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Twenty-Ninth Congress.

Speech of Mr. Benton,

OF MISSOURI,

In Senate, May 28, 1846—On the Oregon question.

(Concluded.)

It was in the year 1801 that McKenzie made this proposition to the British government. That government never ventured to act upon the proposition until after the joint occupation treaty of 1818. Before that, its ministers here hinted vague claims, but refused to write them down, or to sign them. After that convention, and especially after its renewal in 1828, and after the disappearance of our people from the Columbia under the power and policy of the Hudson Bay Company, then the government took the decisive stand, and went the whole length of McKenzie's recommendation. This is the origin of the British claim to the Columbia! Because they could not find a northwest passage—because the Unjigah went to the Frozen ocean—because Frazer's river was unnavigable—because the Columbia river was the only practicable line of communication with the Pacific ocean, and its banks the only situation fit for the residence of a civilized people: for these reasons, after long delay and great hesitation, and aided by the improvidence of our government, they set up a claim to the Columbia! It was found to be the only river on which a commercial communication could be opened between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific ocean—the only British American road to India! The command of the North Pacific ocean, and the monopoly of its rich trade, depended upon the acquisition of the Columbia; and, therefore, they must take it. This is the origin of the British claim to the Columbia river. It was an indispensable link in their commercial line across the continent. The other end of that line was in the frozen and desolate regions of Lake Winipeg and Hudson's Bay, along the icy streams of the Saskatchiwine and Missinippi, (Nelson's river;) yet even for such a route as this McKenzie invoked the aid and protection of the British government, and obtained it. That government now backs the powerful fur company—the instrument of its policy in America as the East India Company is in Asia—in its pretentions to the Columbia as the substitute for the Northwest passage; and if they had the tithe of our title to it would never surrender it. Even with one end of their line terminating in the icy and desolate waters of Hudson's Bay, she still struggles for it. What would it be if she had the North Pass and the Missouri river, bearing down south to the center of the valley of the Mississippi! The British government would fight the world for such a line as that, and spend unnumbered millions in its improvement and protection; yet we have turned our backs upon it—left it for thirty years a derelict in the hands of our competitors; and I am now listened to with some surprise and incredulity when I represent this grand commercial route to India upon the line of the Missouri and the Columbia, as one of the advantages of Oregon—one of our inducements to maintain our rights there.

The effect of the arrival of the Caucasian, or white race, on the western coast of America, opposite the eastern coast of Asia, remains to be mentioned among the benefits which the settlement of the Columbia will produce; and that a benefit, not local to us, but general and universal to the human race. Since the dispersion of man upon the earth, I know of no human event, past or to come, which promises a greater, and more beneficent change upon earth than the arrival of the van of the Caucasian race (the Celtic-Anglo-Saxon division) upon the border of the sea which washes the shore of the eastern Asia. The Mongolian, or yellow race, is there, four hundred millions in number, spreading almost to Europe; a race once the foremost of the human family in the arts of civilization, but torpid and stationary for thousands of years. It is a race far above the Ethiopian, or black—above the Malay, or brown, (if we must admit five races)—and above the American Indian, or red: it is a race far above these, but still, far below the white; and, like all the rest, must receive an impression from the superior race whenever they come in contact. It would seem that the white race alone received the Divine command to subdue and replenish the earth! for it is the only race that has obeyed it—the only one that hunts out new and distant lands, and even a New World to subdue and replenish. Starting from western Asia, taking Europe for their field, and the Sun for their guide, and leaving the Mongolians behind, they arrived, after many ages, on the shores of the Atlantic, which they lit up with the lights of science and religion, and adorned with the useful and elegant arts. Three and a half centuries ago, this race, in obedience to the great command, arrived in the New World, and found new lands to subdue and replenish. For a long time it was confined to the border of the new field, (I now mean the Celtic-Anglo-Saxon division,) and even four-score years ago the philosophic Burke was considered a rash man because he said the English colonists would top the Alleghanies, and descend into the valley of the Mississippi, and occupy without parchment, if the crown refused to make grants of land. What was considered a rash declaration eighty years ago, is old history, in our young country, at this day. Thirty years ago I said the same thing of the Rocky mountains and the Columbia; it was ridiculed then; it is becoming history to-day. The venerable Mr. Macon has often told me that he remembered a line low down in North Carolina, fixed by a royal governor as a boundary between the whites and the Indians; where is that boundary now? The van of the Caucasian race now tops the Rocky mountains, and spreads down to the shores of the Pacific. In a few years a great population will grow up there, luminous with the accumulated lights of European and American civilization. Their presence in such a position cannot be without its influence upon eastern Asia. The sun of civilization must shine across the sea; socially and commercially, the van of the Caucasians, and the rear of the Mongolians must intermix. They must talk together, and trade together, and marry together. Commerce is a great civilizer—social intercourse as great—and marriage greater. The white and yellow races can marry together, as well as eat and trade together. Moral and intellectual superiority will do the rest: the white race will take the ascendant, elevating what is susceptible of improvement—wearing out what is not. The red race has disappeared from the Atlantic coast: the tribes that resisted civilization, met extinction. This is a cause of lamentation with many. For my part, I cannot murmur at what seems to be the effect of Divine law. I cannot repine that this Capitol has replaced the wigwam—this Christian people, replaced the savages—white matrons, the red squaws—and that such men as Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson, have taken the place of Powhatan, Opechonecanough, and other red men, howsoever respectable they may have been as savages. Civilization, or extinction, has been the fate of all people who have found themselves in the track of the advancing whites, and civilization, always the preference of the whites, has been pressed as an object, while extinction has followed as a consequence of its resistance. The black and the red races have often felt their ameliorating influence. The yellow race, next to themselves in the scale of mental and moral excellence, and in the beauty of form, once their superiors in the useful and elegant arts, and in learning, and still respectable though stationary—this race cannot fail to receive a new impulse from the approach of the whites, improved so much since so many ages ago they left the western borders of Asia. The apparition of the van of the Caucasian race, rising upon them in the east after having left them on the west, and after having completed the circumnavigation of the globe, must wake up and reanimate the torpid body of old Asia. Our position and policy will commend us to their hospitable reception: political considerations will aid the action of social and commercial influences.—Pressed upon by the great powers of Europe—the same that press upon us—they must in our approach hail the advent of friends, not of foes—of benefactors, not of invaders. The moral and intellectual superiority of the white race will do the rest: and thus, the youngest people, and the newest land, will become the reviver and the regenerator of the oldest.

