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SELECTED SPEECHES ON BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

1738-1914

SELECTED SPEECHES ON BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

1738–1914

EDITED BY

EDGAR R. JONES, M.P.



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PREFACE

A SELECTION of speeches made for the purpose of illustrating the best rhetorical form of British Oratory has already been published in 'The World's Classics'. The governing principle of this volume is not rhetorical quality, but historical interest. Speeches have been selected from the earliest days of reporting downwards, dealing with such phases of foreign policy as are of exceptional interest at present. They have been chosen so as to cover a variety of international crises affecting various states.

In such a selection some very interesting speeches have had to be set aside, because they represented temporary or individual and sectional views rather than permanent national and official views, and in order to avoid disproportionate reference to the same situation or country.

It is to be hoped that the selection, such as it is, may, through the words of the statesmen of the past, help to prepare our minds for the sound and worthy consideration of the problems of European re-settlement which will arise at the termination of the War.

EDGAR R. JONES.

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WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM

March 8, 1738

THE CONVENTION WITH SPAIN

You have been moved to vote an humble address of thanks to His Majesty, for a measure which (I will appeal to gentlemen's conversation in the world) is odious throughout the kingdom. Such thanks are only due to the fatal influence that framed it, as are due for that low, unallied condition abroad, which is now made a plea for this convention. To what are gentlemen reduced in support of it? First, try a little to defend it upon its own merits; if that is not tenable, throw out general terrors—the House of Bourbon is united—who knows the consequence of a war? Sir, Spain knows the consequence of a war in America; whoever gains, it must prove fatal to her; she knows it, and must therefore avoid it; but she knows England does not dare to make it; and what is a delay, which is all this magnified convention is sometimes called, to produce? Can it produce such conjunctures as those you lost, while you were giving kingdoms to Spain, and all to bring her back again to that great branch of the House of Bourbon which is now thrown out to you with so much terror? If this union be formidable, are we to delay only till it becomes more formidable, by being carried farther

into execution, and more strongly cemented? But be it what it will, is this any longer a nation, or what is an English Parliament, if, with more ships in your harbours than in all the navies of Europe, with above two millions of people in your American colonies, you will bear to hear of the expediency of receiving from Spain an insecure, unsatisfactory, dishonourable convention? Sir, I call it no more than it has been proved in this debate; it carries fallacy, or downright subjection, in almost every line. It has been laid open and exposed in so many strong and glaring lights, that I can pretend to add nothing to the conviction and indignation it has raised.

Sir, as to the great national objection—the searching your ships—that favourite word, as it was called, is not omitted, indeed, in the preamble to the convention, but it stands there as the reproach of the whole—as the strongest evidence of the fatal submission that follows. On the part of Spain, an usurpation, an inhuman tyranny, claimed and exercised over the American seas; on the part of England, an undoubted right, by treaties, and from God and nature, declared and asserted in the resolutions of Parliament, are referred to the discussion of plenipotentiaries, upon one and the same equal foot. Sir, I say this undoubted right is to be discussed and to be regulated. And if to regulate be to prescribe rules (as in all construction it is), this right is, by the express words of this convention, to be given up and sacrificed; for it must cease to be anything from the moment it is submitted to limits.

The Court of Spain has plainly told you (as appears by papers upon the table) you shall steer

a due course; you shall navigate by a line to and from your plantations in America; if you draw near to her coasts (though from the circumstances of that navigation you are under an unavoidable necessity of doing it) you shall be seized and confiscated. If, then, upon these terms only she has consented to refer, what becomes at once of all the security we are flattered with in consequence of this reference? Plenipotentiaries are to regulate finally the respective pretensions of the two crowns with regard to trade and navigation in America; but does a man in Spain reason that these pretensions must be regulated to the satisfaction and honour of England? No, Sir, they conclude, and with reason, from the high spirit of their administration, from the superiority with which they have so long treated you, that this reference must end, as it has begun, to their honour and advantage.

