

From the London Times, March 4th.
THE OREGON QUESTION.

In the way of concession and of argument on the Oregon Question little now remains to be said or done by the British Government. The strongest desire has been repeatedly expressed on our side to terminate this controversy. Our case has been stated with such moderation, and the claims confined to such narrow limits, that nothing but extreme presumption, or rather a species of hostile infatuation on the part of the American Democrats, could lead them to suppose we should make any farther abatement of our rights. We are in actual possession of rather more of Oregon territory than we have ever claimed as our own, because as long as the joint occupation lasts the concurrent rights of both parties extend over the whole country. We have at our disposal ample means of defending our rights. We had never, at any period in the history of our country, less reason to recoil from a war, or fear the result of such a contest with any power, but more especially with the United States. Yet we, on our side, have strenuously and sincerely labored to effect a compromise. We have not alluded to the superiority of our maritime strength; from a misplaced respect for the American Government, no use has been made of those blunt arguments to which alone they now appear to be accessible; until at length we learn with more contempt than surprise, that Mr. Polk and his advisers are embarking in a course which can only lead, if they are allowed to persevere in it, to aggressive hostilities.

In our zeal for the maintenance of peace, and our deference for a nation with which we have so much in common, we have gone so far as to admit that their claim to the Oregon territory is equal to our own, and to argue that a partition is the fairest solution of the difficulty. The Americans, however, are not to be satisfied until they convert this concession of a part into a surrender of the whole. Their claim is, to say the most of it, not better than our own, since they themselves do not dare to submit to the arbitration of a third party, knowing that the public opinion of the world has already pronounced against it. Yet from the most imperfect and controvertible claim they seek to extract twice as much as we contend for—nay, they raise their own pretensions to absolute and total sovereignty, while they annihilate the rights we have practically enjoyed for more than half a century. Thus, in fact, the question in dispute has never been brought to a true issue.

The two quantities have not been reduced to common denomination; they differ in their very nature; and whilst our position not only admits of a compromise, but suggests and requires it, theirs is utterly at variance with the first principles of such an arrangement. Mr. Buchanan's last note says too much unless indeed it says inadvertently what is the truth; for the arguments by which he endeavors to show that the United States cannot submit their claim to arbitration, are equally cogent to prove that their claim will not admit even of negotiation. Mr. Buchanan appears to forget that the United States have negotiated; that he himself, by the last proposal, for the fourth or fifth time conceded that point; that the House of Representatives, by their second resolution, have in fact sanctioned the principle of negotiation, which is, in other words, the principle of mutual concession.

When the American Secretary says he cannot do what the manifest interest and dignity of the two countries require, he must either mean that the Government to which he belongs will not do it; or that that Government is acting under the compulsion of the party, excited to madness on this question, which carried Mr. Polk's election. The practical question for us is to ascertain the intentions of the American government. If Mr. Polk and his advisers are sincerely pacific, they cannot but succeed: there is no obstacle, no impediment, no difficulty in the way, except those which they have themselves created. To bring about a war with us under such circumstances, they must be the worst statesmen in the world if they do not seek it, or the most rash and unprincipled if they deliberately intend it. The time is, however, come when we are forced to judge of their real motives by their conduct, and, as they have not encouraged further argument, it may not be premature to inquire into the amount of their forces.

We are informed by the prodigious volume of American statistics recently prepared for both Houses of Parliament by the diligence of Mr. McGregor, that the standing army of the United States consists of one regiment of dragoons, one regiment of riflemen, four companies of artillery, and eight regiments of infantry. The whole number of troops

now in the service is 9,847, exclusive of 781 commissioned officers. An act of Congress of 1842 reduced the rank and file of the army 3,920 men; this reduction is now proceeding, and when it is completed the standing army will consist of 7,590 non-commissioned officers, musicians, artificers, and privates. It is true, that if this corps should appear rather small for the defence of the United States, and invasion of a region situated 2,000 miles off, on the other side of the American continent, the militia force of the United States might, by its numbers at least, have excited the envy of Xerxes or Bonaparte.