It is in this point of view, and as acting upon the social, political and religious condition of Asia, and giving a new point of departure to her ancient civilization, that I look upon the settlement of the Columbia river by the van of the Caucasian race as the most momentous human event in the history of man since his dispersion over the face of the earth.

These are the values of the Columbia river and its valley—these the advantages of its settlement by us. They are great and grand, beneficial to ourselves, and to the human race, and amply sufficient to justify the United States in vindicating their title to the country, and maintaining its possession at all hazards. But I apprehend no hazard. The excitement in Great Britain was on account of the British settlements on Frazer's river, which our claim to 54 deg. 40 min. included and menaced. That claim is now on its last legs. The myriads of good citizens who have been deluded into its belief, and who have no interest in being deceived, now abandon it as a sheer mistake. The Baltimore Convention, and the editors and orators who were so unfortunate as to stake the peace and the honor of their country on that error, and who had probably never read the Russian treaties of 1824 and 1825, nor the diplomatic correspondence of that time, nor ever heard of New Caledonia, nor taken it into their heads to consider whether continents were appurtenant to islands, or islands to continents: these editors and orators may still hang on to their old dream of fifty-four forty from mortified pride, and the consistency, not of judgment, but of vanity: they may still hold on to the shadowy phantom of their former love; but their power to involve their country in a war for a line which has no existence, and for a country that belongs to Great Britain as clearly as does Canada, is gone. They can no longer lead the country into war upon a mistake! and thus the war party at home may be said to be extinct. In Great Britain I see no desire for war, except with those who have no power to make it—namely, the abolition fanatics, and the Hudson Bay traders. The former of these parties, uninstructed by the scenes of the San Domingo insurrection, and its effects upon the blacks as well as the whites of that island, would deem negro emancipation cheaply purchased in the United States by the slaughter of every man, the violation of every woman, the massacre of every child, and the conflagration of every dwelling in the whole slave-holding half of the Union: but, happily, these fanatics have no longer a French National convention to organize their crimes; and speeches and votes must still be their arms, instead of the knife and the torch.

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

The treaty of settlement and limits will probably be concluded before the expiration of the twelve months which the abrogation of the convention requires: if not, the effect will be the same to us, though not to Great Britain. Under the first article of the Ghent treaty we shall receive the possession of the Columbia; and, as an incident of that possession, as well as by the admission of Lord Castlereagh in 1818, we shall have the right to hold and govern it until the question of title is decided. This brings me to the practical question of providing for the establishment of government, and the administration of law, in the country which we claim. The President, in view of this question, and with due consideration of what we can do pending the convention, and what after its abrogation, and confining himself to the first class of these measures, has recommended five, namely, the notice—the extension of law and government to the American settlers to the same extent that the British government has extended law and government to British settlers—the protection of the emigrants by a mounted regiment—block-houses on the way—a monthly mail. These are the measures recommended by the President. Four of them have been granted (for the mounted regiment will furnish the best mail-carriers;) one only remains, that of the temporary provision for the government of the settlers; and this might have been passed in as little time as it would have taken to read the bill three times, if presented in the form recommended by the President. He recommended an extension of our law to our settlers to the same extent that the British had extended it to theirs. This might have been done by the easy process of copying their act, with the modifications which would have adapted its application to our citizens; and by this means an adequate temporary government would have been provided, with the advantage of being free from the possibility of objection, or cavil on the part of the British authorities.