But gentlemen say, the treaties subsisting are to be the measure of this regulation. Sir, as to treaties, I will take part of the words of Sir William Temple, quoted by the honourable gentleman near me; 'It is vain to negotiate and make treaties, if there is not dignity and vigour to enforce the observance of them'; for under the misconstruction and misrepresentation of these very treaties subsisting, this intolerable grievance has arisen; it has been growing upon you, treaty after treaty, through twenty years of negotiation, and even under the discussion of commissaries, to whom it was referred. You have heard from Captain Vaughan, at your bar,[1] at what time these injuries

[1] The House of Commons, in a grand committee, in 1737, had heard counsel for the merchants, and received evidence at the bar, on the subject of the Spanish de-

and indignities were continued. As a kind of explanatory comment upon the convention Spain has thought fit to grant you, as another insolent protest, under the validity and force of which she has suffered this convention to be proceeded upon, 'We'll treat with you, but we'll search and take your ships; we'll sign a convention, but we'll keep your subjects prisoners, prisoners in Old Spain; the West Indies are remote; Europe shall be witness how we use you.'

Sir, as to the inference of an admission of our right not to be searched, drawn from a reparation made for ships unduly seized and confiscated, I think that argument is very inconclusive. The right claimed by Spain to search our ships is one thing, and the excesses admitted to have been committed in consequence of this pretended right, is another; but surely, Sir, reasoning from inferences and implication only, is below the dignity of your proceedings, upon a right of this vast importance. What this reparation is, what sort of composition for your losses, forced upon you by Spain, in an instance that has come to light, where your own commissaries could not in conscience decide against your claim, has fully appeared upon examination; and, as for the payment of the sum stipulated (all but seven and twenty thousand pounds, and that, too, subject to a drawback), it is evidently a fallacious nominal payment only. I will not attempt to enter into the detail of a dark, confused, and scarcely intelligible account; I will only beg leave to conclude with one word upon it, in the light of a submission, as well as of an adequate reparation. Spain stipulates to pay to the Crown of England ninety-five thousand pounds; by a preliminary pro-

test of the King of Spain, the South Sea Company is at once to pay sixty-eight thousand of it: if they refuse, Spain, I admit, is still to pay the ninety-five thousand pounds—but how does it stand then? The Assiento contract is to be suspended; you are to purchase this sum at the price of an exclusive trade, pursuant to a national treaty, and of an immense debt of God knows how many hundred thousand pounds due from Spain to the South Sea Company. Here, Sir, is the submission of Spain, by the payment of a stipulated sum; a tax laid upon subjects of England, under the severest penalties, with the reciprocal accord of an English minister, as a preliminary that the convention may be signed; a condition imposed by Spain in the most absolute, imperious manner, and received by the Ministers of England in the most tame and abject. Can any verbal distinctions, any evasions whatever, possibly explain away this public infamy? To whom would we disguise it? To ourselves and to the nation. I wish we could hide it from the eyes of every court in Europe. They see Spain has talked to you like your master; they see this arbitrary fundamental condition, and it must stand with distinction, with a pre-eminence of shame, as a part even of this convention.

This convention, Sir, I think from my soul, is nothing but a stipulation for national ignominy; an illusory expedient, to baffle the resentment of the nation; a truce without the suspension of hostilities on the part of Spain; on the part of England a suspension, as to Georgia, of the first law of nature, self-preservation and self-defence—a surrender of the rights and trade of England to the mercy of plenipotentiaries, and in this

infinitely highest and sacred point, future security, not only inadequate, but directly repugnant to the resolutions of Parliament, and the gracious promise from the Throne. The complaints of your despairing merchants, the voice of England, has condemned it. Be the guilt of it upon the head of the adviser. God forbid that this committee should share the guilt by approving it!

at least while I had the honour of administering the war against her. The word may, perhaps, be thought singular: I mean only while I was the minister chiefly entrusted with the conduct of the war. I remember, my Lords, the time when Lorraine was united to the Crown of France;[1] that too was, in some measure, a pacific conquest; and there were people who talked of it as the noble duke[2] now speaks of Corsica. France was permitted to take and keep possession of a noble province; and, according to his Grace's ideas, we did right in not opposing it. The effect of these acquisitions is, I confess, not immediate; but they unite with the main body by degrees, and, in time, make a part of the national strength. I fear, my Lords, it is too much the temper of this country to be insensible of the approach of danger, until it comes with accumulated terror upon us.

