OREGON.

U. S. Senate—Interesting Debate.

Correspondence of the Baltimore Patriot. †

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26, 1846.

This has indeed been a great day in the Senate of the U. States! All early hour, as if in anticipation of something of more than common interest the ladies flocked in great numbers in the circular gallery, presenting a most brilliant galaxy of beauty and fashion. The aisles, while the lobbies and the lobbies were crowded with the other sex.

None know who was to speak, for no one held the floor from yesterday's debate, and there was no method by which conjecture could ascertain in what manner the main question and the amendments were to be considered—whether debated further or laid on the table for a season, or voted on at once! Some anticipated a speech from M'DUFFIE—others from CALHOUN—others from WEBSTER—others from, they didn't care who—while all were anxious for something rich and entertaining.

"They were not kept long in waiting, for WEBSTER and CASS, in all their patriot dignity and immense gravity, measured weapons of wit and repartee and convulsed the sober Senate with laughter! CASS' face looked as smiling as a full moon just peering above the horizon, while the broad smile that played all over WEBSTER'S seemed like the breaking up of a thunder cloud! BREESE too, the ordinarily quiet and sedate BREESE, advanced into the intellectual Melee! The volatile and lively CORCUFF followed, and dealt his blows "up on the subject of mercy" thick and stinging! The graceful and accomplished CRITTENDEN, the "lvanhoe" of the Senate, made a most brilliant charge and gallantly unhorsed the rider of the mock-war horse! The scowling, earnest, impulsive HANNEGAN gallantly entered the list and boldly named the terms upon which he would fight! So also came ALLEN, the full Senator from Ohio with his imperious air, and showed how *young earthquakes* could make the enemy tremble! The staid and drowsy-looking PENNIMAN seemed himself for action and proclaimed to his compeers what *he* would do! And last, though by no means least, the gifted JOHNSON, ever ready to do or not to do in debate, as circumstances may require, took part in the general recounter!

It was a grand intellectual tournament! Mr. WEBSTER could not perceive the *drift* of the Administration, or upon what principle it acted, in regard to this Oregon question. It constantly claimed the whole of Oregon, and yet expressed the hope that the question might be amicably settled! It desired negotiation, and yet refused to yield an inch of the territory! If the administration had actually any line of policy, any fixed principle of action upon this subject, so important to the nation, why was not the fact avowed? Why was it kept back and for what object?

Gen. CASS had perceived two months ago, ever since he read the President's Message, the dangerous nature of this question and now thought it was growing more and more critical every day. We ought to prepare to meet the crisis which seems drawing upon us!

Mr. JOHNSON called upon the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, who was present, to communicate something with the Executive, to inform the Senate whether the President had any distinct line of conduct marked out for his guidance on this question? If he intended to insist on the whole of Oregon, or would yield a portion, should England come back with the offer of the 49th parallel?

Mr. ALLEN replied that he had no authority to state what the President would do, other than the declarations in his message to Congress. He there states that negotiation had terminated, and recommends the notice to be given to England for the termination of the Convention of 1828.

Mr. CORCUFF repeated what he had formerly said, that he could not believe that the President meant to utter the unqualified declaration that our title to Oregon was clear and unquestionable. It would be imagining too much of folly, in a leader and his statesmanship to suppose it.

He took the fact of his subsequent offer of the 49th parallel, as proof that he did not mean to make such a declaration of principle! All that he could have meant was that in his individual opinion our title to the whole was "clear and unquestionable."

From appearances to-day it is quite likely that the Senate will adopt Mr. CORCUFF'S amendment, in lieu of the resolution from the House. His amendment is like that offered by Mr. DAXON in the House, and provides for the giving of the notice, accompanied with the declaration that the notice is a proper one for settlement by negotiation and compromise!

In the course of the debate to-day Gen'l. CASS animadverted upon the very great power assumed by the British Minister in this country, in peremptorily rejecting the offer made by our government of the 49th parallel—upon the difference between the Minister and his Government, which has expressly refused to approve his action and upon the fact that he has not been recalled, and does not seem likely to be!

Mr. PENNIMAN was all this time in the Senate Chamber; and as the color mounted to his face, the General politely took off the wire-edge of his remarks by complimenting the Minister as an honorable man, who should be recalled by his Government with honor, for maintaining what he believed to be its interests and not in disgrace.

