

sails filled with favoring gales, the light of heaven shining on her track, and her sparkling course followed by the admiring shout of thousands, and by the loud and fervent prayers of thousands more. Well did I love her, and highly did I honor her then, but tenfold more have I loved her, and a thousandfold more have I honored her, when I have seen her in darkness and in tempest, with shattered masts, and broken cordage and riven sails, yet instinct with God's own strength, battling with the spirit of the storm, hurling back the fierce waves that seemed ready to engulf her, and riding in triumph through the maddening and warring elements. Formerly, I believed her to be of God—now, I know it; and, knowing this, "therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

The whole Church has suffered and borne much, but it has pleased God to visit you, my beloved flock, over whom the Holy Ghost has made me overseer, with trials peculiarly your own. A new trial of our faith awaited us. Our confidence in God, and the conviction that the Church of our fathers is the Church of the Living God, was yet to be more severely tested. We had been tried by divisions in the Church, divisions in the congregation, divisions in our friendships, divisions in our families, and now we are tried by the ruin of our sanctuary! We have lived to see our holy and venerated sanctuary given up a prey to devouring flames. We were calmly looking forward to another quiet and happy Sabbath under its time-honored roof, to another happy and holy meeting with our brethren beneath its massive arches, when we found our house of prayer occupied by a fearful worshipper. Alas! with too much truth may we adopt the affecting lamentation of the prophet and cry, "Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste." Holy and beautiful, in our partial eyes at least, it was, as the place of our solemn convocations; whence many a fervent prayer had found its way to heaven; where we and our children worshipped God; where many generations, in succession, had worshipped ere we were born, and which, with its ancient churchyard, was associated with the memory of the good and great whose ashes repose around its walls, and whose names, though half-obscured by their tombstones, can never be effaced from the history of their country—names of the brave, who fell in the battle field—names of the great whose genius shed a halo of glory around their native land—names of men of God who had there proclaimed to sinners the way of faith and salvation—and names of holy martyrs, who, in defence of that faith, had poured out their blood like water. We have lived to see the roof which has so often echoed the sound of our holy psalms crumbling into dust, and our place of prayer, blackened and consumed, become a desolation. I am not ashamed, my brethren, of my present emotions while I reflect on what is past; neither am I ashamed to confess the bitterness which filled my soul whilst I stood a helpless spectator of the ruin of our sanctuary. But, oh! it was no small consolation to feel that I was not alone in my sorrow. The kind presence of many a friendly hand, and the sympathetic glancing of many a friendly eye, told me, that on that sad Sabbath morning there was but one feeling common to us all. And sure am I, that that Christian sympathy with each other, that deep feeling of unitedness in affliction, far more compensated to us for the cold and heartless sneers of those who hated us without a cause. Alas! that a Christian minister should be capable of a sneer amid the scorched and smoking ruins of a venerable house of prayer! Alas! that Christian lips should breathe a taunt in such an awful hour! Alas!—but no—we will not too readily believe that a Christian pulpit has been desecrated by being made the vehicle of unhallowed exultation over the sore bereavement of a whole Christian congregation. And we have a smile of sorrowful compassion for those who love us not and triumph in our desolation—but not one word of wrath, or bitterness. We have a smile of brotherly regard to those who love us and feel for our affliction, and a word of encouragement and hope. We have a smile of calm resignation and humble submission to heaven, and a word of unshaken confidence in God. Though he lay us, yet will we trust in him. Yes, we will trust in him; for he is a faithful Creator, and his own testimony assures us that he never will forsake his Church, and that he will undoubtedly vindicate the character of those who love him, and rebuke their slanderers. He vindicated Job from the aspersions of his misnamed friends, by bestowing on him tenfold prosperity in the end. He vindicated Paul from the surmises of the ignorant barbarians, by preserving him unharmed from the serpent's sting. He vindicated his Alpine Churches, by maintaining them in spite of all their enemies, and raising them up at this day many defenders. And will he not vindicate us from the calumnies which we have borne? Is he not even now vindicating us? Nay, hath he not already vindicated us? Never did the Church of Scotland occupy a more dignified position than at this very moment! Never did she stand forth before the eyes of the world with so noble an aspect, and, while the unyielding firmness which she has shown in the hour of trial, proved her to be founded on the rock, no less has the noble spirit of forbearance and meekness, which neither insult nor injury could convert into bitterness, proved her to be imbued with the mind that was in Christ Jesus, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

The Politician

The British Press.