The army register for 1843 contains the appalling announcement that this multitudinous host is commanded by 627 generals, 2,670 general staff officers, 13,813 field officers, 44,938 company officers, being in all 62,205 officers; nor are these numbers at all excessive, when we learn that the forces under their command consists of 1,385,615 men! For the purposes of defence against a foreign invasion we have no doubt that these American citizens would exert themselves credibly. A considerable number of the younger men may even volunteer to take part in offensive operations. But we have no hesitation in saying that to bring an efficient army of even 30,000 men into the field, prepared to march beyond their own frontiers, is the most arduous task which has ever devolved upon the Federal Government of the United States, and with its present powers and resources we believe it to be absolutely impracticable.

The Navy of the United States consists of 11 ships of the line, two of which are afloat, three are receiving ships, and six on the stocks or under repairs. The 14 first-class frigates of 44 guns are the best part of the fleet; of these four are on the stocks and three in ordinary. The two 36 gun frigates are old. The smaller vessels are 17 sloops of war, 8 brigs, 9 schooners, and 6 steamers. The navy list contains 67 captains, 94 commanders, 324 lieutenants, and 133 passed midshipmen, 410 midshipmen, and 31 masters. No estimate can be formed of the strength of the crews of the American navy, because it is well known that a considerable proportion of this fleet is manned by British seamen, who are attracted by the high pay of the American navy in time of peace. But that very circumstance shows the extreme difficulty of manning an American fleet in war, and especially in a war with England. Their ships are, in fact, worked to a great extent by the English mercenaries, a large proportion of whom would unquestionably return to their own colors on the outbreak of hostilities.

We content ourselves with this simple enumeration of the forces of the United States by land and by sea, which we hope is correct. We know not what course Mr. Polk may intend to pursue after the notice for the abrogation of the treaty of joint occupation has been duly given; and we shall await with more curiosity than alarm the enterprises which may be projected for the purpose of expelling British subjects from a district where we happened to command the coast and the interior, the Indians and the forts. The world is perfectly aware that England is not the attacking party, and that we are content to leave matters in Oregon as they now are. If the Americans mean any thing, they mean to dispossess us of what we hold. At the same time, if this intention be avowed by the Cabinet of Washington, or if it be disclosed by votes of money and warlike preparations which imply a fixed determination to engage in this absurd and flagitious contest, no State is bound to wait to be attacked.

Mr. Polk has already instructed the American Minister in London to ask for an explanation of the activity in our dock-yards. His own conscience might have given it to him: his own language has put us upon the defensive; and although the termination of the convention of 1827 by notice is no *casus belli*, yet the disposition indicated by that notice, and the means which may be taken to carry that disposition into effect, may hereafter furnish ample ground of suspicion, of remonstrance, and finally of hostilities. A bold and manly course on the part of the British Government will probably not be without a good effect in the United States; and it will undoubtedly command the unanimous support of the people of England.

A lady in France has recently given \$10,000, for the purpose of completing the church on Mount Zion, Jerusalem.

M. Odinx, Roman Catholic Bishop of Texas, has recently sailed from Havre for New Orleans, accompanied by twenty-seven priests.

THE BANNER.

"LIBERTY AND MY NATIVE SOIL."

CHARLES H. ALLEN, Editor.



Abbeville C. H., S. C.:

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 1846.

The Augusta Bridge Case.—We learn from the Savannah papers that the argument of the Demurer filed in the case of SHULTZ, vs. the Bank of the State of Georgia, has been postponed to the 6th of July next.

Acquittal of Thomas Ritchie, Jr.—We understand, says the Petersburg Republican, that the jury in the case of the Commonwealth of Virginia, vs. THOMAS RITCHIE, jr., without leaving the box, rendered a verdict of "not guilty;" whereupon Mr. RITCHIE was discharged, and the prosecution against the other prisoners dismissed.

War Movements in New York.—A message has been received by the Mayor of New York, from the Secretary of War, requesting the Castle Garden may be relinquished to the General Government, with a view to placing in it a suitable armament. It was intimated that it is also the intention of Government to arm the old fort with 26 pieces of ordnance of large calibre, and the fortifications at the Narrows, Throg's Neck, &c., are to be placed in a complete state of defence.