My Lords, the condition of His Majesty's affairs in Ireland, and the state of that kingdom within itself, will undoubtedly make a very material part of your Lordships' inquiry. I am not sufficiently informed to enter into the subject so fully as I could wish; but by what appears to the public, and from my own observation, I confess I cannot give the Ministry much credit for the spirit or prudence of their conduct. I see that, even where their measures are well chosen, they are incapable of carrying them through without some unhappy mixture of weakness or imprudence. They are incapable of doing entirely right. My Lords, I do, from my conscience, and from the best weighed

[1] In the year 1735, by an arrangement between the Emperor of Austria and the French.

[2] The Duke of Grafton.

principles of my understanding, applaud the augmentation of the army. As a military plan, I believe it has been judiciously arranged. In a political view, I am convinced it was for the welfare, for the safety, of the whole empire. But, my Lords, with all these advantages, with all these recommendations, if I had the honour of advising His Majesty, I would never have consented to his accepting the augmentation with that absurd, dishonourable condition which the Ministry have submitted to annex to it.[1] My Lords, I revere the just prerogative of the Crown, and would contend for it as warmly as for the rights of the people. They are linked together, and naturally support each other. I would not touch a feather of the prerogative. The expression, perhaps, is too light; but, since I have made use of it, let me add, that the entire command and power of directing the local disposition of the army is the royal prerogative, as the master-feather in the eagle's wing; and if I were permitted to carry the allusion a little farther, I would say, they have disarmed the imperial bird, the '*Ministrum fulminis alitem*'. The army is the thunder of the Crown. The Ministry have tied up the hand which should direct the bolt.

My Lords, I remember that Minorca was lost for want of four battalions. They could not be spared from hence; and there was a delicacy about taking them from Ireland. I was one of those

[1] King George III had, by a message through the Lord-Lieutenant, recommended the Irish House of Commons to augment the Irish army, and assured them expressly that on the augmentation being made, not less than 12,000 men should at all times, 'except in cases of invasion or rebellion in Great Britain,' be stationed in Ireland.

who promoted an inquiry into that matter in the other House; and I was convinced that we had not regular troops sufficient for the necessary service of the nation. Since the moment the plan of augmentation was first talked of, I have constantly and warmly supported it among my friends: I have recommended it to several members of the Irish House of Commons, and exhorted them to support it with their utmost interest in Parliament. I did not foresee, nor could I conceive it possible, the Ministry would accept of it, with a condition that makes the plan itself ineffectual, and, as far as it operates, defeats every useful purpose of maintaining a standing military force. His Majesty is now so confined, by his promise, that he must leave twelve thousand men locked up in Ireland, let the situation of his affairs abroad, or the approach of danger to this country, be ever so alarming, unless there be an actual rebellion, or invasion, in Great Britain. Even in the two cases excepted by the King's promise, the mischief must have already begun to operate, must have already taken effect, before His Majesty can be authorized to send for the assistance of his Irish army. He has not left himself the power of taking any preventive measures, let his intelligence be ever so certain, let his apprehensions of invasion or rebellion be ever so well founded; unless the traitor be actually in arms—unless the enemy be in the heart of your country, he cannot move a single man from Ireland.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

April 25, 1793

THE PARTITION OF POLAND

The people of England ought to know what were the views of the Minister upon this war, and to what extent it was to be carried, that they might not be proceeding under a delusion. Supposing we had gained our original purpose, he wanted to know how peace was to be obtained, without negotiation with those who have the exercise of government. If we countenanced the memorial of Lord Auckland, we should say, that the whole National Convention—all the members of the districts—in short, about eight or nine millions of people, must be put to death, before we can negotiate for peace. Supposing that we were to join the conspiracy to dictate a form of government to France, he then should wish to know what sort of government it was that we were to insist on. Were we to take the form of it from that exercised by the Emperor, or that of the King of Prussia ? or was it to be formed by the lady who so mildly conducted the affairs of Russia ? or were they all to lay their heads together, and by the assistance of the Pope, dictate a form of government to France ? Were the French to have a constitution, such as the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke) was likely to applaud ? Indeed, he feared that this was not yet settled ; and there were various specimens

