

vate individual, representing, in an unofficial manner, the governor and many of the prominent citizens of Oregon. In fact, the legislature, deeming its functions infringed by this action of the governor, passed resolutions embodying their idea of the harm done the colony by the officiousness of "secret factions."

There was not ready money in the treasury to have paid the passage of Mr. Thornton, even had it been at his disposal. A collection was taken up, contributions being made partly in coin, but chiefly in flour, clothing, and anything that could be of service or was convertible into money. A contract was made

with Captain Roland Gelston, of the bark *Whitton*, to convey Mr. Thornton to Panama, and the vessel sailed at once for San Francisco, and thence to San Juan, on the coast of Lower California. Here the captain informed his passenger that he must decline to fulfill his contract, as he desired to engage in the coasting trade. From the perplexing dilemma he was extricated by Captain Montgomery, commanding the United States sloop of war,

*Portsmouth*, then lying at anchor in the harbor. This gentleman deemed the mission of Mr. Thornton of enough importance to the government to justify him in leaving his station and returning with his vessel to the Atlantic coast. He accordingly tendered the delegate the hospitalities of his cabin, and set sail as soon as preparations could be made for the voyage. The *Portsmouth* arrived in Boston harbor on the second of May, 1848, and Mr. Thornton at once hastened to Washington to consult with President Polk and senators Benton and Douglas, those warm champions of Oregon, as to the proper course to pursue. By them he was advised to prepare a memorial, to be presented to congress, setting forth the condition and needs of the people whom he represented. This he did, and the document was presented to the senate by Mr. Benton, and was printed for the use of both branches of congress. Mr. Thornton also drafted a bill for organizing a territorial government, which

was introduced and placed upon its passage. This bill contained a clause prohibiting human slavery, and for this reason was as objectionable to the slaveholding force in congress as had been the previous one. Under the lead of senators Jefferson Davis and John C. Calhoun, this wing of the national legislature made a vigorous onslaught upon the bill, and fought its progress, step by step, with unabated determination, resorting to all the legislative tactics known to so delay its consideration that it could not be finally passed by the hour of noon on the fourteenth of August, the time fixed by joint resolution for the close of that session of congress.

The contest during the last two days of the session was exciting in the extreme, and the feeling intense

throughout the Union. The friends of the bill had decided upon a policy of "masterly inactivity," refraining entirely from debate, and yielding the floor absolutely to the "filibusters," who were, therefore, much distressed for means to consume the slowly passing hours. Though silent in speech, they were constantly present in person to prevent the opposition from gaining time by an adjournment. The bill was then on its second passage in the senate for the purpose of concurrence with amendments, which had been added to it by the house. On Saturday morning, August 12, the managers of the bill decided to prevent an adjournment until it had been disposed of, having a sufficient majority to pass it. The story of that memorable contest is thus told by Mr. Thornton, who sat throughout the scene, a deeply interested spectator:

"I re-entered the senate chamber with the deepest feelings of solicitude, and yet hopeful because of the assurances which had been given to me by the gentlemen I have named [Douglas, Benton and Hale]. I soon saw, however, that Calhoun and Butler, of South Carolina; Davis and Foote, of Mississippi; and Hunter and Mason, of Virginia, as leaders of the opposition, had girded up their loins and had buckled on their armor for the battle. The friends of the bill, led by Mr. Benton, having taken their position, waited calmly for the onset of their adversaries, who spent

