued by Great Britain was, that Spain never again attempted to perform any act of exclusive sovereignty on the part of the coast, now claimed by Great Britain. She gave up the contest for ever; and the principle settled by this affair was one which a mere declaration of war could never unsettle. Nothing after this short of the expulsion of the English traders and settlers by force of arms in war, or a cession in peace by treaty, followed up in both cases by a real possession and settlement, could re-establish the claim relinquished by Spain, and now imprudently and unreasonably, if not unjustly, re-asserted by the President and Mr. Buchanan. Should Mr. Buchanan expect that after her subjects have formed settlements of some value in that region, Great Britain will, in 1846, treat this claim in any other way than she did in 1789, when the British trade with that part of the world, and the capital invested there, were in themselves deserving of no consideration? *

* It appears to me that it is questionable whether such a claim as Spain pretended to possess, even admitting her own pretensions—a claim founded barely on discovery—admits of transfer. There are, as every body knows, things of such a nature, that though we have a right to use them ourselves, we have not the right of transferring them to others. Query—Are not rights obtained by discovery of this description? Has a transfer of any such title to another nation, as that to the western coast above 42° of north latitude, which Spain is alleged to have transferred to the United States by the treaty of Florida, ever before happened in the civilized world? If so, the principle may be established by precedent. It may be so for aught I know to the contrary. But if not, and if this is a solitary instance, I should consider arguments drawn from analogy as very strongly bearing against the lawfulness of such transfer. I refer, of course, to the principles of natural law.

I state this point only as a query. My argument needs no help from it. But I cannot neglect the opportunity of remarking that this whole transaction with Spain in regard to her claim on the western coast of North America, has always appeared to me little honorable either to Spain or the United States. It was rather a mean attempt on the part of Spain to obtain a something, if it were only good will, for that which she was conscious could never avail her any thing, if left to use it herself. The fact that she could make no use of her claim ought to have been a reason for leaving the territory, so far as lay in her power, open to the whole world. On the part of this country, it was rather a small affair—too like the act

What has been said is sufficient, as I think, to show that the foundation on which Mr. Buchanan has built his argument in his letter to Mr. Pakenham of August 30, 1845, has no solidity whatever. His reasoning in regard of the validity of the Spanish title is unsupported by a single principle of public law, or by any respectable precedent established by the intercouse of nations. Having subverted the foundation, it is unnecessary to examine his reasoning in detail. So far as the assertion of a claim beyond the valley of the Columbia is concerned, if the Spanish title to the whole territory is untenable —utterly unfounded, as I think it must appear to every unprejudiced inquirer, after examining the principles which I have stated above —Mr. Buchanan's boasted argument falls utterly to the ground, and merits no further attention.

Yet there is one piece of unsound reasoning in his answer to one of Mr. Pakenham's arguments, which, as it has made some impression on the public mind, it may not be amiss to notice briefly; especially as a refutation of it will tend to strengthen the position maintained in the preceding pages. I quote the essential part of the passage referred to in Mr. Buchanan's words, that you may see that in my comment I do full justice to this adroit piece of sophistry.

"But the British plenipotentiary argues, that 'the United States can found no claim on discovery, exploration, and settlement effected previous to the Florida treaty, without admitting the principles of the Nootka convention;' 'nor can they appeal to any exclusive right as acquired by the Florida treaty, without upsetting all claims adduced in their own proper right, by reason of discovery, exploration, and settlement antecedent to that arrangement.'

"This is a most ingenious method," says Mr. Buchanan, "of making two distinct and independent titles held by the same nation worse than one—of arraying them against each other, and thus destroying the validity of both. Does he forget that the United States own both these titles, and can wield them either separately or conjointly against the claim of Great Britain at their pleasure? From the course of his remarks it might be supposed that Great Britain, and

of a needy briefless lawyer—to buy up a dubious title for the purpose of lending her strength and abilities to support it. It looked like seeking materials for a future quarrel, or buying up another man's quarrel, through a litigious spirit. God grant that through our folly and madness in the manner in which we follow up this title, we may not in the end show that it was really a quarrel—a quarrel fatal both to ourselves and our opponents, which we have unwisely purchased.

not the United States, had acquired the Spanish title under the Florida treaty. But Great Britain is a third party—an entire stranger to both these titles—and has no right whatever to marshal the one against the other.*

"By what authority can Great Britain interpose in this manner? Was it ever imagined in any court of justice that the acquisition of a new title destroyed the old one? and *vice versa*, that the purchase of the old title destroyed the new one? In a question of mere private right, it would be considered absurd, if a stranger to both titles should say to the party who had made a settlement, You shall not avail yourself of your possession, because this was taken in violation of another outstanding title; and although I must admit that you have also acquired this outstanding title, yet even this shall avail you nothing, because, having taken possession previous to your purchase, you thereby evinced that you did not regard such title as valid. And yet such is the mode by which the British plenipotentiary has attempted to destroy both the American and Spanish titles. On the contrary, in the case mentioned, the possession and the outstanding title being united in the same individual, these conjoined would be as perfect as if both had been vested in him from the beginning."

In the first sentence of his reply to the passage extracted from Mr. Pakenham's letter, Mr. Buchanan represents most incorrectly and unfairly the purpose of his opponent. That purpose was not to make "two distinct and independent titles held by the same nation worse than one;" and to "array them against each other, and thus destroy the validity of both!" On the contrary, Mr. Pakenham's avowed and sole purpose is to compel his antagonist to relinquish the claim under the Spanish title, by showing, (as he has, in my opinion, done satisfactorily,) that this claim, as now brought forward and urged by the American government, is fatal to the claim to the region on the banks of the Columbia made in 1818, and still maintained by the American plenipotentiary. He shows also, that by asserting

* Is this argument, or mere declamation? Has Mr. Buchanan forgotten that he was not addressing a jury in a county court? Let me note another specimen of similar verbiage passed off as argument in the same letter: "Besides, beyond all doubt, this discovery was made by Gray; and to what nation could the benefit of it belong, unless it be to the United States? *Certainly, not to Great Britain. And if to Spain*, the United States are now her representative." This is mere twaddle affecting to be reasoning. How unlike his predecessor in office, and in the negotiation! Quantum mutatus ab illo!

a claim to any portion of the Oregon territory in 1818, the American government recognized the soundness of the principles on which the British government acted in the affair of Nootka Sound, in repelling the claim set up by Spain to the exclusive sovereignty of the whole coast of North America for upwards of twenty degrees of latitude beyond her actual settlements. Mr. Pakenham might well plead, that if such is the validity of the Spanish title, that through it the United States have a right at present—as asserted by Mr. Polk and Mr. Buchanan—to assume the sovereignty of the whole territory up to the Russian settlements, and to expel the English settlers after so long occupation, surely it must have been an act of great audacity in the United States government in 1818 to assert any claim whatever to any part of the Oregon territory, and still more so to make a proposal to the British government for a partition of that territory. If Mr. Buchanan's broad assertion of the acknowledged sovereignty of Spain over the whole Northwest coast for three centuries be worth any thing, such partition would have been an act of daring robbery on the part of both nations—certainly on the part of the United States, and only less certainly on the part of Great Britain, because she might plead the privileges secured to her under the convention of the Escurial, after the affair of Nootka Sound.

Mr. Pakenham might justly have maintained that he who defends cause by arguments founded on contradictory principles, does it serious injury with all sound logicians and honest men. But yet Mr. Pakenham has made no attempt to destroy the validity of the claim of the United States previous to 1818, by arraying against it the Spanish claim. He has shown, to be sure, that to maintain this latter claim, is to invalidate the former claim. But, on all occasions, the British government appears to have been generous in her concession of the claims of the United States founded on the discovery of Lewis and Clarke, &c., and to have admitted greater validity in these claims than, as I think, they really possess; perhaps, through a consciousness that her own claims labored under the same defects as those of the United States—the want of settlement and occupation sufficiently extended to secure a just title as against other civilized nations. Mr. Pakenham introduced the reasoning which Mr. Buchanan has in this passage assailed with much subtlety, but with little fairness or sound logic, for the purpose of defending the claims of the British government under the Nootka Sound convention, and

his argument, considered as a whole, is calculated to give validity to the claims of the United States previous to 1819, and not to destroy their validity. Mr. Pakenham sums up the part of his argument against which Mr. Buchanan's sophistry, above noticed, is directed, in the following manner: "The undersigned trusts that he has now shown that the convention of 1790 (the Nootka Sound convention) has continued in full and complete force up to the present moment—

"By reason, in the first place, of the commercial character of some of its provisions, &c.