of what had been already thought of by different Powers. There were two manifestoes of the Prince of Coburg; the one promised the form of government chosen by themselves, in which they agreed to have a monarchy, and afterwards, in the course of four days, this promise was retracted in consequence of the accession of Dumourier to the confederacy. What would the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke) say if they should not give the French the form of the constitution of Poland, or would he content himself with saying, they ought not to have such a constitution? He believed that neither the Chancellor of the Exchequer, nor any of his supporters, would say anything at present upon that subject. It appeared, however, somewhat mysterious, perhaps, that after the Congress at Antwerp, in which Great Britain was not unrepresented, that the intention of the combined Powers had altered, and that a much more sanguinary mode was to be pursued against France than had been before intended; and perhaps the time might come when the parties might follow the example set by the manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, and affirm that these were threats which were not intended to be carried into execution. But this was not the way to amuse us. The people of England would not long be content to remain in the dark as to the object of the war. Again he must ask, what was the object of the war? Again he must ask, what was the object of our pursuit in conjunction with the other Powers against France? Was it to restore the ancient tyranny and despotism of that nation? This would please some people, he knew, particularly emigrants; but nothing would be so hateful to the

people of this country, or any other where there existed the least love of freedom, nor could anything be more destructive to the tranquillity and happiness of Europe. Were we to join Dumourier in a declaration not to rest until we had put to death those detestable regicides, calling themselves philosophers, and all the miscreants who had destroyed all lawful authority in France? If we were, he would venture to say, this would be a war for a purpose entirely new in the history of mankind; and as it was called a war of vengeance, he must say, that we arrogated to ourselves a right which belonged to the Divinity, to whom alone vengeance ought to be left. If the Minister said that on our part there was no intention to interfere in the internal government of France, he must then ask what were the views of the other Powers, with whom we now acted in concert against France. Was it to make a partition of France, as they did of Poland? Or should he be told, that as far as regarded the affairs of France under the present Power, he was talking of none who ought to be mentioned as a people; that the *sans culottes* were too contemptible a race to be mentioned; he would say, he meant to ask what was to become of the whole nation of France? If he was told that it was impossible for the crowned heads, acting in concert upon this great occasion, to have any but just and honourable views, he would answer that the subject was of too much magnitude to be allowed to pass in such a manner; and in his suspicions he was justified by the example, and fortified by the observation of an honourable gentleman (Mr. Jenkinson) with respect to the father of the present Emperor, that no man ought to take his

word for one hour. No material alteration, he believed, had taken place in the views of that Court since the death of that prince, nor of others in the present confederacy. Were we to forget that the King of Prussia encouraged the Brabanters to revolt, and then left them to their fate? Were we to forget the recent conduct with respect to Poland? Were we to forget the taking of Dantzic and Thorn? Indeed he thought that those who every day told us, in pompous language, of the necessity there was for kings, and of the service they did to the cause of humanity, they should at least have spared the public the pain of thinking of these subjects, by not entering into the views of that unnatural confederacy. Indeed it was impossible for him to dismiss the consideration of Poland, without adverting to an eloquent passage in the work of a right honourable gentleman, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the late revolution there. Here Mr. Sheridan quoted the following passage of Mr. Burke's Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs:

The state of Poland was such, that there could scarcely exist two opinions, but that a reformation of its constitution, even at some expense of blood, might be seen without much disapprobation. No confusion could be feared in such an enterprise; because the establishment to be reformed was itself a state of confusion. A King without authority, nobles without union or subordination, a people without arts, industry, commerce, or liberty; no order within, no defence without; no effective public force, but a foreign force, which entered a naked country at will, and disposed of everything at pleasure. Here was a state of things which seemed to invite, and might, perhaps, justify bold enterprise and desperate experiment. But in what manner was this chaos brought into order? The means were as striking to the imagination, as satisfactory to the reason, and soothing to the moral sentiments. In contemplating that change, humanity has everything to rejoice and to