The bill from the House is not a modified copy of the British act, and is therefore objectionable. It also provides for what is already done, and therein is objectionable again. A bill for the mounted regiment, and the chain of block-houses, for the protection of the emigrants, passed the Senate five months ago. Not being presented as a war regiment, for the conquest of the country up to 54 40, it passed with so little notice, that the event seems to have been almost unobserved. It has lately passed the House of Representatives, and is now the law of the land; and if all the other measures recommended by the President had been brought forward in the same way, they would have passed as easily, and the whole five measures, notice and all, finished four or five months ago. But they were brought forward as war measures—war for "all or none"—clear up to 54 40. This was the cause of delay, and the reason why one of the measures—that of the temporary government—remains unacted upon to this day. The provision in the bill from the House for the regiment and the block-houses, is, therefore, not merely unnecessary, but a work of supererogation—a sort of superfetation in legislation. Equally supererogatory and absolutely impracticable, is the provision in the bill for the establishment of a monthly mail between Missouri and Oregon. Mails in an uninhabited country of more than two thousand five hundred miles, traversed by savages, and running over mountains of seven or eight thousand feet, where deep snow lies for more than a thousand miles and more than half the year, could not be carried by the solitary conveyance of a contractor's man or boy. Four or five mounted riflemen, going together, and started from the different posts to relieve each other, alone could do it. In winter, they would have sleighs drawn by dogs, the reliefs always being ready at each post. The mounted regiment, already provided for in the Senate's bill, can render this service, costing nothing, and by the mere order of the President. No law is necessary about it. A non-commissioned officer and four or five men, relieved at each post, are the only practicable mail-carriers over such a line; and while carrying the mail, will also be in the line of their military duty, in looking out for danger, and giving assistance to travellers and emigrants.

In the land grants, the bill from the House is entirely deficient: it proposes three hundred and twenty acres to each settler. Now the bill which passed the Senate heretofore gave double that amount to each father of a family, and half that amount for each child under eighteen years of age, including the children born within five years after he went to the country, and also half that amount to the wife in her own right; and to all single men over eighteen years it also gave six hundred and forty acres. Such beneficial provisions as these, once sanctioned by the Senate, should not be given up without an effort to restore them.

The bill, therefore, now before the Senate, is, in some respects, unnecessary—in some, injurious—in some, deficient in justice to the settlers, and, in defining no boundaries for the territories to be occupied, is dangerous to the peace of the country, and commits the hazards of war to the collisions, accidental or designed, of government agents, four thousand miles from the seat of government. It confounds temporary and permanent measures, which should be kept distinct. A temporary government, to provide for the preservation of order and the administration of justice until the convention expires, is one want—a permanent territorial government is another; and, for the purpose of having these measures appropriately brought forward, and in a way to pass, I shall move to recommit the bill with instructions to bring in the temporary and the permanent measures separately—namely, a temporary extension of law to the extent recommended by the President, and a plan for a permanent territorial government, fully organized, to take effect the instant the present convention expires. These are my views. I would not mix temporary and permanent provisions: I would do nothing half way, or niggardly. At the termination of the present convention, I would take possession of the territory to the same extent that it was held by Mr. Astor—from the sea to the mountains—and take possession as an owner knowing its value, and determined to maintain it. A governor who should be both a statesman and a soldier, with an adequate salary, should be at its head; a distinguished general should be under him as the immediate commander of the military force, regulars and militia. A territorial legislature—superior and inferior courts of law and equity, and of admiralty jurisdiction—and a custom house, should be established. A skilful engineer should be sent out to superintend the planning and construction of fortifications; a regiment of artillery should go to man the works. A navy-yard should be established for the repair of vessels. The militia should be organized, and divided into classes, ready for service when called, to be compensated in land for holding themselves ready, and paid for their services when in the field. Mounted gun-men, cavalry, and horse artillery, so well adapted to a country of plains and grass, should be relied on for field service against Indians, or any invader: artillery and infantry (regulars and militia) for the defence of posts and forts. A chain of posts on the commercial route of the Columbia and Missouri should be established. That route flanks the British establishments, and is open to the depredation of the northern Indians. Posts at the Oka-nag-an, and at the Upper Falls of the Columbia—in the valley of Clark's river—at the great falls of the Missouri, and at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, should be established. The protection of government should be extended to both routes, the land line of travel through the South Pass, and the water line of commerce through the North Pass. This would keep the Indians in order on both routes, north and south, and speedily open direct communications with the Pacific ocean. In a word, I would prepare to take possession of the country (for its exclusive possession comes to us under the Ghent treaty, whether Great Britain treats now or not) on a scale commensurate to its importance, and to our rank and power in the world. For this purpose I would have the bill recommitted, and the committee instructed to report separately the temporary measure for the preservation of order, and the permanent government for the territory, which I have sketched.