"By reason, in the next place, of the acquiescence of Spain, &c.

"And, thirdly, by reason of repeated acts of the government of the United States, previous to the conclusion of the Florida treaty, manifesting adherence to the principles of the Nootka convention, or at least dissent from the exclusive pretensions of Spain."

Here we have the purpose, for which Mr. Pakenham himself, in the next paragraph to that quoted by Mr. Buchanan, asserts that he introduced this appeal to consistency, this declaration of the necessity of keeping to the same principles, the same views of the laws which nations have adopted and followed in the settlement of their claims to territories on this continent—a very different purpose from that which Mr. Buchanan has unfairly substituted in its place, and made the occasion for a burst of wordy and windy declamation.

Mr. Buchanan talks as if the two titles were independent and strengthened one another—the one making up for any defect in the other, as two separate titles to a piece of property claimed under the municipal laws of a particular country. I have no doubt that this artful representation of the matter has imposed on many a reader of the correspondence. But Mr. Buchanan ought to have remembered, that, if the Spanish title was such as he represents it, the title asserted in 1818 was not an imperfect title, but no title at all. It is, in this case, a mere nullity—a mere pretence set up to cover a cowardly *usurpation* of the property of another party, for the present unable to assert his rights, and cannot with consistency be pleaded in connexion with the claim founded on the Spanish title as stated, and to the extent stated, by Mr. Buchanan. Mr. Buchanan draws an illustration from the courts of law—an ingenious device, and one which has proved, it is to be feared, but too effective with many of his readers. By this device he covers up the sophistry of his argument. But the question between him and Mr. Pakenham is not about titles

recognized as perfect or imperfect by the code of some particular nation, but about the *principles* on which a title can be justly founded to a national possession. It is not, in other words, a claim to be settled by municipal law, which is at issue between the plenipotentiaries, but the *principles* of the law of nations. Mr. Buchanan not only misstates the purpose of his opponent's arguments, as I have already shown, but he changes the issue. Consequently his reasoning is utterly irrelevant—a mere tissue of artful sophistry designed to cover the rash assertion of Mr. Polk in the inaugural.

Mr. Pakenham assumes that, in negotiations between states, the *principles* on which claims are founded by either party must be *consistent.* He proves that the principles, on which the claim to the valley of the Columbia in 1818 are founded, are *wholly inconsistent* with the principles, on which the claim to the whole of Oregon under the Spanish title are founded; and thus brings the action of the United States government, and the arguments and claims of her negotiators to prove the absurdity and the inconsistency of the claims set up under the Spanish title. Mr. Buchanan wholly evades the question, and escapes adroitly from defending the gross inconsistency of the principles assumed in the course of his correspondence, in a mist of words, and by a reference to courts of law; showing, in the mean time, that he is much better acquainted with the species of logic which prevails there—the logic of the advocate —than with that higher and more straight-forward species of logic, which becomes the statesman. But his escape to the courts cannot avail him, for even there a title proved *wholly invalid*, by the assertion of another title, could not surely *strengthen* the latter title; though two imperfect, but not *contradictory*, titles might in some cases lend assistance to each other.

Mr. Buchanan adds to the passage above quoted, "The undersigned, while strongly asserting both these titles, and believing each of them separately to be good as against Great Britain, has studiously avoided instituting any comparison between them." I have no doubt that Mr. Buchanan has studiously avoided any comparison between the *principles* on which these two titles are founded. It only needed to bring these principles together to show their glaring inconsistency; and at the same time the unfairness of Mr. Buchanan's and Mr. Polk's whole course in managing this negotiation. These principles are the clashing principles maintained by Great Britain, on the one hand, and Spain, on the other, in the Nootka Sound controversy

—principles so opposed, that an appeal was about to be made to arms to settle the contest. The one principle is that by which, as I have shown above, Spain set up a claim to the whole of the New World—both the eastern and the western coasts of North America —under the sanction of the Pope, and through the title founded on the discovery of this continent by Columbus, while engaged in the service of the sovereigns of Castile and Aragon; and the other the principle fully and explicitly stated in the passage which I have quoted from Vattel, and on which all the other nations of Europe, except Spain and Portugal, have constantly acted in forming settlements on this continent, and to which the United States has also given its most unequivocal sanction, at least in the case of the claim to the valley of the Oregon prior to the year 1819.

Had not the other nations of Europe acted on this principle, and resisted the exclusive claims of Spain, the Anglo-Saxon race could never have obtained a footing on these shores; the foundations of this great republic—the leading power of this continent—could never have been laid. It remained for Mr. Polk and Mr. Buchanan to resuscitate these exploded principles of decrepit Spain, which if they had prevailed, the territory occupied by the United States would have remained to this day a savage wilderness.

Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

New-York, February, 1846.

Dear Sir:

If the argument in the preceding letter be sound, we may readily form a correct judgment of the subject in controversy between the two countries, and of the manner in which it ought to be settled. Neither, as yet, has just pretensions to *exclusive sovereignty* over any very considerable portion of the Oregon territory. I mean in case notice of the abrogation of the convention of 1818 were given.—Till this notice is given, and for a year after, the terms of the convention inhibit any attempt to exercise exclusive sovereignty.

But were the notice given and the year elapsed, neither nation would have a right to exclusive sovereignty, or exclusive possession

of any part of the territory, save what is occupied by their settlements and a reasonable portion of the region contiguous. All the rest is still open to the world; though not likely to be ever settled by any other than British subjects and American citizens. No other power, it is to be presumed, will feel a desire to intrude and plant colonies under its own protection. The whole territory seems destined to form one great nation of Anglo-Saxon origin, which will, in all probability follow most closely the institutions of that one of the Anglo-Saxon nations, which shall supply the larger portion of its population. I agree with those who expect that it will hereafter form an independent republic, with institutions less or more democratic. Even should the British portion of the original settlers have the preponderance—and this is not likely—this fact would not, in my opinion, render the result which I have mentioned less probable. Great Britain is very far from being a bad nurse of republicans, or democrats, if you please. Is not the class of our population, which comes from the British Isles—I mean those who come with the design of permanent settlement—as orthodox in their democracy as any other portion of our citizens? Were not the fathers of this republic, the founders of its constitution and liberties, nursed under British institutions? And were they not as sound and consistent republicans as the men of the present generation?

Those, who contemplate the Oregon territory as the future seat of a large number of states united with our confederacy, indulge as I think in visionary dreams. Railroads to the Pacific! Ports on the Pacific! These might be of great advantage to the settlers in that country, especially if we pay the cost. But how could they serve us? What could be raised by agricultural settlers in that region which could pay the expense of transportation hither by railroad? Would it serve any purpose to transport lumber over the Rocky Mountains? Or heavy produce of any kind? Furs will soon be out of the question. And to bring the agricultural productions of such a climate to the Western States, would be to carry coals to Newcastle. But the Chinese trade might be directed that way. Very likely. Ships will cross the Pacific from China, from India, and land their cargoes within the Straits of Fuca or at the port of San Francisco, after we have *annexed* New California, and then these cargoes will be transported three thousand miles by railroad to St. Louis. How much less would it cost to transport them from St. Louis, say by the way of Pittsburgh, to New-York, than to transport them from China direct by sea?

But granted that commercial intercourse with Oregon may some time become profitable to this country, it may be as advantageously carried on should Oregon become an independent nation, as if it were received into the bonds of our confederacy.

It is useless, I presume, to advert to the danger incurred by extending a government like ours over too large a territory. We are threatened already with the evils which arise from embracing regions having interests opposed, or, at least, conceived to be opposed, under the same general government. *Prudent* men apprehend serious danger from the unlimited extension of our boundaries; but *prudence* seems not to be the order of the day. It is an old fashioned and exploded virtue, and the worshippers of the great goddess "Nonsense," of whom "all of us and all we boast of is the offspring," are in the ascendant.