glory in, nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to suffer. So far as it has gone, it probably is the most pure and defecated public good which ever has been conferred on mankind. We have seen anarchy and servitude at once removed, a throne strengthened for the protection of the people, without trenching on their liberties, all foreign cabal banished, by changing the crown from elective to hereditary; and what was a matter of pleasing wonder, we have seen a reigning King, from an heroic love to his country, exerting himself with all the toil, the dexterity, the management, the intrigue, in favour of a family of strangers, with which ambitious men labour for the aggrandizement of their own. Ten millions of men in a way of being freed gradually, and therefore safely to themselves and the State, not from civil or political chains, which, bad as they are, only fetter the mind, but from substantial personal bondage. Inhabitants of cities, before without privileges, placed in the consideration which belongs to that improved and connecting situation of social life. One of the most proud, numerous, and fierce bodies of nobility and gentry ever known in the world, arranged only in the foremost rank of free and generous citizens. Not one man incurred loss, or suffered degradation. All, from the King to the day-labourer, were improved in their condition. Everything was kept in its place and order, but in that place and order everything was bettered. To add to this happy wonder (this unheard-of conjunction of wisdom and fortune) not one drop of blood was spilled; no treachery; no outrage; no system of slander more cruel than the sword; no studied insults on religion, morals, or manners; no spoil; no confiscation; no citizen beggared; none imprisoned; none exiled: the whole was effected with a policy, a discretion, an unanimity and secrecy, such as have never been before known on any occasion; but such wonderful conduct was reserved for this glorious conspiracy in favour of the true and genuine rights and interests of men. Happy people, if they know how to proceed as they have begun! Happy prince, worthy to begin with splendour, or to close with glory, a race of patriots and of kings: and to leave

A name, which ev'ry wind to heav'n would bear,
Which men to speak, and angels joy to hear.

To finish all. This great good, as in the instant it is,

contains in it the seeds of all further improvement, and may be considered as in a regular progress, because founded on similar principles, towards the stable excellence of a British constitution.

Here was a matter for congratulation and for festive remembrance through ages. Here moralists and divines might indeed relax in their temperance, to exhilarate their humanity.

Such, Mr. Sheridan said, was the description which the right honourable gentleman gave to that revolution. Was it to be supposed that he would afterwards say, that this ought to have been trampled upon and destroyed, or should suffer such an event to happen, and never utter a word upon the subject? He did not think that monarchs of the present day had fulfilled the promises that some persons had made, and which had been expected from them, so that their names might be handed down to posterity as a glorious example of integrity and justice. With respect to the future views of the different Powers, they might best be conjectured by what had already happened. The Empress of Russia, upon the sincerity of whose motives, and integrity of whose actions, there could be no doubt, previous to the attack on Poland, among other things in her manifesto, said by her Minister:

From these considerations, Her Imperial Majesty, my most gracious mistress, as well to indemnify herself for her many losses, as for the future safety of her Empire and the Polish dominions, and for the cutting off at once, for ever, all future disturbances and frequent changes of government, has been pleased now to take under her sway, and to unite for ever to her Empire, the following tracts of land, with all their inhabitants.

This was the language for which the confederates were to justify perhaps the future taking under

their sway, and uniting for ever to their Empire, part of the dominions of France. We had heard much of the abominable system of affiliation adopted by the French; but this was a Russian impartial affiliation, and no doubt the confederate Powers approved of it. In like manner will they affiliate all France, if they can. So will they England, when they have it in their power; and he was sorry to say, that if we joined in that infamous confederacy, and the people agreed to it, England would deserve to be so treated. The Empress then proceeded to state what she expected for the favour she had conferred:

Her Imperial Majesty expects from the gratitude of her new subjects, that they, being placed by her bounty on an equality with Russians, shall, in return, transfer their love of their former country to the new one, and live in future attached to so great and generous an Empress.

On an equality with Russians! This was a glorious equality,—liable to be sent to Siberia with other Russian slaves. For this mighty favour they were to transfer, as naturally might be expected, the whole love they had for their native country, to Russia, their new and happy land; for the same Minister of this equitable and generous Empress proceeded to say:

I, therefore, inform every person, from the highest to the lowest, that within one month, they must take the oath of allegiance before the witnesses whom I shall appoint; and if any gentlemen, or other ranks possessing real or immovable property, regardless of their own interest, should refuse to take the oath prescribed, three months are allowed for the sale of their immovables, and their free departure over the borders, after the expiration of which term, all their remaining property shall be confiscated to the Crown.