Congressional.—We learn by the latest dates from Washington, that all debate upon the Oregon question was to have been closed on the 16th instant; and the voting upon the different propositions commenced, as to the result of which, we have yet received no tidings. The termination and peaceable disposition of this vexed question will be highly gratifying to the whole country after so much stormy discussion and excitement. Mr. CALHOUN has been the master spirit in the Oregon question, and all his talents and influence have been most beneficially exerted in giving a proper and peaceable direction to it. It is truly an exalted and enviable position for any man to occupy, upon whom in the dark hour of danger all eyes are turned for protection and deliverance; and such has been the position of this great man throughout this question. It should ever be regarded an auspicious day to our government when he was induced to forsake the quiet and repose of home to embark once more upon the stormy sea of politics. Without his councils and admonitions the rashness of imprudent members might have involved us in a sanguinary and protracted war, peopled the land with widows and orphans, and plunged the nation in debt to the amount of millions of dollars.

The Sub-Treasury Bill has not yet been taken up in the Senate, and it is thought that it will be materially modified before passing that body. The New York Courier and Enquirer says, "That advices from Washington leave no room for doubt that very material alterations will be made in the bill. In the first place, it will not go into operation until autumn; and accordingly, only one-third specie will be required in payment of duties, &c., during the first year.

The new Tariff Bill has at last made its appearance in the House, from the Committee of Ways and Means and was laid upon the table of the Chairman, on the 14th inst. It is to go into operation on the 9th of December next. All custom House officers to be sworn officers if not so already. Goods in public store on the 22d December, pay duties under the new tariff. Articles not specially provided for, pay a duty of 20 per cent. The fishing bounties are also repealed

by the bill, and a drawback is allowed on foreign salt in lieu of the fishing bounties now paid. Among the 30 per cent articles are woollens, coarse and fine, iron and sugar. Cotton goods pay a duty of 25 per cent, and tea and coffee, in case revenue is not received upon other articles, are made to pay a duty of 10 per cent.

Foreign News.—We have given upon the fourth page of this week's paper, the news from England to the 10th of March. The markets remained pretty much as they were at the sailing of the last steamer, bottom being firmer. The tone of the English press is still a little unfavorable.

The English are beginning to think the conquest of the Sikhs no trifling affair, and much treasure and blood will be expended before it is effected.

The most interesting feature in the foreign news, is the insurrection in Poland. These oppressed and down-trodden people have resolved to throw off their chains, which have so long bound them to the guildd care of the haughty autocrat. We regret to learn that there is but little chance for them to regain their freedom. Would to God they could come out unscathed from the fiery ordeal through which they must pass. At the name of Poland, what associations start up in the mind! The land of heroes, of SOBIESKI, KOSCIUSKO and PULASKI. Poland, who, once steel-clad, performed prodigies in the battle field, and stood proudly "alone in her glory," whilst others did homage for their crowns and kissed the toe of his holiness, who graciously trampled their diadems in the dust. Although she has long since been shorn of her glory, her kingdom dismembered and blotted from the map of nations—her sons driven into exile and chains, and trodden to the earth by the heel of the oppressor, in the language of her battle song, she is "not yet wholly dead." Behold her shaking off those chains, and daring once more to

"Strike her altars and her fires,
For the green graves of her sires,
God! and her native land!"

And who can withhold his sympathy and prayers for the Poles, that success may crown their efforts? It will ever be a lasting stain upon the escutcheons of France and England, that they tamely stood by and allowed this gallant people to fall unaided, before the myriads of despotism. God grant that Poland may once more establish her nationality. The sympathies of the friends of liberty, wherever they may be found, will be with her, and the God of battles will surely fight for her.