I cannot dwell upon the matters above suggested, nor urge at length the argument which might be drawn from them. A little sober reflection on them would, I think, have a tendency to moderate the ardor of some of the most sensible of that portion of our citizens which seems willing to run the risk of plunging the country into all the horrors of war for the possession of a territory, which a very few years may show is never to be of any value to us, at least in the shape of an integral part of our republic.

But to return to the subject with which I commenced this letter, since no civilized nation as yet has acquired an exclusive title to Oregon, and since it is likely to be of so very little direct value either to the United States or England, what is the real question regarding it which ought to be settled between these nations? Not certainly the question of the absolute or exclusive sovereignty of the territory. Even had they divided the territory between them in any way, this would not confer on each an exclusive title to their own share in the partition, till they had secured possession by actual settlement. The question to be adjusted is simply this: *Within what limits will the parties agree that their respective claims and settlements in the territory west of the Rocky Mountains shall be henceforward confined?* Settlers from this country are beginning to find their way in great numbers over the Rocky Mountains, and are likely, ere long, to come into collision with the servants of the Hudson Bay Company and other British settlers. It is important to both countries that these collisions should be prevented. For this purpose it is requisite that a boundary be determined, to their own

side of which each party to the compact shall be bound to confine their settlements to prevent all conflicting jurisdiction. Each nation can then, without danger of collision, extend its protection, and suchof its laws and institutions, as it may deem expedient, to the occupants of that portion of the territory lying on its own side of the boundary.

With the views presented in the preceding letter in regard of the claims of both countries to Oregon, and with common sense views of its probable importance as an acquisition to either country, it need not be an arduous task to settle this question. Some difficulty in making a satisfactory arrangement might arise, on the one hand, from the nature of the coast south of the Columbia, which is represented as utterly destitute of harbors; and some difficulty on the other hand, from the fact that a large proportion of the British settlements are planted on the north bank of the Columbia river. It is within that portion of the territory lying between the Columbia and 49° of North latitude that Great Britain has acquired the most just claim to sovereignty by actual settlement. On the other hand it is certainly a grievance to the settlers from this country that they should have the command of no good harbor. These difficulties might surely be adjusted between the parties, if both were inclined to be accommodating. To provoke each other to war for such a matter, would be only less absurd than it would be wicked. If it cannot be adjusted on generous and conciliatory terms, it is a case, if ever there was one, which ought to be referred to arbitration. It was most unfortunate that Mr. Calhoun did not accept of the first offer of arbitration.

But it is vain now to talk of arbitration during the presidency of Mr. Polk. Since the correspondence between Mr. Pakenham and Mr. Buchanan, recently communicated to Congress by the President, this is a resource for the eventual settlement of the controversy, on which we can no longer calculate. And were I to judge of the state of the question from all the *authentic* and *official* information which we possess at present, I should greatly dread the results. Rumors we have in great abundance that some measure for adjusting the question is about to be proposed and accepted; or, as some say, to be referred to Congress to relieve the President of all responsibility —a measure connected with the abrogation of the British corn laws, and the reduction of the American tariff, &c. I am not unfriendly to the policy of the President in reference to the latter subject, nor

to the policy of Mr. Peel in regard to the former; though I do not expect that the adoption of either policy will effect all the wonders which some expect from them. I believe that the repeal of the corn laws at least will be of little advantage to us, and that it will not be productive of unmixed good, nor of so much good to Great Britain, as the anti-corn-law agitators expect. But, admitting, as I do, the soundness of the free trade policy, I do not like mixing up subjects of ordinary legislation with questions of international diplomacy. I think it is neither judicious nor expedient to tie down our legislative action in regard of duties on imports by a treaty with a foreign power. It is impolitic to connect our legislation on such subjects, in any way, even in discussion, with foreign affairs. Such a course is the most likely thing in the world to produce a powerful reaction, and to injure the cause of the free trade advocates. The suspicion that duties were lowered to gratify England, and obtain a large slice of the Oregon territory, would be enough to create a host of enemies to such reduction. This would present a point of attack which the friends of a high tariff would not fail to assault. Let us always, in forming a tariff, arrange it not only with our *own* interests really, but also professedly and exclusively in view. Foreign nations ought to expect, and do expect nothing else from us. Still if the adjustment of the tariff and of the corn laws can afford any loop-hole for the two cabinets to get extricated from their difficulties, let other considerations yield for the sake of such an important purpose. A war between the two countries would, in all likelihood, cause more damage to both, than all the impolitic legislation about tariffs and corn laws has done during the last half century.

But I suspect that there is no foundation whatever for this very improbable rumor. I am afraid that all the various rumors that promise a speedy settlement of the controversy, are destitute of any solid foundation, and that they are merely the offspring of the hopes and wishes of those with whom they originate. About the middle of January all the rumors were of a pacific character. And yet the secrets of the cabinet, when they came to be disclosed, were far from being calculated to encourage hopes of peace. I fear a repetition of the same disappointment, through the obstinacy of our executive. I should not be surprised if the next revelation from the cabinet should inform us of the peremptory rejection of a declared ultimatum. What might follow that event, I venture not to say. Probably a defiance—a declaration that any intrusion on the north

side of the Columbia, would be considered a commencement of hostilities. Perhaps something even more prompt than that. If Great Britain once becomes persuaded that the controversy must end in an appeal to arms, she is not likely to wait till we have prepared ourselves for the contest and arranged our difficulties with Mexico. Still when I contemplate the extreme folly and wickedness of a war about such a matter, I cannot but think a collision between the countries almost impossible. I am strongly inclined to hope a favorable result of the controversy. But, what is mortifying, this hope rests rather on the forbearance and magnanimity of Great Britain, than upon the wisdom of our public counsels.

The very pacific news, which has arrived from England since I wrote the preceding paragraph, would not induce me to change a single syllable. This news (except, perhaps, the remarks of Mr. Peel on Mr. Pakenham's rejection of the compromise offered by Mr. Buchanan) was what was to be expected, when we consider the nature of the instructions under which Mr. Pakenham must have acted in making his twice repeated offer of arbitration. Every man, who was at all acquainted with the present temper and feelings of the British people and of the British government, knew from the beginning that Great Britain would wage no war with us, if she could avoid it with honor—if she should not be *provoked* to it by *insolence* and *bullying*, as well as injustice on the part of our government. The knowledge of this fact, I fear, has been a principal cause of the insolent attitude assumed by many of our statesmen, and of the unreasonable claims of the administration, and in this manner the means of retarding, or even endangering the peaceful settlement of the controversy. The whole danger lies on this side the Atlantic. The news from Washington is much more to be regarded than the news from England, if we would judge correctly of the probable issue of the negotiation. The language used in parliament is certainly pacific, eminently conciliatory—calculated to administer a tacit rebuke to the noisy, frothy blusterers in the chambers of congress—but it is at the same time firm.* I am only afraid in

* The emphatic remarks of Mr. Hume are especially worthy of notice on this side the Atlantic. They exhibit the feelings of disappointment and regret with which the warmest friends of liberal institutions regard the course recently pursued by this government. They show also, that if Britain should, *unfortunately*, *be forced* into a war on this question, her people will enter into it with more perfect unanimity than they have entered into any war during the last eighty years.

regard of it, that the administration at Washington and the public, looking exclusively to its pacific spirit, may be induced by it to become more obstinate and pertinacious in their unreasonable demands, instead of magnanimously imitating the conciliatory spirit manifested by British statesmen of all parties.

I do not believe that the President and his cabinet wish to plunge the country into war, much less that they wish to plunge it into war to injure the wealthy and commercial classes of the community. I believe that they do not expect that the course which they are pursuing, will plunge it into war. I attribute the blame of bringing the controversy with Great Britain to its present position to no such malignant feelings towards Great Britain, and still less to such malignant feelings towards the wealthy, commercial and planting interests of the country, as have been ascribed, I hope altogether unjustly, to some of the President's supporters. If a war were likely to occur, a wise administration would use every effort to gain the favor of the classes who command the disposable capital of the country, as the success of an administration in time of war must depend greatly on the ready and cordial co-operation of these classes —I mean the capitalists and wealthy merchants. I ascribe the present position of our relations with Great Britain altogether to the *obstinacy* of Mr. Polk.* He took a rash step, without due reflection on the probable consequences, in his inaugural address, in response to an unwise resolution adopted, for the purpose of creating "political capital," by a few irresponsible men at Baltimore on the occasion of his nomination; and he is determined to exhibit consistency and firmness in following it up.