Mr. President, I have performed a painful duty—one from which I have long held back, hoping that events would correct the errors of the day, and free the country from danger. There was great danger of war with Great Britain when Congress met last fall, and all upon a mistake and blunder. War speeches and war preparations were immediately commenced on this floor, and the people were inflamed up to the fighting-point. I endeavored gently to quiet these dangerous movements, all to no purpose. At last, I felt it to be my duty to my country to speak out, and to let the people see that they had been led into great errors, and to the brink of war, by editors and orators, assuming to speak with great authority. I know the frailty and vanity of poor human nature, and how hard it is for party leaders to admit a mistake which they have induced myriads of good men to adopt. The leaders are ashamed to retract: not so the mass of their followers. They have no interest in being deceived, and no petty vanity to be mortified at the retraction of error. They only wish for what is right and honorable, and with them truth prevails, and error passes away. For two years the people have been indoctrinated with a Russian line upon fifty-four forty, from the sea to the Rocky mountains, the Russians owning all north, and we all south, and and leaving no room for Great Britain between. Well! the treaties supposed to establish this boundary, and thus to cut out Great Britain, are produced, and they show that there is no such line—that the United States line with Russia is insular, and not continental; and that Russia, by treaty, admits the British title quite out to the Pacific ocean, and covering the exact place where the boundary of fifty-four forty was supposed to be established! The treaties show this; and their production is enough for those who have been deceived into the belief of a fifty-four forty boundary. Again: for two years the people have been deluded into the belief that this 54 40 was their true and rightful northern boundary! The executive documents of 1823-'24 were produced; and they show that the statesmen who made the treaties supposed to give us this northern boundary actually proposed it, at the time, over and over again, to Great Britain, as her northern boundary, coming down to forty-nine for quantity, and that, not upon a principle of compromise, but of right, to cover her settlements in the valley of Frazer's river, settlements well known to the statesmen of that day, however unknown to the brave fifty-four forties of the present day. For two years the people have been told that every acre and every inch—every grain of sand, and blade of grass, and drop of water, from forty-two to fifty-four forty, is ours. Geography, history, and the maps are produced, and show that Frazer's river flows from fifty-five to forty-nine—discovered by the British in 1793—settled by them in 1806—covered from head to mouth with their settlements, and known by the Scotish name of New Caledonia when we negotiated with Spain in 1819; and then the executive documents are produced, which show that this river and its settlements were admitted to be British property by Mr. Monroe's administration, who no more set up a title to it under the Spanish treaty of 1819 than they set up a title to Canada under the same treaty. Yet our warlike fifty-four forties opened the session with demands for ships and troops to fight Great Britain for this very Frazer's river! A demand which put her up to ships and troops on her side, until she saw that these intrepid invaders of New Caledonia would be set right at home. From that moment her war fever abated; the war fever of our valiant invaders abated also: they now cry war no more; and, to do them entire justice, I verily believe they had never heard of Frazer's river at the time they proposed to walk over in their march to fifty-four forty. They are now peaceable enough; and all we have to regret is, the discredit which their want of acquaintance with our own treaties—want of acquaintance with our own documents—and want of acquaintance with our own geography, has brought upon us in the eyes of Europe and America.

The danger is past. The language and conduct of Great Britain is pacific—perfectly so. She was a little ruffled at first; as who would not be at the menaced invasion of a province! But since she has seen that the invaders are brought to a stand at home, she seems to have recovered her good humor, and the Oregon question has nearly died out with her. Now every body is looking for a settlement of it on the basis of the old offers of 1807, 1818, 1823. These offers I digested into the form of two resolutions in 1828, in executive session of the Senate, with a view, by their adoption, to prevent the ratification of the renewed joint occupation convention which we are now all so determined to get rid of. These resolutions have been read once to the Senate, but I will read them again, not to show my consistency, (for my ambition is to be right, and to get right by changing, when standing still becomes error,) but to choke the quibblers and garblers who mutilate and misapply my words, to get me into the same box they are in themselves. Sir, I come into the Senate before the fathers of the church had all left it, and when it was the custom of the young Senators to listen to the old ones, and not to throttle them; and when, I flatter myself, I learnt something; and, among other things, learnt that forty-nine was the proper boundary between our Columbia river and the British Frazer's river. Upon this knowledge I acted in drawing these resolutions eighteen years ago; and I have nothing to add, or to take from them to-day.

"*In Senate: secret session: Feb.* 5, 1828.

"MR. BENTON'S RESOLUTIONS.

"*Resolved*, That it is not expedient for the government of the United States to treat with his Britanic Majesty, in reference to their territorial claims and boundaries west of the Rocky mountains, upon the basis of a joint occupation by the citizens of the United States and subjects of Great Britain, of the country claimed by each power.