From the London Times.
THE OREGON QUESTION.
The question arising out of the conflicting claims of this country and the United States to the Oregon Territory, is, essentially different from all the ordinary topics connected with our foreign political relations, and it involves the most serious consequences to both countries, and to the world. It is, upon the whole, a fortunate circumstance, and in these days, we must add, an honorable distinction of the people of this country, that we are accustomed to watch the vicissitudes of affairs abroad without passion and without prejudice, confiding in the vigilance of our own government for the protection of British interests, but caring very little for the odorous and unprofitable kind of ascendancy which is to be acquired by eager meddling in foreign affairs. The first lesson which the plain common sense of England would read to a minister is to abstain from committing the country by an indiscreet solicitude in managing matters in which success brings with it no reward, and defeat entails humiliation and danger. In all such cases, as we have repeatedly had occasion to remark when such instances have occurred, or when the opposition has laboured to make them occur, the indirect advantage of a diplomatic triumph or a military flourish is far too dearly purchased by the possible and direct danger of war, and the irritated feelings which such manifestation of power and activity leave behind them. Will any one be able to think a few years hence, that for the sake of restoring to the Sultan the province of Syria, and humiliating the Pasha of Egypt, Lord Palmerston wasted the blood and treasure of England, and wantonly kindled a strife between ourselves and the French people, which no subsequent prudence or foresight has been wholly able to quench? The events of 1840 are a memorable example of what is to be gained, and what is to be lost, by a foreign policy of this impetuous and officious kind; and the warning of such success has not been lost on any one but the authors of that notable scheme, who have indeed their reward.

But the more we are disposed to contest the propriety of mixing ourselves up in foreign disputes or revolutions, in which we have no direct interest or concern, except when it can be done under the milder form of mediation and advice, the more we would reserve all the energy and power of this country, for those cases which do directly affect us, and in such cases the more resolutely would we have them displayed. There is no real danger, in spite of the language of a cabinet, like that of the United States, or the unparliamentary vituperation of the opposition papers at home, that the moderation of England should be taken for a want of power, or the tranquil dignity of her language for a sacrifice of her rights. Enough has been done, even in the last few years, by British diplomatists, and soldiers, and sailors, to convince the world that the resources of this country were never so great as at present; and they will not prove the less irresistible for having been used in no petty quarrels, and for no vain glorious exhibitions of national force.

In the employment of such resources, the country expects from the government the greatest forbearance, and the greatest resolution if the case be one in which forbearance is weakness. It needs no argument to prove that a direct aggression on the territorial rights of the British Crown is of such cases the strongest. Yet if the language of the American President is to convey more than an empty threat, such an aggression is contemplated by the cabinet which has just been formed at Washington. Mr. Polk announces his conviction that the American title to the country of the Oregon is clear and unquestionable, and that his fellow citizens are already preparing to protect that title, by occupying it with their wives and children. This patriarchal mode of going up into this new land of Goshen is certainly no violation of the existing treaty; but when the President goes on to speak of the jurisdiction of our laws, the benefits of our republican institutions, and the formation of states in that part of our territory within the sphere of our Federal Union, he misrepresents the true nature of our agreement on the subject.

This case may be stated in a very few words. When the dispute, which arose in 1790, between Great Britain and Spain, with regard to the possession of Nootka Sound, and the right to make settlements on the north west coast of America, was amicably terminated by the treaty of the Escorial, the state of that remote region rendered such an arrangement practicable. The Whigs ridiculed it at the time, and Mr. Gray observed, that "in every place in which we might settle access was left for the Spaniards; where we might form a settlement on one hill, they might erect a fort on another, &c." But, in point of fact, at that time and for half a century afterwards, the recognition of a joint abstract right was sufficient to prevent a collision, since neither state was likely to make an active use of it, and the country was not yet open practically to the operations of commerce or the authority of a Government. It is contended, indeed, on the part of the United States, that the Treaty of the Escorial was abrogated by the declaration of war between Spain and Great Britain in 1796, and that it was never renewed; inasmuch that when Spain ceded to the United States all her titles to land north of the 42nd parallel of latitude by the Treaty of Florida, signed in 1816, she ceded those titles, not as limited and defined by the treaty of 1790, but as they existed before that treaty. The argument is bad, for the Treaty of the Escorial, being in the nature

of a convention declaratory of existing rights, was clearly not liable to be abrogated by a subsequent declaration of war, and was certainly held to be in force by both Spain and Great Britain after the cessation of their hostilities.