Some have attached the blame of the harshness with which the negotiation has been managed by the administration, to Mr. Buchanan, I suspect, unjustly. He has had to do the best he could to defend the false step taken by the President and by his party at

* We have reason to believe, from the account which Mr. Polk's friends give of him, that he is obstinate. They call it firmness; but firmness and inflexibility in a bad cause is obstinacy. Let those whom it concerns, and especially the Senate of the United States, endeavor to guard in time against the consequences of this inflexibility—this iron will of the President. It may bring on us a war, contrary to his original intention—a war, if the British government will not come to such terms as will enable him to justify his first rash, and again obstinately reiterated claim to the whole of the Oregon territory. In this dangerous policy the President may peradventure succeed and be applauded; but not by those who have a regard for the *true* honor of the country.

Baltimore; and if, as has been alleged, he sits uneasy in the seat which he at present occupies, I am inclined to conjecture, that, notwithstanding all the glory obtained by "laying Mr. Pakenham on his back,"* the cause is rather that he does not exactly like the work in which he is engaged—the course of policy which he is defending, than that Mr. Polk is dissatisfied with his harshness in managing the negotiation.

In censuring the course pursued by the administration in the management of this controversy, I would notice one very important transaction, which seems not to have met with such public animadversion as it deserves. It is the publication, with the President's message, of the correspondence with Mr. Pakenham. This *ex parte* statement ought never to have been published, whilst there was any hope of settling the question by negotiation. I call it an *ex parte* statement, because such it really was, since Mr. Pakenham must obviously have felt himself precluded, by a sense of duty, from making any reply to Mr. Buchanan's last letter, in which Mr. Polk's extraordinary claims in regard of Oregon were so elaborately defended. If we suppose Mr. Polk to have acted, as he is bound in duty to do, on public principles—to subserve the interests of his country, and not some paltry personal or party purpose—the publication of this correspondence is irreconcilable with the dictates of ordinary prudence, except upon the hypothesis that Mr. Polk considered war between the two countries inevitable, and that "the hearts of the people" were to be prepared for this result; or on the hypothesis that Great Britain might, by the exhibition of a bold front and extravagant pretensions—by rousing the feelings of the democracy, be bullied and frightened into a surrender of her claims.† The first of these two suppositions seems to be denied by the immediate friends of the administration, who generally maintain, in public and in private, that we are to have a speedy settlement of the controversy; it is also discountenanced by the fact, that no adequate

* This vainglorious boast was made long before the correspondence was published, and therefore most likely emanated from the cabinet. Thus originating, it was unhandsome, and deserves reproof. The secrecy preserved as to the nature of the correspondence deserves commendation.

† The chief motives for the premature publication of the correspondence, no doubt, were to justify Mr. Polk's unfortunate assertion of a claim to the whole of Oregon in his inaugural, and to glorify Mr. Buchanan, and perhaps subserve certain other purposes—to gain "political capital."

preparations are made, or means demanded for commencing war. If the latter be the true hypothesis, the attempt to bully and intimidate England is, in my opinion, equally dangerous and dishonorable. An attempt which, even if it should in part succeed, will not be eventually serviceable to this country. It will injure our reputation —it has already done so—and may embarrass us in future negotiations with foreign states. In the mean time we run the risk of pushing Great Britain to such extremity that she may feel compelled, by a sense of honor, a regard for her reputation with the nations of Christendom, to resist by force our unreasonable claims. It is possible to calculate too securely on the pacific disposition of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen and the British people.

Great Britain may probaby, if we do not touch her on the point of honor, yield some portion of what she considers her just rights in treating with us, from the same motives that a respectable person will yield something of his just claims to a very litigious and unpleasant neighbor, in order that he may rid himself of annoyance. In such a transaction it is the successful party that is placed in the most humiliating position. If we pursue the course pursued by President Jackson in *violently* enforcing the treaty of indemnification of losses of American citizens, formed with the king of the French, and the course now pursued by President Polk, we shall soon acquire a character for obstinacy and grasping higgling diplomacy that will little conduce to gain us friends, if, on any occasion in the vicissitude of human affairs, we should need sympathy and friendship.

We may trace the course of this higgling overreaching diplomacy in a great measure to the fact that our negotiators are generally aspirants to the presidency, and that it appears to them that the best way to recommend themselves to the public is by driving a hard bargain with foreign states in all negotiations, whether about territory or about compensation for damages, &c. They are thus led in their transactions abroad to act rather on the principles of the crafty, chaffering small dealer, (the *perfidus caupo*,) than those of the man of honor, the gentleman. It must be admitted that the negotiators appear not to be altogether mistaken in their estimate of the road to popularity.

By this overreaching policy we may gain a few millions of dollars, or a few thousand miles of territory, worthless to ourselves and to every body else, and lose character and standing among the na-

tions—get the reputation of a grasping, avaracious, dishonest people, who will on all occasions take advantage both of the weakness and of the good nature of their neighbors to enrich themselves. How ever others may estimate these things, this is not the character which I would like any country having a claim on my love to acquire.

It may be observed, as worthy of the severest censure, that our government has of late got into a habit of making very loud and gratuitous professions of moderation and even disinterestedness when the policy pursued is of the most questionable character. Of this we have a striking example in our diplomacy with Mexico—grasping at her provinces, and at the same time professing to be her best friend. Together with these professions, we usually couple abuse of other nations. Now all this is in very bad taste, to pass over its morality, which is Machiavelian and infamous. It never imposes on foreign nations. Sagacious men are awakened by it to suspicion, when before they may have seen no cause for suspicion; and it disgusts men of sense both at home and abroad. Nor does this conduct produce much effect with those who are most ready to swallow all these hypocritical pretensions of moderation. Such persons generally care nothing whether the country has a character for moderation and honorable dealing or not; success with them is the criterion of the propriety of every measure; as to wrong, they feel altogether indifferent, provided their own country is aggrandized.

In this connexion allow me to notice another shallow and dangerous opinion which seems to be fast gaining ground among us—no longer confined, as formerly, to the ignorantly patriotic and the demagogues, but finding its way to higher places, and which exercises much influence over the public mind in reference to the Oregon controversy. It is the opinion that our own form of government, or rather, I should have said, our own government, is not only the best on earth, but that it is the only one fit to be tolerated among men. That our own government, if we do not corrupt it, is the best for us, all men here are generally agreed. To the assertion that it is the best on earth, when men are fitted to manage it wisely and enjoy it, I will not object. But that it is the only government fitted for mankind, and that all other governments are usurpations, tyrannies, systems of oppression, is both an extravagant and a dangerous doctrine. Nor is it an indigenous plant of this soil; it has been transplanted from the gardens of the Jacobin Club. Such exclusive

views of forms of government are of a similar nature to exclusive forms of faith in religion, and tend to produce the same baneful effects. The bigot in politics is the counterpart of the bigot in religion. With the Mormons, both say we are the "saints," and not only heaven but earth was designed as the peculiar inheritance of ourselves and the seat of our institutions. If we can cheat and overreach the *heathen*, it is all conducive to the service of religion, says the one species of bigot—of liberty, says the other. Thus the eternal principles of justice are set at defiance, if they stand in the way of democratic institutions. It is forgotten that to set an example of justice and to inculcate strict principles of justice is necessary to the prosperity of every state, and to none more necessary than to a republic—necessary in reference to internal peace and prosperity—necessary to the successful management of its foreign relations. A nation which imitates Mormon bigotry and exclusiveness will soon find itself in the position of Ishmael. "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand will be against him." Instead of this we ought to adopt and act on the same wise and liberal principles of toleration in political doctrines which we have successfully adopted in regard of religion; and as we allow every man to worship his creator and seek heaven in his own way, so to approve of every nation being allowed, without coming under the ban of our denunciations, to seek the establishment of political order in its own way. Regarding, in our national capacity, the varieties in political institutions with the same tolerance as we regard the various forms of Christianity among ourselves, it ought to be our ambition, our pride, to hold a conspicuous rank among the civilized states of the world—conspicuous not merely on account of our power and efficiency both in the arts of peace and war, but for a generosity and magnanimity becoming our high station, and the glorious destinies which await us, if our own follies and crimes prevent not.