Really after such specimens, one would have supposed, but for the well-known character of the council of these confederate Powers, they were actuated under the influence of madness, or they would not thus think of insulting the feelings of human nature. But this was not enough: an oath, it seemed, must be taken, for:

The clergy, both high and low, as pastors of their flocks, are expected to set the example in taking the oath; and in the daily service in their churches, they must pray for Her Imperial Majesty, for her successor, Great Duke Paul Petrovitz, and for all the Imperial Family, according to the formula which shall be given them.

Here again there was evidence of a great and good mind, for this pious Empress was determined that perjury should be very general in her dominions, and that the example should be set by the clergy! Mr. Sheridan then proceeded to take notice of the great and good King of Prussia with respect to Dantzic, as specified in what he called his reason for taking possession of part of Poland with his military forces.

It would certainly militate against the first rules of a sound policy, as well as the duties incumbent on us for the preservation of tranquillity in our State, if in such a state of things in a neighbouring great kingdom, we remained inactive spectators, and should wait for the period when the faction feel themselves strong enough to appear in public; by which our own neighbouring provinces would be exposed to several dangers, by the consequences of the anarchy on our frontiers.

We have, therefore, in conjunction with Her Majesty the Empress of Russia, and with the assent of His Majesty the Roman Emperor, acknowledged that the safety of our States did require, to set to the Republic of Poland such boundaries which are more compatible with her interior

strength and situation; and to facilitate her the means of procuring without prejudice of her liberty, a well-ordained and active form of government, of maintaining herself in the undisturbed enjoyment of the same, and preventing, by these means, the disturbances which have so often shaken her own tranquillity, and endangered the safety of her neighbours.

In order to attain this end, and to preserve the Republic of Poland from the dreadful consequences which must be the result of her internal division, and to rescue her from her utter ruin, but chiefly to withdraw her inhabitants from the horrors of the destructive doctrine which they are but too prone to follow, there is, according to our thorough persuasion, to which also Her Majesty the Empress of all the Russias accedes in the most perfect congruity with our intentions and principles, no other means, except to incorporate her frontier provinces into our States, and for this purpose immediately to take possession of the same, and to prevent, in time, all misfortunes which might arise from the continuance of the reciprocal disturbances.

Wherefore, we have resolved, with the assent of Her Russian Majesty, to take possession of the above-mentioned districts of Poland, and also of the cities of Dantzic and Thorn, to the end of incorporating them to our State.

We herewith publicly announce our firm and unshaken resolution, and expect that the Polish nation will very soon assemble in the Diet, and adopt the necessary measures, to the end of settling things in an amicable manner, and of obtaining the salutary result of securing to the republic of Poland an undisturbed peace, and preserving her inhabitants from the terrible consequences of anarchy. At the time we exhort the states and inhabitants of the districts and towns which we have taken possession of, as already mentioned, both in a gracious and serious manner, not to oppose our commanders and troops, ordered for that purpose, but rather tractably to submit to our government, and acknowledge us from this day forward, as their lawful King and Sovereign, to behave like loyal and obedient subjects, and to renounce all connexion with the Crown of Poland.

Now, after this, Mr. Sheridan said, he wished to know whether any robbery that had been

committed by the most desperate of the French, or whether any of their acts, were more infamous than this? Of what consequence was it to any man, whether he was plundered by a man with a white feather in his hat, or by one with a nightcap on his head? If there could be any difference, the solemnity with which the thing was done was an aggravation of the insult. The poorer sort of the French could plead distress, and could also say that they had endured the hardships, the toils, and the perils of a winter campaign. But here was nothing but a naked robbery, without any part taken in the calamity which gave birth to it. He had alluded to these things merely for the purpose of giving the Minister an opportunity of disapproving of them: he hoped he should not hear the principle avowed. Crowned heads, he thought, were at present led by some fatal infatuation to degrade themselves and injure mankind. But some, it seems, regard any atrocity in monarchs as if it had lost its nature by not being committed by low and vulgar agents. A head with a crown, and a head with a nightcap, totally altered the moral quality of actions—robbery was no longer robbery—and death, inflicted by a hand wielding a pike, or swaying a sceptre, was branded as murder, or regarded as innocent. This was a fatal principle to mankind, and monstrous in the extreme. He had lamented early the change of political sentiments in this country which indisposed Englishmen to the cause of liberty. The worst part of the revolution in France is, that they have disgraced the cause they pretended to support. However, none, he was persuaded, would deny that it was highly expedient to know the extent

