

interval east of the Allegheny mountains. As has been shown, the great emigration of 1843 was the result of causes that had been at work for several years, and not the hasty and illy-considered act of people suddenly aroused by the voice of one man. It was at Fort Hall, where, as formerly, it was proposed to abandon the wagons, that Whitman impressed himself the most strongly upon the immigrants. He begged and pleaded with them not to leave their wagons behind, and guaranteed to pilot them safely through to his mission. His persuasions prevailed, and he fulfilled his promise, thus demonstrating that the settlement of Oregon by means of emigrant trains from the Mississippi valley was practicable; and that this had a great effect upon the final settlement of the disputed title between Great Britain and the United States is undeniable.

As the presidential campaign of 1844 drew near, the question of the annexation of Texas was the leading one. This was championed by the democrats and opposed by the whigs, as it involved a war with Mexico. It was deemed necessary to acquire new territory in the north at the same time, to preserve the balance between slave and free states and territories, and with a reckless disregard of consequences, the democratic party platform also declared that our title to the whole of Oregon, up to fifty-four degrees and forty minutes north latitude, was "clear and indisputable." Upon this platform of Texas and Oregon, one involving war with Mexico and the other inviting hostilities with Great Britain, Mr. Polk made his campaign, the air being filled with the belligerent cry of "Fifty-four-forty, or fight." Mr. Polk was successful. Texas was annexed and a war with Mexico followed. That equally serious consequences did not ensue in the other case was largely due to the fact that Great Britain considered "Fifty-four-forty, or fight" very much as it did the retaliation message of President Cleveland in the last campaign, simply so much froth and campaign buncomb. And so it proved, for when the question of giving Great Britain the required year's notice of the termination of the treaty of joint occupation came up in congress, the very ones who had started the war cry opposed it on the ground that it would bring on a war with England, which, in view of the threatened hostilities with Mexico, must be avoided at all hazards. The most belligerent action they could be induced to take was the passage of a joint resolution, in the spring of 1846, authorizing the president, "in his discretion," to give the required notice, and the president had entirely too much discretion to do it. Two years before, just prior to the opening of the campaign, the democratic secretary of state, John C. Calhoun, had negotiated with the British minister for the forty-ninth parallel,

but the agreement was not completed, because it would have deprived his party of the advantage of yelling "Fifty-four-forty, or fight" during the campaign. Negotiations were now promptly resumed on this basis, and the government elected by the "fifty-four-forties" ignobly abandoned its position and made the offer of a line on parallel forty-nine, which Great Britain at once accepted, with the modification that all of Vancouver island should be left in British territory, and a treaty on this basis was concluded and ratified. That England accepted this line was not due to any threats of war made during an election campaign, which were looked upon by her as mere political fireworks, but because the hardy pioneers of the west had toiled and fought their way out to Oregon, had formed a government, and were in actual possession of the country. Things wore a different aspect from that presented in 1827, and England recognized the change of conditions those brave and liberty-loving men and women had wrought. The immigration of 1844 and 1845 had added fully three thousand to the American population of Oregon, and all hope of counterbalancing this on the part of England was gone. Whitman settled this question when he found a route for wagons in 1843. This much the logic of circumstances compelled Great Britain to concede, but she would undoubtedly have gone to war before conceding more. In his "Twenty Years of Congress," Mr. Blaine says: "But a striking and useful lesson would be lost if it should be forgotten that the country was brought to the verge of war by the proclamation of a policy which could not be enforced. It was originated as a cry to catch votes; and except with the ignorant, and the few whose judgment was carried away by enthusiasm, it was from the first thoroughly insincere."

Four hundred and seventy wagons, over one thousand cattle and fully two thousand people constituted the immigration of 1846, nearly one-half of whom turned off at Fort Hall and went to California, where they aided those who had preceded them in the work of wresting that fair province from Mexico. With them came news of the settlement of the Oregon boundary on the forty-ninth parallel, carrying joy and gladness to the hearts of those who had been so long beyond the protecting arm of the government they loved. In 1847 fully three thousand were added to the population, about as many more coming out the following year. But the trials of the founders of Oregon were not ended. Congress was too busy settling the Texas matter to pay any more attention to Oregon, now that the question had been taken out of politics. The most strenuous efforts of Senator Benton, almost the sole champion of Oregon now that his illustrious colleague was dead, were unavailing to se-