It may be inquired, what ought the peace-loving part of the community to do in the present state of the controversy? No unanimous response has yet been made to this question; and hence little associated effort has been made to influence the course of the government in regard of this matter. The general opinion seems to be that those who are opposed to the measures of the administration should sit with folded hands, and leave all the responsibility to rest on the executive and on the party which has raised him to power.

Some advise this course, and even more, to facilitate all the measures demanded by the executive, because they hope that the result—whether peace or war—will be advantageous to their own party, and fatal to the party of the President; others, because they suppose that it is the course most likely to moderate the action of the government, and to secure eventually the adoption of peaceful measures. The motives of the first of these two classes are too selfish, unmanly, unpatriotic to deserve any further notice. It is not so with the latter. They mean well, whatever may be thought of their wisdom. They fear the effect of excitement on this question. Some of them are even apprehensive that if the commercial and intelligent classes openly and firmly oppose the policy of the administration, it will stimulate the friends of the executive to plunge the country into war in order to injure the commercial class and the interests of the Atlantic States in general. Such fears as these are insinuated by some of the editors and correspondents of our public papers. These insinuations I believe to be grossly slanderous. Though I have little confidence in the wisdom of our rulers, I do not entertain such notions of their morality and patriotism and regard for their fellow-citizens, as these insinuations imply. Nor do I believe any thing so bad as this of any large portion of the western supporters of the President. If it were come to this, that a party, under the influence of such malignant feelings against a portion of their fellow-citizens, strong enough to carry measures so important in our public councils, existed in the country, then verily might we despair of the republic. There may be a few such men in the country; but if ever, unfortunately, they should become the majority, we shall rapidly sink to the level of our sister republics south of us on this continent, or even to a lower deep—to the level of the French Republic during the Reign of Terror.

Again—many of both political parties who are sincerely desirous that peace may be maintained, stand in this kind of position. They are sorry that the administration have, by claiming the whole territory west of the Rocky Mountains, endangered the issue of the negotiation; but yet, since the step has been taken, they think it best to offer no open resistance. This course some follow through regard for their party, some through patriotism, perhaps more through the hope that, by setting up a large claim, the President may succeed in obtaining a better bargain from the British government. With none of these classes can I exactly agree. The party spirit

that would, by a criminal inaction, sacrifice the interests of the country to the caprice or the obstinacy of a leader, I consider detestable. True patriotism and a genuine spirit of independence, I think, would point to quite a different course from that of silence and non-resistance, when we believe our rulers are acting wrong, and that in an affair that may prove to be of the last importance to the honor and interests of the republic. And least of all can I agree with those who remain silent through the secret or avowed expectation that the course pursued by the President may enable us to obtain a better bargain in the negotiation. Of this chaffering, higgling method of managing negotiations with foreign powers, I have spoken freely already. This setting up of exorbitant claims—asking a high price in order to drive an advantageous bargain—is a mean, pedlar-like policy, altogether unbecoming in a great nation, and altogether improper to be pursued in negotiating with a great and high-minded nation. It is also calculated to involve the administration which pursues it in difficulties. It may do so to a serious extent in the present case. When the President asserts a claim to the whole of Oregon, many of his partisans believe that he is in earnest, whether he is so or not; and should he choose to relinquish his extreme demands, it is not certain that he could carry enough of his friends along with him to give sanction to a treaty founded on reasonable principles.

It is in my opinion the best and the safest policy for those who are opposed to important measures, to speak out, in a manly way and at a proper time, their real sentiments. This course may possibly facilitate, instead of impeding, the action of the administration, by helping to prepare the country for the relinquishment of the extreme claims of the President. And now is the proper time to speak aloud. The whole subject is before the public—referred to the representatives of the people. Whilst it was confined within the cabinet, and under the exclusive control of the treaty-making department of government, the propriety and prudence of meddling with it might be doubted. But now the question is before the Senate, and it is in the power of that body to modify essentially the course of policy which shall be adopted in regard to this matter. It is not perhaps too much to say, that to decide for peace or war is now in their power.

I believe it to be the duty of all those who do not wish a war on account of the subject in dispute—of all those who think that the

claims presented by Mr. Buchanan in his letter of August 30th, 1845, are untenable, to declare so in a manner that is not to be mistaken. Especially all those who are opposed to the step of giving unconditional notice of the abrogation of the convention of 1818, considering this notice a measure likely to endanger our peaceful relations with Great Britain in the present crisis of the negotiation, ought to speak out and give the support of their authority and influence to that portion of our Senators who are disposed to resist the measures recommended by the President in relation to the Oregon territory. If some of these measures receive the sanction of the Legislature, they will certainly endanger the peace of the two nations, whether the President and those who enact them intend so or not. If the notice is given, either we must proceed to farther measures, which may produce hostilities, or place ourselves in a very awkward and humiliating position before the world. I agree entirely with those who think that, on various accounts, the notice, in no shape, ought to be given at present. If, indeed, the notice were given in the manner proposed by one of the amendments offered to the resolutions before the Senate, viz., accompanied with an offer of arbitration, it could do no harm; on the contrary, it would effectually satisfy the public mind in both countries that all danger was past; but since the publication of the late correspondence, it appears useless to talk of this. The only hopeful plan in the present aspect of the business is, as it seems to me, to defeat the resolution to give notice. Those who think so ought to make their opinion known in time. They may suppose that this is sufficiently done by the private correspondence of individuals, possessed of influence and consideration, with the Senators. Or they may be willing to leave the matter to the management of the public press—the gentlemen of the fourth estate, as it has been called. These gentlemen seem to be willing enough to take the whole management of the matter on their own shoulders. I have, I confess, much more faith in the good, old, regular, manly way of getting up petitions. It may not be necessary to call public meetings—perhaps it might be imprudent to call them. They are certainly often called for far less important purposes, and on questions not less likely to excite violent party opposition. If meetings are called, the language held at them should be that of moderation—not of denunciation; the same of petitions. Nor is it necessary that these petitions should all be of a similar tenor. They ought to be suited to the varying opinions of those who, whilst they agree in endeavor

ing to avert the curse of war, yet differ in their views of some questions connected with the controversy. The crisis seems to demand an emphatic expression of the opinions of the intelligent and wealthy classes—those who, if a war should unfortunately occur, will be called upon to support its heaviest pecuniary burdens, whilst at the same time their business is suspended or deranged, and their property destroyed or depreciated. Why not rouse yourselves, I would say to such, and do your duty to yourselves and to the republic.* If you neglect your duty now, you may have deep and lasting cause to repent of your neglect hereafter.

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

New-York, February, 1846.

Dear Sir:

In the present letter I design to call your attention briefly to some of the difficulties and dangers which are to be apprehended, if we should unfortunately engage in war with Great Britain. Though there is at present ground to hope that such a conflict may not happen in our days, yet it is good to bear in mind the hazards with which it would be attended, especially as a proper sense of these is the best security, so far as regards the influence and action of too many of our citizens, against our rushing recklessly into the horrors of war. I am the more inclined to notice this subject, because I think the difficulties of such a war as we should have to wage with Great Britain are not fully appreciated by the present generation. The lessons of past experience seem to be in a great measure forgotten. Nothing but the exaggerated glories of the conflict in which our fathers were engaged, is generally remembered; the difficulties and disasters have been permitted to sink into oblivion. In treating this subject, I will pass very lightly over those matters which are open to the observation of the most cursory inquirer, and confine my attention chiefly to those which are most likely to pass unnoticed, especially by observers strongly influenced by national prejudices. For a more full and authoritative account of the financial difficulties

* "Quin expergiscimini igitur, et capessite rempublicam."

which would attend such a war, I refer to the able pamphlet of Mr. Gallatin.