But this American argument would rather strengthen than diminish the British claims, for the Treaty of the Escorial was a compromise, and if it be held to have been rescinded, then the British rights become absolute as they were before it existed. The main point, however, on which we would now insist is, that this, and every other arrangement since made with the United States, was essentially temporary in its nature.

Joint occupancy is only possible as long as no real sovereignty is exercised. Indeed, in the course of the negotiations between the two governments in 1827, the British Commissioners proposed that the convention of 1818 should be renewed for a term, with the condition that "neither of the contracting parties should assume or exercise any right of exclusive sovereignty or dominion over any part of the said country." This suggestion was rejected by Mr. Gallatin. Each party, then, retains an unquestionable right of making settlements, and even of exercising what is called sovereignty, in the Oregon Territory; but it is evident that as soon as both parties proceed to exercise right, which exclude each other in practice, a collision must ensue. The time is come when such a temporary arrangement has ceased to be possible or secure; but temporary arrangement can only be terminated in two ways—either by a convention settling the disputed amount of territory and drawing a fixed boundary, or by a recurrence to that state of things in which force alone can decide between two absolute claimants. If the negotiations undertaken between Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Gallatin in 1826 led to no more satisfactory result than a renewal of the temporary convention of 1818, it is most improbable that any negotiation will now terminate more successfully, unless it turn upon the arbitration of a third Power. This expedient is, however, rejected by the Americans; and the tone of Mr. Polk's address does not lead us to suppose that he would even adhere to the ultimatum of 1826, which was the prolongation of the frontier along the 49th parallel of N. latitude from the point at which it now terminates to the Pacific.

Our position in the matter is, a defensive, though not altogether a passive, one. England desires an amicable adjustment; but if that be rendered impossible, that untractable policy of her opponent, the aggressive conduct of the American Government, and the unparalleled language of the President, suffice to prepare us for the other alternative. The rights of British subjects in the country of the Oregon must of course be defended; and, indeed, the British positions there are sufficiently strong to defend themselves from any sudden attack likely to be made upon them; but if any such attack be made the American Government must, of course, be held responsible for it, and the people of the United States must take the consequences.

From the London Times, April 5.

DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE OREGON QUESTION.

In the House of Commons Lord J. Russell, on reading the order of the day for going into committee on supply, called the attention of the house to that part of the message of the President of the United States, which related to the territory of Oregon. It was not his intention, he said, to enter at all into the question of the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government, or even of their policy on this very subject of the Oregon, neither was it his wish by any observations which he might then make to embarrass their proceedings. But the inaugural address of President Polk had taken this question out of the ordinary course of diplomatic arrangement, and required some notice on the part of members of that House. That distinguished functionary had adopted a course entirely new, which, if it were not met with something unusual on their part, would let questions of great national importance be decided hereafter by popular addresses from the head of the Government, and by the popular action resulting therefrom. The President, in his message had alluded to the annexation of Texas to the United States, an allusion which he only noticed for the purpose of showing that the present policy of the executive Government of the United States tended to territorial aggrandizement. In his next sentence the President declared his intention to assert and maintain by all constitutional means the right of the United States to that portion of their territory which was situated beyond the Rocky Mountains. "Our title," said he, "to the country of Oregon is clear and unquestionable, and already are our people preparing to perfect that title by occupying it with their wives and children." In consequence of this declaration, he (Lord J. Russell) felt compelled to call the attention of the house and the country to this question, in order that they might see how far the President was justified in saying that his title to the country of the Oregon was clear and unquestionable, and in declaring his intention to take it into his possession without any regard to those treaties, which were generally the bond of peace between independent nations. There were three modes by which a title might be acquired to a country like the Oregon:—the first was by ancient discovery; the second, by treaty; and the third, by discovery, ancient or modern, followed up by occupation and settlement. He then entered into a statement of considerable length, for the purpose of showing that if the title to the Oregon rested on ancient discovery, England could put in a claim far superior to that of the United States; and if it rested on treaty, we had a claim that was undeniable, whilst that of the United