"*Resolved*, That it is expedient for the government of the United States to treat with his Britannic Majesty in reference to said claims and boundaries upon the basis of a separation of interests, and the establishment of the 49th degree of north latitude as a permanent boundary between them, in the shortest possible time."

These resolutions were offered in secret session, as it was proper to offer them, but have long since been made public, with other proceedings on the ratification of the renewed joint occupation convention in 1828. They are known to the leaders if not to the followers of the fifty-four forties, and would be appealed to by all who would wish to represent my opinions as they are, and not as they are not!

I have no personal interest in this matter. After long delay I have spoken publicly (for my opinions were never a secret) what my duty to my country required at my hands, and according to the knowledge which thirty years' study of the subject has given to it. I have been fighting the battle of Oregon for thirty years, and when it had but few friends, though now entirely eclipsed by the new converts. I am where I always have been, and rejoice to see the question coming to the conclusion which I have always deemed the right one. For my justification in making head against so much error, I throw myself upon the equity and intelligence of my countrymen; and, never having had any fear for myself, I now have none for my country.

Mr. Benton then moved to recommit the bill to the committee on the Territories, amended on motion of his colleague, (Mr. Atchison,) to recommit to the Judiciary committee, with instructions to report as follows:

That the bill be recommitted to the Committee on the Judiciary, with instructions—

First. To bring in an amendment extending the jurisdiction and laws of the United States civil and criminal, over the citizens of the United States in Oregon, to the same extent that Great Britain extended her jurisdiction and laws over her citizens in the same territory by the act of Parliament of July 2, 1821, and supplemental act.

Secondly. To report a bill for the full and perfect government of the territory, to take effect after the abrogation of the joint-use convention, providing for the appointment of a governor, to be the military and civil chief of the territory, and, *ex officio*, superintendant of Indian affairs; providing also for a territorial legislature, and for the administration of justice; also providing for the defence of the territory by fortifying the mouth of the Columbia river, and other points, and organizing the militia; also for the conducting of commerce by establishing a collection district and custom-house in Oregon; also to provide for the security of navigation, by light-houses, buoys, beacons, &c., at the mouth of the Columbia. The boundaries of said territory to be such on the north as may be established by treaty with Great Britain; and until so established, to be along the parallel of 49 degrees of north latitude.

Tea and Coffee.—The question of subjecting these articles to duty, is to be governed entirely by public convenience. When there is ample revenue from other sources, it is well enough to have these articles free, because they enter into the consumption of almost every family, high and low, rich and poor. They are not used *exclusively*, or almost exclusively by persons in moderate circumstances, as is the case with sundry articles subject to extravagant duties under the existing Tariff,—yet the latter excite no misgivings in the minds of men who are clamorous against duties on tea and coffee, as oppressive to the poor! It is not difficult to comprehend the height, depth, and length of this regard for the poor, so remarkably sensitive in certain circumstances, and so obdurately insensible in others.

While our revenue was equal to our expenditures, we were quite willing that tea and coffee should be imported duty free. But now that the occurrence of war renders additional revenue necessary,—all the revenue, in fact, that can be raised, without resorting to direct taxation,—the case is clear that tea and coffee should pay a duty in common with every thing else. The whole Tariff, as a general rule, should be so graduated as to produce the highest revenue. Articles now free, with the exception of specie and a few other commodities about which there is some peculiarity which marks them as exceptions, should be charged with duty; duties too low to produce the highest aggregate revenue, should be raised; while those so high as to amount to prohibition, or nearly so, should be reduced to the revenue standard. In short, a *Tariff for revenue* is what the circumstances of the country now demand, and for revenue only. There is no need of looking at any other interest. For, in graduating the rates of duties so as to produce the highest revenue, we shall as a matter of course "protect," if that word must be used, those articles of home manufacture which come in competition with imported articles. This is the luck, not the right, of the persons engaged in manufacturing those incidentally protected articles. They have no more *right* to be protected, than any other class of citizens.

When the country requires more revenue than can possibly be raised by the duty on imports, the sales of public lands, and all other sources except direct taxation, then to resist the laying of duties upon tea and coffee, is either to demand direct taxation, or to call for a needlessly large increase of the national debt! There is no escape from this alternative. The patriotism of the people ought to make them willing, if the exigencies of the country require it, to pay direct taxes; much more the small pittance which would result from a duty of 20 per cent. on tea and coffee. The man that opposes this duty on the ground of its being oppressive, reveals the measure of his patriotism too distinctly to require further remark. Our fathers pledged "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor," for their beloved country. This man shrugs his shoulders and looks sour at the payment of 25 cents.—*Journal of Commerce.*