Mexico.—Affairs are fast coming to a crisis in Mexico. The army of occupation, at latest dates, had reached the Rio Bravo, opposite Matamoros, without fighting; but there is every probability that the next news we receive from this quarter, will be the commencement of hostilities. Mr. SLIDELL has been rejected, and is now at New Orleans, waiting the orders of Government. The cause of his return, was the refusal upon the part of Mexico to receive him as Minister Plenipotentiary, consequently our relations with her now are at an end, so far as diplomacy is concerned. Had England, instead of the United States, been dealing with the Mexicans, they would have been chastised for their insolence long since. And why should we then tamely submit to her insults? We have borne them until forbearance has ceased to be a virtue, and our government should hesitate no longer to inflict upon her the punishment she richly deserves. As to the result of a war with imbecile Mexico, who for a moment would fear it? Distracted and torn to pieces by intestine feuds, incapable of self-government, a mere shadow of a nation, the very boys of our country could almost effect her conquest, and yet we learn that a war with the United States is a popular measure with Mexico. "Whom the gods wish to destroy they first demet," is an adage applicable to the Mexicans, and one which we may yet see verified.

A country possessing the advantages of climate and soil that Mexico does, under the influence of civilization, might be made a happy and prosperous land, the home of genius, and nursery of the arts and science; but under her present lords, how abject and low her condition! It is the destiny of America to dispel the moral darkness which has sit down upon her, and to restore this land which, once under the Aztec dynasty, flourished as a garden to its former beauty.

MEXICAN AFFAIRS.

IMPORTANT IF TRUE.—Some details, both curious and important, if authentic, are given by the New York Courier des Etats Unis of Saturday morning. According to this journal, which professes to have its information from reliable sources, the various factions of the republican party, which, with divers objects in view, yet are of one accord in their opposition to Paredes, have agreed to act together, taking Santa Ana as their chief, provided he will give the guarantees they require for his sincere and faithful return to liberal opinions.

Negotiations have been opened to this end, Santa Ana has given the stipulated guarantees, and we have seen, says the Courier, a confidential letter from his companion in exile, Manuel Crencio, Rejon, which gives probable explanations of Santa Ana's past conduct, and vouches for his present good faith.

Senor Rejon has also published a pamphlet explaining the reasons which induced Santa Ana to make, and himself as Minister to approve, the decrees of November 29 and December 2, 1844, by which Santa Ana established a species of dictatorship by dissolving the Congress and restraining the liberty of the press.

Don Manuel Rejon justifies these extreme measures, by showing that Santa Ana and himself sincerely intended to invade Texas, persuaded as they were that if Texas should be annexed to the United States, it would be forever lost to Mexico.

Confiding in the explanations and pledges thus given, the republican coalition is preparing to recall Santa Ana and place him at the head of the projected revolution. But with the success of that revolution his task will end. Once restored to Mexico, passing over the ruins of the monarchical party, Santa Ana will convoke the whole people in primary assembly, and consign to them the election of a Congress and a President, himself renouncing the latter office.

An absolute retirement to private life will be one of the conditions annexed by him to his co-operation in the plan of Republican restoration.

Thus speaks the Courier. Its revelations are of sufficient importance, if they are true.

THE TEXAS DEBT.—A resolution was introduced on the 18th ult., into the House of Representatives of Texas, "that a committee of five be appointed to inquire into the expediency of ceding to the Government of the United States the public lands of Texas for the just equivalent, for the purpose of providing means to liquidate the public debt; and that they be also instructed to take into consideration the propriety of classifying and defining the public debt; and of appointing a board to ascertain and allot the same, and that said committee report to this House by bill or otherwise." The House appointed on said committee Messrs. Howard, Mabry, Sadler, Cazeau and Noble.

From the following article in the Austin Era, of the 21st ult., it appears that a bill to this effect has likewise been reported to the Senate:—

"It is with pleasure that we perceive there has been introduced into the Senate, by Col. H. L. Kinney, from Corpus Christi, a bill for the liquidation and adjustment of the public debt. The State of Texas has abundant resources, if well managed, to discharge all her liabilities, and we trust that the stain of repudiation, or even carelessness about her obligations, will not be suffered to rest upon her escutcheon any longer. The creditors of Texas who have so long hoped and "endured all things," cannot help feeling grateful to that Senator, for the prompt and sensible plan recommended to ascertain and secure their rights. The bill proposes the appointment, by the Governor and Senate, of three commissioners to set upon the claims, at Austin, commencing on the 1st June next, and thereafter on the first of every alternate month, with the powers of a Court of Law and Equity; and whose decision is to have the effect of a judgment. The right of appeal is also to be allowed from their decision. We will in our next publish the entire bill, for the satisfaction of all interested."