of our alliance with Powers who had acted so recently in the manner he had represented, and to have the object of our pursuit in this war distinctly known. The Minister may perhaps in future come down to the House, and say he is sorry, but it has become highly necessary to interfere with the power of Britain farther, as the crowned ladies and gentlemen of Europe cannot agree about the partition of France, or that such a disposition is about to take place, that we shall be worse off than if we had let France remain as it was. These who feared the attachment of men to French principles, argued wrong. From the effect of the experiment they would never be popular: nothing but crimes and misery swelled all the accounts from that country. If the peasant had been represented happy and contented, dancing in his vineyard, surrounded with a prosperous and innocent family, if such accounts had come, the tidings would have been gladly received. At present we hear of nothing but want and carnage—very unattracting indeed. More danger, he thought, arose from a blind attachment to power, which gains security from the many evils abounding in France. On the same principle that Prussia divided Poland, he contended, they might act here. They declared a prevalence of French principles existed in Poland : His Majesty's proclamation asserts the same here, and is therefore, in this sense, an invitation to come and take care of us. Could such despots love the free constitution of this country ? On the contrary, he was persuaded that, upon the very same principle that Poland was divided, and Dantzic and Thorn subjugated, England itself might be made an object for the same fate as soon as it became

convenient to the confederates to make the experiment. He would defy any man to show the principle upon which a difference could exist with regard to us and the other sacrificed countries, in the wishes and the desires of the combined Powers. But supposing this to be out of all question, and that this country had nothing to dread in that respect, and that all Europe had nothing to look to but the extermination of French principles, how would the present prospect of our success then appear ? Could we entertain so vain a hope (indeed he was astonished to hear it even hinted) that the French, who had all the winter been lying in the snow at some periods, and wading up to their necks in water at others, in an enemy's country, fighting for their rights, will, in their own, submit to give them up in a mild season ? The thought was too absurd, and the expectation too extravagant, to be harboured by a man possessed of a spark of rationality.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

February 5, 1795

THE PRUSSIAN SUBSIDY

Mr. Sheridan said, that upon a former occasion he and another honourable gentleman had endeavoured to get some information of the services performed by the King of Prussia during the last campaign, in consequence of his engagements with this country. Some returns had lately been laid on the table on that subject, but these contained no information. It appeared that the King of Prussia had received from this country the enormous sum of twelve hundred thousand pounds, without having rendered it even the smallest service. He thought it therefore necessary, previous to the discussion of the imperial loan, to come to some resolution with respect to this conduct on the part of His Prussian Majesty. It was certainly no argument against granting a loan to the Emperor, that the King of Prussia had violated his faith. But this circumstance ought certainly to enforce on the House the necessity of caution, and induce them to take some step in the present instance that might operate as a warning, with respect to future transactions of the same sort. His Majesty had stated in his message that he had received from the Emperor the strongest assurances of a disposition to make the greatest exertions, provided he should

be assisted by a loan of four millions from this country. He understood, if he could rely upon the credit of public statements, that in another country the Parliament had been told of the absolute determination of His Majesty to guarantee this loan. This was a language which he considered as very unbecoming, when addressed to the representatives of the nation, and as highly improper in Ministers, who were of course responsible for whatever proceeded from the Throne. Before such a determination had been expressed, he should have wished to have had something also like a positive determination from His Imperial Majesty to make the exertions which were to be the conditions of the loan. He should more particularly have wished for such a declaration from the Imperial Court, which had, at all times, been proverbially distinguished by ill-faith. He recollected on this subject a strong expression of a right honourable gentleman (we suppose Mr. Windham), who said, that since the capture of Richard I, the conduct of the Court of Vienna had been marked by an uniform series of treachery towards this country. To guard against this treachery, he thought that nothing would be better than for the House of Commons to show themselves alive to their duty on the present occasion. There were some men who, though insensible to the calls of honour, were yet not callous to the sense of shame. Some men of that description might be found among the ministers of Austria. It might, therefore, be of importance, by way of warning to them, to come to some resolution, expressive of indignation and contempt, with respect to the violation of faith on the part of His Prussian Majesty. Mr.