And here I would notice, first, the greatly increased power of England since 1812; and the fact that she is now so disengaged that she could bring this whole power to bear upon us. I know it is the fashion with some of our demagogues to speak of England as decrepid, and as tottering under the weight of her national debt. The national debt is a great evil—the increase of it would be a great and a dangerous evil. This is well understood in England—and an increase either of her debt or of her taxation will be avoided, if possible, by her wisest statesmen. But notwithstanding this, England is immensely richer—or, what is more to the purpose, has more disposable wealth at her command, at present, than at any past period of her existence as a nation. And, if a war is forced upon her, this wealth would be most profusely employed for the purpose of annoying and humbling her opponent. It is, in fairness, to be admitted that this country has grown, during the same period, in wealth and population still more rapidly—in a greater ratio—than England. But undisciplined numbers avail little in war; and the disposable wealth in this country, that which can be readily converted to the purposes of war, is not proportionately great. Our increased capital is chiefly vested in improved lands, manufactories, public works, &c. And though these would enable us to raise more revenue by taxation, they would not be available to supply the immediate wants of government in the commencement of a war—they would not increase the power of loaning to the State. And in such a war as we should be obliged to wage with England, no other means but loans could adequately supply our urgent demands.

Again, England is prepared and ready for hostilities at any moment, and could therefore support a war with us for a long time without increasing her present burdens or her present debt in any alarming degree. She possesses a navy immensely larger than any which we can hope to command; to which she can add any desirable increase by the employment of the steam packets already constructed with reference to this purpose. We, on the contrary, are wholly unprepared for a contest single-handed with such an antagonist. And before we should be adequately prepared to begin, as happened in 1814, we should all, even the most pugnacious among us, be heartily tired of the contest.

Next, I would notice a fact which, though not wholly unob-

served, is not sufficiently attended to in the calculations of our over-sanguine fellow-citizens. It is that this country has been almost invariably unsuccessful in all attempts at *aggressive war*. Witness the failure in the attempt to take Canada in the revolutionary war; the failure in a similar attempt in the war of 1812, contrary, no doubt, to general expectation in this country, and contrary, as I know, to very general expectation in Britain. Witness the very sanguinary, protracted and expensive war a few years ago, with a miserable handful of Indians in Florida. These failures are all attributable, in part at least, to the same cause—the impediments which the past and present state of the country presents to military operations. In a country so covered with forests as the United States and Canada still are, an invading party would need to be exceedingly strong and well provided with warlike supplies and means of conveyance to make any great impression on a civilized foe, or to penetrate to any distance into the interior, with assurance of maintaining its footing. Almost every campaign in this country, whether in the old French wars, in the revolutionary war, or in the last war with Great Britain, affords illustration of this truth. Similar fortune has attended all the attempts of England to penetrate far into the interior in her struggles with this country. Witness Burgoyne's invasion from the north, Cornwallis's invasion of North Carolina and Virginia, &c., and, in the last war, the foolish and wanton attack on Washington and Baltimore, and the, perhaps, equally absurd and still more disastrous (to the aggressors) attack on New-Orleans.

By the way, there is a lesson worth learning to be derived from these facts, in regard to the probable disasters which may attend a war with Mexico. The difficulties and dangers of such a war are, in my opinion, much underrated by the good people of these States. They look to the field of San Jacinto, instead of the Everglades of Florida, for indications of the results of a contest with the Mexicans. They forget that the Camanches may prove as formidable enemies, if they should unite with the Mexicans, as the miserable remnant of the Seminoles. They forget that Santa Ana, too, was an *invader*, and that his case is another striking example of the results of all aggressive warfare in a country like that which lies between the United States and Mexico. Besides, it is forgotten that the result of the battle of San Jacinto did not depend altogether on the valor of the Texan party, nor on the inefficiency or cowardice of their opponents, but much more on casualties and blunders, and on the reck-

less contempt of the Mexican chief and the Mexican army for an enemy whom they supposed to be utterly incapable of facing them in battle, whom they considered as flying before them routed and dismayed, and whom they consequently expected to drive without resistance out of their territory. A casualty such as the Texans improved to the establishment of their independence might never occur again; a mistake or blunder of the same description is not likely to be repeated by the Mexicans, especially in a struggle with the United States.

In considering the probable results of a war with any nation, when we sit down beforehand to count the costs, we ought never to calculate on the *casualties* which have heretofore favored us; nor to expect that mistakes made by our opponents on former occasions will be again repeated. A wise statesman, in drawing conclusions from the past, will exclude all such matters from his calculations; or, rather, will make allowance for a large share of the casualties of war proving unfavorable to his country. For instance, a prudent man, in forming an estimate of the probable success of another war with Great Britain, would leave out of his account such affairs as the victory on Lake Erie, the victory on Lake Champlain, and the victory of General Jackson at New-Orleans; and also several of the victories at sea during the war. So far as any of these victories was determined by unforeseen casualties, he could not safely depend on the recurrence of these casualties. And so far as, on the one hand, they were occasioned by the foolish contempt entertained by the British of American prowess and skill, or by the manifest blunders of the British leaders; or, on the other hand, by the peculiar sagacity and intrepidity of individual American leaders, it would not be safe for him to expect a repetition of the reckless contempt and blunders on the one side, or of the same extraordinary personal intrepidity on the other. Now, were the proper deductions made for every thing of the kind which we have mentioned, what encouragement, in entering upon a new war, could be fairly drawn from the last war? Suppose the casualties should be against us, especially at the beginning of the contest—that our ships of war should, for a length of time, be so unfortunate as to encounter always a decidedly superior force, and that our commanders should be filled with as much vanity and contempt of their adversaries as the British in 1812, (a thing not altogether unlikely to happen;) that the intrepid Perry, and Decatur, and Jackson have dropped their mantles, when

departing, on no worthy successors; and that our recklessness and confidence generated by the exaggerated statements of our success in the last war—which statements, unaccompanied with any of the humiliating reverses in that war, have ever since been incessantly dinned in our ears—should betray us into some serious blunders, and bring on us a few such signal defeats as befell the British in the last war: would not in this case our vainglorious boasting be speedily changed into national dejection, and weariness of a war without glory, but not without its accompanying burdens of taxation?

I know well the answer which would be made to this by our bold Bobadils, our thunderbolts of war. They would say that such reverses, in the commencement of the contest, would only serve to screw up the national courage, and render the people desperate, and confirm the determination to dispossess the British of every foot of the soil of this continent before the sword should be sheathed. This kind of talk sounds very fine, but yet it is mere froth and gasconade. It is flatly contradicted by the experience of these men's fathers—not less brave, though perhaps less presumptuous than themselves—in the last war; and that a war attended with no very fatal reverse to the arms of this country, though with great failure of success in achieving the manifest objects of the struggle. Even the cabinet became sick of the war, as well as the tax-payers and the contributors to the public loans; and the Emperor of Russia was induced—Mr. J. Q. Adams perhaps knows how—to offer his mediation, and prevent the necessity of maintaining the struggle during another campaign, the probable results of which were an object of deep apprehension to the government at Washington, as well as to peace-loving people all over the country. That the Emperor should *of his own mere will* have proposed his kind services to adjust the quarrel between Great Britain and the United States in 1812, when Napoleon was invading his dominions, and England his only reliable friend, I can readily believe. But by what means he was induced to offer his mediation at a later period, Mr. Adams, as I have said before, can best tell. And I do not believe that he told all that he could tell on this subject, when he discoursed upon it the other day, in the House of Representatives, in reply to Mr. Rhett.

Again, let us consider for a moment the extent of the war, into which our prudent Executive seems *willing*, and some of our prudent legislators seem *inclined* to plunge us. I do not believe that

Great Britain would make any attempt to penetrate into any part of this country. It would certainly be very unwise for her to do so—as hazardous, or rather much more hazardous than it has proved on former occasions. This country is undoubtedly much stronger to resist such aggressions than ever she was in any former struggle with Great Britain. Such attempts to penetrate into the country, wherever made, would most likely prove disastrous to any foreign foe. In this point of view, this country is mighty—impregnable; but her resources for aggressive war, as I have stated above, are increased neither in the same ratio with the increase of her population, nor of her wealth. Nor do they admit of being so increased, without the expenditure of much capital, and much time in forming and training a large regular army. More capital and more time would be necessary for this purpose, than would be sufficient to tire the patience even of the lovers of military glory, and much more the lovers of peace and of commercial pursuits.