MR. WEBSTER'S REMARKS.

☞ Annexed are the remarks of Mr. Webster during the course of the debate sketched by the correspondent of the Patriot:

When speaking on this subject some six weeks ago, I said it was most obvious that the President could not expect war; that the right of war is the Chief Attribute of such a nation must be expected to act, if, charged as he was with the defence of the country, he expected any danger of its being assaulted by the most formidable Power upon earth. I still say there is nothing in the Executive communications to show us that the President does expect a war. He must, then, expect nothing but a continuance of the present dispute, or a settlement of it by negotiation. But how is it to be settled? On what terms? On what basis? All that we hear is, give the whole of Oregon or none." And yet there is to be negotiation. We cannot conceal from ourselves or the world the gross inconsistency of such conduct. It is the sight of the whole population, on our part, that Oregon is ours; there is nothing like admitting even a doubt, on the part of ourselves or others, as to that position; and yet we are to negotiate! What is negotiation? Does any gentleman expect that the Administration are, by negotiation, to persuade Great Britain to surrender the whole of what she holds in Oregon? They say they do this; I cannot say they will not. If that is their expectation, let them try their hand at it; I wish them success. That is I wish that we may get "all Oregon," if we can; but let our argument be fair, and let us settle the question reasonably.

But I do not understand the position we are placed in. The Executive seems to be for negotiation, but against taking anything but the whole of Oregon. What is to be the ground of negotiation? What is the basis on which it is to proceed? If the Executive has made up his mind not to treat for less than the whole, he should say so, and throw himself at once on the two Houses of Congress.

I am entitled to make this remark, because it cannot be disguised that the probable effect of this notice is viewed very differently, by very intelligent gentlemen, friends of the Administration, on this floor. The Senator from Georgia (Mr. COLQUITT) regards it as a measure tending to peace; he expects, he hopes peace follows it; he thinks the expression of such opinions as he avows will enable the Administration to secure the peace of the country.—There are certain other gentlemen, and among them the honorable Senator from Michigan, (Mr. CASS,) who are much less ardent in their hopes of peace. That Senator's impression has been, that, if we pass this notice, there is a possibility and a prospect of war; and so against the gentleman's own declarations and disavowals, his speeches generally terminate in the expression that war is inevitable.

Mr. CASS here rose, and a general smile, and said, No, [much laughter] no; I never used the word; and I beg leave to contradict the statement. I have been afraid of war. This, I allow has been my position; and I hope I shall neither be misunderstood nor misrepresented. I do not mean to say that the Senator from Massachusetts intends to misrepresent me.

Mr. Webster. Certainly not.

Mr. CASS. What I said was, that we were called on by the President to give this notice; that if we gave it, and there was no negotiation, and England did not recede, and we went on to carry out the other measures recommended by the President, that then war would be certain. [A laugh.] I will repeat my position. I say if we give this notice, and there shall be no negotiation; and if England adheres to her present pretensions, and we go on to the session of Oregon while she is there in possession, then there will be gentlemen may use any term they please. [Much merriment.]

Mr. Webster.—The only contingency the Senator fears is that England will continue her claim. Now, I would ask the honorable Senator whether he expects the England will ever surrender all of Oregon to any Power on earth.

Mr. CASS.—I have my doubts that she will. I asked, as long ago as in October last, when she had ever relinquished any claim to territory she ever had set up.

Mr. Webster.—Exactly; and it comes to the same thing. The gentleman thinks we shall not recede and England will not recede; and then what more likely to happen than a war? It was the Senator's argument, and not any particular expression he employed, which gave me the idea that such was his impression. I do not charge the gentleman with saying that "war was inevitable;" but what he did say yet rings in my ears as much as any expression of the language, I am reminded of the sentence with which the Roman Senator ended all his speeches, "*Delenda est Carthago.*"

I am desirous of expressing this sentiment—(without wishing to embarrass the Administration; if negotiations are pending I will hold my tongue: my tongue is to be the ground of negotiation? What is the basis on which it is to proceed? If the Executive has made up his mind not to treat for less than the whole, he should say so, and throw himself at once on the two Houses of Congress.

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