"A Home Currency."—We see by our exchanges that the States of Illinois and Indiana, are being flooded with the notes of Ohio Banks, while a late Dayton paper states that the Bank of Camden, N. J. has a large circulation in that vicinity. Our own state depends for its currency chiefly upon the banks of other states, Indiana and Virginia. In connection with these facts, we trust that the people will bear in mind, the declaration of Alfred Kelly (a bank coon in Ohio) that, "*when banks send abroad their paper, it is because they cannot redeem it, and wish it kept from home.*" We believe that all these banks are rotten, and will go down in time. Let those who are interested *be on the look out.—Chillicothe Adv.*

Lieutenant Porter.—The Picayune says it has learned from one of the officers of the army that the body of Lieut. Porter, of the 4th infantry, has been found about 26 miles from Matamoras, on the other side of the river. It was recognized by a peculiar mark upon one arm.

Correspondence between Gen. Gaines and the War Department.

About a dozen columns in the Government organ are occupied with the correspondence between Gen. Gaines and the War Department. In looking over this voluminous correspondence, says the Louisville Journal, we see abundant reasons for thinking that the General ought to be assigned to some less responsible station than that now occupied by him. General Gaines is an old soldier, and has distinguished himself gallantly on the battle-field, and these facts ought to be always remembered in his favor. His intentions, in assuming responsibilities not delegated to him, were undoubtedly good, but good intentions sometimes lead to unpleasant results, as was the case in his ordering out volunteers without authority to do so.

In his correspondence with Mr. Secretary Marcy he betrays an extraordinary amount of vanity, and exhibits a very fierce malignity against all persons suspected by him of inimical feelings towards himself. In a letter written in September last, he desires authority, in the event of a war with Mexico, to assemble on the banks of the Rio Grande "*fifty battalions of mounted gunmen.*" He thinks that the "moral effect" of such a force, in conjunction with the regulars, and all under the command of an officer of experience, would be to secure a prompt peace, and that if such a force were marched to the city of Mexico, and to other populous cities and settlements of that benighted Republic," it would effect a very speedy cure of the awful maladies of alternate anarchy and despotism" with which Mexico has so long been afflicted. He then speaks of himself and his age, says he is three years younger than Blucher was in his brilliant actions near Waterloo, and adds that his health is excellent and his mental ability to command an expedition to the city of Mexico and thence to California, or Panama, or both, is greater than it was in 1814, when he triumphed over a superior force commanded by a British officer of the Wellington school. He adds:

"I was sixty-eight years of age on the 20th of March last, and am the only United States soldier now living who ever won a battle at the head of a division over a British army. Under these circumstances *I claim as a right* the command of the proposed expedition, consisting, as it must consist, principally of regulars and volunteers belonging to the geographical limits of my division."

He then makes a charge at Gen. Scott:

"Having good reason to believe that my claim will be opposed by Major General Winfield Scott, an officer who has been for many years my junior, who I am sure has labored for more than a quarter of a century past with far more zeal to cover me with calumny and defeat my efforts to be employed in any service likely to redound to the safety and glory of my country than he has ever labored to provide for the national defence and to defeat the invading foe, I have determined to submit my claim to the President of the United States and the Secretary of War, confidently trusting to their known wisdom and justice for a decision which will prove to the army and the nation, that the rights of the *unpretending soldier*, always found upon the frontier when menaced by wars, will be as much respected as those of the *political tactician*, long accustomed to cringe and crouch in and about the political metropolis, sacrificing the interests and honor of the shrine of that morbid thirst for the Presidency, which has unhappily for a long time past turned the heads of many worthy chiefs of cliques from their appropriate pursuits, to the great annoyance of the good people of the Union, and the neglect of their best interests—a thirst for high office which has in some cliques raged even more in favor of the British views of abolitionism than for placing our own seaports in a state of defence against the assaults of British war steamers."

In his various letters, he talks about Jackson, Bonaparte, Wellington, Grouchy, and other distinguished military folks, gives the Hartford Convention advocates a broadside, and pours some red-hot shot into Gen. Cass and "such abandoned writers," whom, he says, he scorns, detests and defies. He adds that such writers have proved that they take more delight in their schemes of intrigue with the chances of a seven years' war with a few Indians, anticipating success in the election of some favorite political chieftain, than in the sure prospect of timely protection to helpless women and children upon a defenceless frontier.

He speaks of the bad treatment he has heretofore received from the War Department, owing to the "lawless conduct" of Gen. Scott, his "vindictive junior." He feels consoled under his grievances with the knowledge that he will soon triumph over all opposition in establishing his system of national defence, to the disgrace of every military man who has covertly and openly opposed him. He adds:

"Gen. Scott has not the power to harm me without being aided, as he was in his intrigues of July, 1841, by the head of the War Department, in a matter and to an extent not sanctioned by law. What were the precise conditions of his promotion over me I have not learned; but this is a fact well known to the army and people of the United States, that he had been but a few months in his new office before his intrigues for the Presidency were disclosed in an address tending to scandalise the army and the office confided to him.