States had no ground whatever to stand on; and that if it rested on modern discovery, the discovery of the Columbia, made, carried on, and authorized by regular officers of the British Government, and the subsequent settlement of the territory surrounding it by British subjects, gave us a title which the American Government could not displace. Captain Vancouver had discovered the river Columbia; his lieutenant had sailed 90 miles up its stream, and British subjects from Canada had erected 18 forts on its banks, and had long been carrying on a favourable trade there. He then gave a history of the negotiations between Great Britain and the United States respecting this country, and traced them from their commencement to the period when the existing convention was formed in 1827 between Mr. Rush on the one side, and Mr. Huskisson on the other. A new circumstance has now risen up. The President of the United States had made a peremptory claim to all this territory, and had called upon the citizens of the United States to go forth with their wives and children and take possession of it. Now, Columbia was become of more importance each succeeding year. The Government ought, therefore, to insist on a speedy solution of this question; for there was danger lest the citizens of the United States should disturb British subjects in the enjoyment of their property on the Oregon, and should thus produce a collision between the two Governments. He was not prepared to say that Great Britain should abate any of her just pretensions, nor where we should draw the line between the Americans and ourselves. He thought, however, that we could not accede to a proposal less than that made by Mr. Canning in 1827, with any regard to our own interests. He had heard it said that the value of this territory was a matter of indifference to us; but it was not a matter of indifference to us whether we should yield any portion of our territory to what he must be permitted to call a blustering announcement. It was not a matter of indifference to us, that the means of communication between Columbia on the one hand, and our possessions in India and China on the other, should be surrendered to a foreign power. It was not a matter of indifference to us that the tone and character of England should be lowered in any transaction which we carried on with the United States. He should have abstained from entering into this question if it had been left as a diplomatic transaction between the Earl of Aberdeen and Mr. Buchanan, as the agents of the British and American Governments; but as it had been taken out of their hands, he could do what the Minister of the Crown was precluded by his position from doing—he could state to the people of England what were their rights. Having made that statement, he should leave the whole matter in the hands of the Government, and he had no doubt that they would consult the interests of the country and the honour of the Crown.

Sir A. Peel could not be surprised, and could not feel regret, that the noble Lord had taken the course which he had pursued. He was of opinion, that, whilst these matters were pending in negotiations between the two Governments, it was politic to abstain from exercising the right of discussion on subjects calculated to excite popular feeling, unless there were cogent reasons to the contrary. If the noble Lord had thought it right to depart from that course on this occasion, he ought not to be held responsible for the consequences; for it appeared that this question had been withdrawn from the cognizance of those to whom it had been intrusted, and that a popular appeal had been made to the passions of the people in the United States by those who ought to have discountenanced such an appeal. The noble Lord had said, that a Minister of the Crown spoke on such a question as the present under a responsibility to which he (Lord J. Russell) was not liable. That was undoubtedly true, and he should therefore abstain from following the noble Lord through his statement, as he could not do so without implying opinions from the expression of which he ought to abstain. He felt, however, that it was open to him to inform the house of the general state of our negotiations with the United States on this question. In the year 1818 the northern boundary of the possessions of the United States and of Great Britain, westward of the Rocky Mountains, was defined. No agreement was made as to the country beyond the Rocky Mountains; but a convention, signed between the two Governments in 1818, which was to continue for ten years, gave a right of joint occupation to the subjects of each country. In 1824, and again in 1826, Mr. Canning made several attempts to come to an amicable adjustment of our respective claims with the American Government. Those attempts entirely failed. At the end of ten years the convention expired. A new convention was framed in 1827, which continued in force for ten years. In the convention of 1818, with this proviso, that the convention of 1827 should not necessarily determine by the lapse of time, but should extend beyond the term of ten years, and should terminate after a year's notice from either party, when the rights of both should revive. That was the convention which now affected the territory of the Oregon. Mr. Pakenham, our Minister, had been directed in 1842 to form an amicable arrangement of the claims of the two countries on equitable terms. He read a message of President Tyler, dated the 30th December, 1843, for the purpose of showing that he had expressed an equal desire to come to an amicable arrangement. Nay more, on the 19th of February, 1845, about a fortnight before his inaugural address was delivered by President Polk, President Tyler in reply to an address from the Senate of the United States, asking for information relative to the negotiations pending on this question with England, observed,—"I have only to say that, as the