The power of our formidable opponent would likely enough be directed against some of the cities on the sea-board—certainly against our commerce.* But, above all, the most vigorous efforts would be

* The effects of a war with Great Britain, as regards the wealth of the country, would be extremely disastrous, and deeply felt by a large portion of our citizens. Our foreign commerce would be nearly annihilated. Consequently a great proportion of those engaged in this pursuit would be ruined. All kinds of property in the great commercial cities would be miserably depressed. And the calamity would of course reach to the laboring class in these cities, who depend on commerce for employment, and would produce all the distress which the necessity of changing their occupations and their place of residence involves.

Again, a war would seriously injure the industry of the Southern States. This is well understood, and therefore needs the less notice here. I believe this evil is sometimes exaggerated. The cotton must still find its way to Great Britain. Were we, as some are perhaps ready to recommend, in case of war, to declare a non-intercourse, in order to cripple our opponent, it would bring us into collision with other European powers, and especially with France. But still a war with England would, no doubt, greatly reduce the price which the planter would receive for his cotton. This would impose on him the necessity of raising a larger proportion of his own supplies at home, and would thus directly curtail the market of some of the Western States, and, co-operating with the obstacles to exportation, reduce the price of the productions of the Western States in general. The demand for supplying the armies on the north-western borders, might, in some degree, counterbalance this diminished demand from other quarters. But, on the whole, the regular and steady demand for the productions of the west, contrary to the expectations of the western people themselves, would most likely be greatly reduced, and, more

made to secure, if possible, the complete ascendency on the lakes. Steam navigation would give immensely greater advantages to the party holding this ascendency, than could have been obtained without it. If by a great effort at first—and this great effort Britain is prepared, and, no doubt, determined to make—she could attain this important object, she might safely defy all our attacks on her Canadian possessions, till we had spent twice as much money as in the last war, and perhaps twice as much time. Even then the Canadas could not be invaded with safety, or any assurance of success, for their inhabitants would before that time have become a nation of warriors, as capable of opposing this country, as it was capable of opposing the colossal power of the mother country in the war of the revolution—especially when these provinces should be backed, as they would be, by British capital and British valor. Should the war take this turn, it might probably bring some of our western demagogues to their senses; inasmuch as it would cut off the commercial resources of some portion of the territory of the northwestern States, by interrupting all intercourse through the lakes with the seaboard.*

especially, if the British should obtain the ascendency on the lakes, and thus obstruct the intercourse with the Atlantic cities.

The effects of the destruction of foreign commerce on the revenue of the country are obvious. The duties on importation would be comparatively unproductive. Direct taxes of an onerous description must be imposed and paid, when the means of paying would be greatly diminished by the restriction or destruction of our usual markets. If both parties should become desperate, and pursue the war long and pertinaciously, capitalists may anticipate that forced loans, either direct, or in the shape of depreciated government paper, would necessarily be resorted to—both would, likely enough, be tried; and the results might deeply shake the public confidence in the permanency of our institutions, and entail the most disastrous political consequences. A vast national debt is obviously an inevitable consequence of a protracted war. For the more full consideration of this and kindred subjects, I have already referred to Mr. Gallatin. I would now also refer to the speech of Mr. Calhoun, delivered since the above sentences were written. His anticipations of the enormous amount of debt likely to be contracted, in case the war should last ten years, are, I believe, nearer the mark than Mr. Gallatin's. But there is not, as I shall show before I close, the least probability of such a protracted contest.

* Query. Does not a wish to get rid of the payment of their debts due to foreign capitalists, by means of a war, influence selfish, dishonest men in the Western States, in their manifest efforts to disturb the peaceful relations of this country and Great Britain? I fear that the course of some western men in this matter, is rather attributable to this dishonorable motive, than to all the "annoyances and collisions" to

Again, it is obvious from the present state of our relations with Mexico that, if we have a war with Great Britain, we shall certainly have a war at the same time with Mexico. A war with this latter country we are likely enough to have at any rate; and even this, as we have already hinted, may give us more to keep our hands employed, and to drain our pockets, than many people suppose, especially if it should be managed by us in the Florida style, or as the war on the frontiers of Upper Canada was managed during the greater part of the last contest with Great Britain. But, in case we have a war with Great Britain, a war at the same time with Mexico would be a very serious additional calamity. Mexico, protected by British naval armaments from an attack in the gulf of Mexico, and assisted by British treasure and British skill, would be a much more dangerous antagonist than Mexico single-handed and unaided. She could, by distracting our efforts, render immense service to her ally. Besides this, we might calculate on all the Indians on our western and northwestern frontiers as bitter enemies, and perhaps on some within our territories, who are far from being satisfied with the treatment which they have in many instances received from the government at Washington.*

In enumerating the dangers of a war with Great Britain for the whole of Oregon, I might notice the temper and feelings with which both nations would enter into the contest. This country must obviously enter into it a divided people. A large and most respectable portion of the community feel persuaded of the injustice and the

which, Mr. Gallatin says, they have been "personally exposed," and which, I think, he somewhat exaggerates. It is to be remembered, that in most serious collisions which have happened on the borders, the citizens of this country have been the aggressors.

* I leave out of the account altogether the difficulties which would attend an attempt to maintain our ground in Oregon, as no such attempt would likely be made. The defence of that territory, and of the settlers in it, would have to be entirely abandoned. Mr. Calhoun's opinions—of the efficiency of the Mexicans as allies of Great Britain, of the impossibility of defending Oregon, and of the dangers arising from incursions of the Indians on our northwestern borders—presented in his speech in the Senate since the above was written, are much stronger and more decided than those which I had ventured to assert. The views exhibited on these and on kindred matters in Mr. Calhoun's speech ought, both on account of their own intrinsic importance, and the great intelligence, experience and respectability of their author, to produce, and no doubt will produce, a deep impression on all considerate men.

folly of a course, which should precipitate us into such a conflict They consider war, even when necessary for the defence of the property or the honor of the nation, as a great and deplorable calamity. But such a war as this for the wilds of Oregon, they regard as not only disastrous to the lives and property of themselves and their fellow-citizens, but, at the same time, a reproach to the national character—a reproach to republican institutions. Let it be remembered, that among those who thus regard the war, are included the vast majority, if not the whole of the parties, who control the disposable capital of the country—the very parties on which the government, in such an emergency, must depend, in a great measure, for the supply of the immense expenditure necessary to maintain such a conflict. Most of these persons would feel very reluctant to assist the government in what they consider an unjust, impolitic, unnecessary and shameful war. Patriotism (and in this, I think, they are at least not behind the noisy vainglorious demagogues who urge us on to war,) would, no doubt, impel them to lend all the assistance possible, in case their country were menaced with invasion, to maintain a defensive war ; but they would feel unwilling to assist in making aggressive war in such a cause, and they would, by their party action, impede the efforts of the executive. Besides this, it is to be apprehended that there is a party among us —not altogether despicable as to numbers—who would rejoice in the calamities which might befall their country in such a contest, as being the means, in their opinion, of hastening the accomplishment of greater good—as conducing to the more complete extension of liberty and equal rights to all the inhabitants of these States of every color. All these circumstances would tend less or more to paralyze the arm of government in the maintenance of a war for the whole of Oregon.

Let us now look to Great Britain. If forced into a contest with this country on this subject, in order to defend her national reputation, she would engage in the conflict with the unanimous and cordial approbation of all men of all parties who have any decisive influence over her counsels, and with the energetic co-operation of her wealthy and industrious classes. Her people would engage in the war with feelings of the strongest indignation against our government on account of what they consider the injustice, insolence and unreasonableness of the course which it has pursued as

regards the immediate subject of dispute. Besides, many in Britain still feel greatly exasperated at the bad faith displayed by the repudiating States. Add to this the strong feeling of hatred (whether reasonable or unreasonable it matters not in this connexion), to our system of negro slavery—a feeling pervading a very large and influential portion of the British people—and we have elements which, combined, would render certain a more vigorous and determined and unrelenting prosecution of hostilities against this country than in any former war. Even the contemplation of the violence of the conflict is sufficient to make any sane man shudder. The people of Great Britain would regard the war as a direful, but inevitable calamity; and every effort would be made to shorten its duration by putting forth at the beginning of the contest all the energies of the nation, in order to induce her opponent to a speedy reconciliation on reasonable terms. In such a contest, so provoked, there is not the least grounds to hope that Britain would, on her part, yield till she should be driven from all her possessions on this continent, and it is doubtful whether even then she would be disposed to yield.