"I had confidently persuaded myself that the army and its senior general officer would have justice done them under the present administration, inasmuch as the election of Col. Polk clearly indicated a determination on the part of a large portion of the good people of the Union to put down all intriguing for the succession. In this hope I will not despair."

We suspect that the veteran soldier does despair of having "justice" done him under the present administration, since it has countermanded his orders and ordered him to repair to the seat of government.

Gen. Scott notices the charges brought against him by Gen. Gaines, denies them, and says: "The remedy for Gen. Gaines's irregularities, arising mainly, as I am in charity bound to suppose, from insanity or dotage, is to place him on an indefinite leave of absence;" and adds that this is the course he has advised should be pursued towards him for the last three years.

It must be confessed that Mr. Secretary Marcy occupies a very pleasant position for a military gentleman, such as he is, at the present time. He has to sustain a belligerent correspondence between two major generals, and is truly a Secretary *at* War as well as *of* War.

The Four Generals.—It is little more than a month since the commencement of the present war, yet in that short space of time, no less than four of our generals have succeeded in distinguishing themselves. One has suddenly emerged from comparative obscurity, to be hailed as the first military leader in America. A second has succeeded in demolishing the fabric of a fame little less glorious; a third has rendered himself liable to blame from the government although not from the people, by the precipitancy of his patriotism, which we are free to say is of the purest character; and the fourth has simply been successful in obtaining for himself an unenviable notoriety.

The first of these is Gen. Taylor—the second, Scott—the third, Gaines—and the fourth, Worth.

We would enquire, then, by what means have these four officers arrived at the respective positions they now occupy in the estimation of their countrymen! How have they accomplished it! Simply thus. The first by doing his duty—the second by refusing to do his—the third by overdoing his—and the fourth by not seeming to know he had any duties to perform.

The English Press on the Value of Republican Institutions.—The London Weekly Despatch of the 31st ult., after comparing our reasons for going to war with Mexico to those assigned by the wolf for going to war with the lamb, goes on to remark as follows:

"We may differ as to the cause of the war; but that 50,000 citizens should be ready at once to advance to the frontier at the peril of life and the abandonment of all other occupations, in a cause which they at all events hold to be just, is a proof of the tremendous strength and value of popular institutions, and obvious example for the right means of preserving a national security. The number of volunteers was expected far to exceed the limit voted. Mexico will ultimately be no match for its foe, either by sea or land, and it is therefore consolatory that President Polk should declare that he will always be ready to offer or accept terms of peace."

Later from Mexico.

The U. S. sloop of war Falmouth arrived at Pensacola the evening of Friday the 19th inst., from off Vera Cruz, whence she sailed on the 4th inst. The officers and crew were all well.

The ship Princeton had arrived off Vera Cruz, and with the frigate Raritan was maintaining the blockade of the port. The health of the crews of both vessels was excellent, although the *vomito* was raging in the city of Vera Cruz.

The Falmouth had left at Vera Cruz the British brig of war Rose, and the French brig Le Mercure and bark La Perouse.

The fate of the bark Eugenia, Captain Biscoe from New York—which vessel it will be recollected, ran the blockade, was uncertain. Instructions for disposing of her had been sought from the capital. Some were disposed to seize and burn her, though subsequently a disposition was manifested to let her off "scott free," in consideration of her saucy defiance of the American squadron.

Gen. Paredes had at last determined to leave the Capital and take the command of the army of the frontier. The result of the actions of the 8th and 9th of May is said to have made upon him a profound impression. We detect in the tone of the papers which comment upon those actions, direct attempts to palliate the extent of the disasters, intended for the Provisional President rather than the public. Paredes was to leave the Capital on the 6th inst., at the head 3,000 troops, but orders had been issued that large bodies should join him at different points on the line of march, so that his entire force, including Arista's command, should not fall short of 16,000 men.

Although we have now received intelligence by way of Havana and Tampico, and by the Falmouth, that Paredes would certainly take the command of the army in person, yet there was an impression prevalent among men of sagacity in Vera Cruz, when the Falmouth left, that he would not and could not venture to leave the city of Mexico during the session of Congress. It is said that nearly one-half of the country is in open revolt. The news received here a fortnight since of the revolt at Mazatlan is confirmed, and as we then anticipated, Sonora is now in a state of rebellion against the Central Government.

So ripe for revolution is the Department of Vera Cruz, that upon the departure of the Falmouth it was said there were 1500 men outside the city of Vera Cruz ready to attack it at any moment, upon the signal being given. Some of the guns had actually been removed from the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa and placed around the city for its defence, and troops had been withdrawn from the castle for the same purpose. The intelligence received from Tampico on Sunday shows how that city was rent by internal dissentions, and considering the deplorable state of the country in every quarter and under every aspect, it would by no means surprise us were Paredes compelled to forego his cherished purpose of placing himself at the head of the Mexican army.

To illustrate the treachery of General Alvarez, towards Paredes, the story is circulated at Vera Cruz that the former, who had the command of the forces at Mazatlan, was supplied with $1,500,000 with which to act against the American squadron in the Pacific. No sooner had Alvarez obtained the funds than he pronounced against Paredes, kept all the money, and even sold the cannon in the forts.

Correspondence of the Newark Daily Adv.

Camp 1st Brigade U. S. Army, *Matamoras, Mexico, June 5th*, 1846.

I feel proud of my country, and of the character of its little army here. Its conduct during the battles of the 8th and 9th ult., and since the taking of Matamoras, is beyond all praise—creditable alike to itself, our country, and the commanding general.

When we recollect the overbearing insolence of Arista, Ampudia and Mejia—the harrassing attacks upon our little detachments, and the savage murders perpetrated by their authority, we are hardly prepared for the sublime spectacle of an aggravated but victorious army, repaying all the unprovoked evils which it had so long and so patiently endured, by voluntary acts of active and benevolent kindness. Yet, after a fatiguing march under a tropical sun, when darkness had suspended a murderous action of four hours; there, upon the blood-drenched plain of Palo Alto, fearfully illuminated by a burning prairie, might be seen American soldiers, supperless and exhausted, busily ranging over the scene of strife, picking up and relieving the wants of wounded enemies, carrying to the hospital stations all the badly mutilated, and freely surrendering to their use, blankets and great coats, their only protection against the drenching dews of the prairie.

And again, after the brief but fierce encounter at Resaca de la Palma, we find our soldiers actively employed after the same manner. The Mexican wounded were sheltered, and their dead buried, while not a corse was profaned by the polluting touch of the vulture Gain! As our enemies fell, so were they buried.

In the city of Matamoras not an outrage has been committed; conquerers and conquered mingle harmoniously together, mutually respecting the rights and feelings of each other. The trade of the place is reviving; the confidence of the people is secured; and now may daily be heard in the streets of this once loyal city, the loud cry—"Que vivan los soldados Americanos"—*Long live the American soldiers.*

India Rubber Bridge for the use of the Army.—An order has been given for the construction of an India Rubber Bridge for the use of the Army in Mexico. A similar bridge was invented some time ago, used during the Creek war in Alabama some ten years ago. The following is a description of it:

"It consists of large bags, or pontons, something like cotton bags in shape, made of India rubber cloth, which being filled with air and attached literally together, formed a bridge of fourteen feet in width, and of any length according to the number of bags used; upon these were laid light timber to support boards placed laterally, which forming a smooth level surface, admitted the passage of wagons, horses, &c. A detachment of six hundred men, with all their arms and accoutrements, including the field officers, mounted upon horses, marched on it at once, and often remained a quarter of an hour in going through the evolutions to test its strength; they counter-marched with as much facility as if on terra firma. Field pieces with their complement of matrosses, and their caissons filled with ammunition, and loaded wagons were also driven over it with the same ease. It was said, that a troop of horse arriving at night at a river where this bridge was, and seeing it stretched across the stream, crossed upon it under the impression that it was a common bridge. The great advantage of this bridge is its portableness, all the pontons and cordage for a bridge of three hundred and fifty feet being capable of transportation in a single wagon; whereas, the former ponton equippages consisted of cumbrous and bulky pontons of wood, sheet-iron and copper."

Mexican Government and Matamoras.—It has been officially announced to the people of Matamoras, by the Mexican government, that all persons who may have communication with the American forces, and all persons who may have communication with those persons communicating with the American forces, will be denounced as *traitors, and treated accordingly.* This last surprising denunciation is so general in its character, and throws open the door of oppression so wide to the different revolutionary leaders constantly springing up in the country, that even the stolid Mexicans of Matamoras are somewhat alarmed at the result. Since Gen. Taylor took possession of this city, private property and all civil rights have been protected—a thing never before known in Matamoras. The consequence has been, that the inhabitants that have remained have gradually gained confidence, and gone about their business, and necessarily had intercourse with the "American forces," and are therefore under the ban of the decree received from the head of the Mexican government.

It is also "decreed" that all foreign merchants trading in Matamoras, should leave the place within a certain time, or have their goods confiscated. This decree is supposed to be sent out as a "preparatory" to confiscation, as the merchants have their depots of goods throughout the whole of Temaulipas. The consequences of such oppressive decrees may well be conceived; they are calculated to drive the people of this department entirely from any connection with the central government.

It is rumored, upon what appears to be good authority, that Gen. Ampudia is pressing into his army all the inhabitants of the country about Monterey, taking old and young indiscriminately, not to come to this place, but to defend the passes of the mountains from the approach of our army.—*N. O. Tropic, June 18.*