Suppose, that in such a desperate and protracted struggle, this country should succeed to the utmost extent of the sanguine anticipations of some of our demagogues, the consequences would likely, in the end, prove more disastrous to us than a severe defeat.*

But from a *protracted* struggle with Great Britain, is there any solid reason whatever to anticipate success, and not rather defeat in war, and as regards our internal affairs, what is still worse, bitter, implacable political strife and recrimination, disorganization of our government and dismemberment of the Union?

Now, suppose that Great Britain should come out of the contest shorn of her greatness, humbled, and showing evident symptoms that she was hastening to the final eclipse of her former glory, as some of our bigoted and vainglorious ultra-democrats hope, and in their ravings predict, still she would leave a name splendid in the annals of the world. But should this nation, by the struggle, (whether through success or defeat,) bring upon herself, as it is possible that she might in case the contest should be long protracted, premature destruction, the dismemberment of her confederacy, a military despotism, or a state of anarchy and misrule, and consequent exposure to the frequent recurrence of revolutions, like those

* See Mr. Calhoun's late speech for a forcible exposition of some of the evils likely to result from a successful struggle with Great Britain and Mexico.

which are the curse of the southern republics of this continent, she would fall from her high station with disgrace, and bring reproach on the very name of democracy. Even the glory of the fathers of the country would be tarnished by the folly of their degenerate sons, when it should be made to appear that they had shed their blood in vain to establish rational freedom in this western world. It might then be tauntingly inquired, in the language of an old poet, how came you to ruin thus prematurely so large and prosperous and promising a republic? And answered, a crop of demagogues sprung up—silly, reckless, &c.*

But though I speak thus in answer to the vainglorious gasconade of some of our demagogues, so calculated to excite against us strong feelings of contempt abroad, and possibly to betray us into measures ruinous to the republic, I do not anticipate any such extreme results from a war, either as regards Great Britain or this country. Viewing the matter with the lights of history and experience, and taking into consideration the changeful temperament of that portion of our people most influenced by the war spirit, I do not anticipate a protracted struggle, as many seem to do. The results would probably be nearly the same as in the last war. We would find ourselves utterly baffled in every attempt to make an impression on the possessions of our opponents; financial difficulties would arise; tax upon tax; and weariness of war even among some of those who at first encouraged war measures. An Oregon war would be far more unpopular from the beginning with the respectable portion of the community, and especially with men of capital, than the last war. The professions about going into the contest, if once war were declared, with undivided front, are all *humbug*. It may do well enough for editors of papers and party leaders to pledge themselves in this manner; but will the people, when smarting under the calamities of war, care for enabling them to redeem these pledges. The administration would find itself involved in inextricable embarrassment. Some John Q. Adams would receive a hint to jog the elbow of the Emperor of Russia, or some other potentate—our jealousy of potentates notwithstanding—and, after some two or three years of war, we

* Cedo, qui vestram rempublicam tautam amisistis tam cito?
Proveniebant *oratores novi* STULTI *adolescentuli*.

"I have more faith in popular nonsense, than in the selfish second thought of the wisest man in the world." We have, it seems, not only "stulti oratores," silly reckless demagogues, but panegyrists of—"*nonsense*."

should come out of the conflict, minus some hundreds of millions of war expenses—with the loss of Oregon, and of all hope of gaining settlements on the Pacific, and possibly with Texas reduced to very reasonable dimensions. If any reader of these pages thinks this result unlikely, let him divest himself for a moment, if he can, of national prejudices and national vanity, and consider attentively, with the aid of the experience of the past, the whole prospect ahead in case of a struggle single-handed with Great Britain and Mexico; and see whether he can come to a different conclusion from that expressed above. Should some of my opinions be attributed to my foreign prejudices imbibed in youth, and which more than a quarter of a century spent under the institutions of this country has not sufficed to eradicate, I would suggest that it is good sometimes to look on a subject from the point of view which even a declared enemy might be supposed to take.

Fas et ab hoste doceri.

I have not dwelt on the calamities which such a war would inflict upon Great Britain; not because they are of small importance, but because it is needless to expatiate on them in this country. The British people and government are awake to a sense of these calamities; and some of us are too much engaged already in looking to what we suppose the weak points of Great Britain, and in exaggerating them, to the neglect of a proper consideration of our own peculiar unfitness for aggressive war. Many indeed seem disposed to dwell *exclusively* on the contemplation of the weak points of Great Britain, and on the supposed strength of our own position, grossly exaggerating both, and forgetting altogether our own weak side and the strong side of our antagonist—the worst possible preparation for a struggle, and boding only disaster and humiliation.

The restlessness and disaffection of one class of the Irish people is considered by some as threatening serious danger to Great Britain should she become engaged in a war with this country. This danger has been, as I think, greatly exaggerated. Those, who are intimately acquainted with the history of Britain during the last sixty years, know well that when she commenced her long struggle with the French Republic the state of Irish affairs threatened more serious danger to her than at any period since. Nearly the whole Irish people—the hardy and energetic and intelligent Anglo-Saxon

race in the north, as well as the Celtic race of the south, and with them a large portion of the population of England and Scotland, openly and declaredly sympathized with the leaders of the French revolution. An organization embracing a very large share of the talent and active energies of Ireland was formed and ready to invoke the co-operation of France. Yet England found herself, when engaged in a desperate foreign struggle, more capable of putting down resistance at home, than if she had been in a state of profound peace. To suppress the growing spirit of disaffection at home was, in fact, one main purpose of commencing hostilities with France. The application of these historical facts to the present case is obvious. A war with this country, accompanied as it would be by the embodiment of the county militia, would make Great Britain, for the time being, more powerful to suppress insurrection in her own dominions. But what cause is there to suppose that we should have in this conflict the sympathies of those who influence most the movements of the disaffected in Ireland? They feel little love either for our people or our institutions, and would be more likely to *denounce* us than to speak or act in our favor. A time of war they would likely find less propitious than a period of peace to further their objects with a British ministry. It has been in times of tranquillity that they have always heretofore obtained the most important concessions.

Again—it is intimated by some that France might take advantage of a war between Britain and this country to humble her ancient rival. But whilst England pursues her present course of policy in her foreign relations, she can never have a war with France, without such a change in the government and policy of the latter country, as would combine all the powers of Europe in another alliance to check her dangerous ambition. It is manifestly the policy of the present dynasty of France, to maintain the most friendly relations with Great Britain. This policy can only be changed by Jacobinism once more obtaining the ascendency. And even were this to take place, England would have little cause of serious apprehension, since such an occurrence would unite all Europe to oppose France, and to oppose her with much more energy and concert of action than on a former occasion. But I need not dwell on this. It is obvious already to every man of sense, who has attended to the plain and emphatic language of M. Guizot, that, in a war with Great Britain on account of Oregon, this country has nothing to ex-

pect from the sympathies of France, and our antagonist nothing to fear from her interference.

Yours, &c.

P. S.—When I commenced these letters, nothing in the form of argument had yet appeared in opposition to the views maintained in Mr. Polk's Message and Mr. Buchanan's correspondence. But I am happy to find that many intelligent men of all parties, whose patriotism admits of no question, agree with me in the most essential points maintained in the preceding pages, and have anticipated me —as regards much of the matter here treated—before the public. Still, notwithstanding the substantial agreement of my views with those of the respectable men to whom I have alluded, the intelligent reader will readily discover such discrepancy, even as regards the subjects which we have treated in common, as gives evidence that these views of the Oregon controversy, and the arguments by which they are maintained, are not a mere reflection of the opinions and arguments of others, but an independent testimony to the soundness of the principles which we in common defend. Besides, there is a variety of matter embraced in these letters which has not as yet, so far as I know, been brought before the community in connexion with this discussion. Were it otherwise, I should not think it expedient to present my opinions on this subject to the public.

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