Sheridan here referred to that article of the treaty in which it was stipulated that sixty thousand Prussians should co-operate with the British troops, and that a commissioner should be appointed for the purpose of watching over the observance of this article. From the scraps of letters laid upon the table, it appeared that no commissioner had been appointed for this purpose. This, he contended, would not have been the case, except Ministers had been aware that the King of Prussia, from the very first, was indisposed to perform his duty. He referred also to the memorial of the Emperor, which stated that the effective co-operation of the Prussians might have been the means of saving Brabant, and, in consequence, of preserving Holland. Such were the effects stated by His Imperial Majesty to have resulted from the breach of faith in His Prussian Majesty. In his answer to this memorial, addressed to the circles of the Empire, that monarch shows a degree of apprehension, that he should have even been supposed to have had the smallest disposition to keep faith towards this country after he had once received its money. He should therefore conclude with moving this resolution—'That it appears to this House, that the King of Prussia received from the treasury of Great Britain the sum of £1,200,000 in consequence of the stipulations of the treaty concluded at the Hague, on the 10th of April, 1794; and that it does not appear to this House, that the King of Prussia performed the stipulation of that treaty.'

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

February 17, 1800

GRANT TO THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY[1]

The honourable gentleman [Mr. Wilberforce] who has just sat down, and said he rose only to save himself from misinterpretation, has declared that he has no objection to peace. Now I should expect a warmer declaration from that honourable gentleman, when I recollect his conduct on a former occasion. I recollect a time when he came to rebuke the violence of the Minister. [Mr. Sheridan read a motion, made by Mr. Wilberforce, for an address to His Majesty, praying that the Government of France might not be made an obstacle to peace, when an opportunity should arrive.] Now, as the honourable gentleman is anxious to escape from the charge of inconsistency, I should expect he would state the reason for this difference in his conduct now. Then the Government was a provisional government; a government from its nature not intended to stand; a government of furious Jacobins; and yet the honourable gentleman implored to supplicate His Majesty that it might not be suffered to stand in the way of peace; but now, when it is of a less objectionable description, he justifies his friend from an arrogant, vio-

[1] Not the King of Prussia; but Francis II of Austria. —*Ed.*

lent, inconsiderate, and I hope he will not find an unfortunate note, refusing to accept peace from such a government. An honourable gentleman who has spoken in the debate put a very just question, whether the country will endure to be governed by words, and not by facts? I admit it right that it should not be so governed, but I unfortunately have the authority of the present Government that it is. The honourable gentleman spoke with great eloquence, I may say irritation; but never did I see eloquence so misapplied. He has shown his dexterity in driving the subject from its proper basis; he guides, urges, and inflames the passions of his hearers on Jacobinical principles, but he does not show how they bear on the present question. He has not dared to say, that so far as respects the restoration of the House of Bourbon, we have suffered by the defection of Russia. What that Power may still do with regard to La Vendée, or reconciling the people of Ireland to the Union, I do not inquire; but with regard to the great object, the restoration of monarchy in France, we are *minus* the Emperor of Russia: that Power may be considered as extinct. Is it, then, to be endured, that the Minister shall come down and ask for a subsidy under such circumstances? Is it to be endured, that we shall be told we are at war for the restoration of monarchy in France, that Russia is pledged to the accomplishment of that purpose, that Russia is the rock on which we stand, that the magnanimous Emperor of Russia, the gallantry of whose troops, and the skill of whose great generals, place them above all the troops and generals in Europe, is all we have to rest on? Is it to be endured, I say, that this rock should prove

as brittle as sand, and that those who held this language should come down in a week after, and say, give us two millions and a half to subsidize Germany, and then we shall have a better army than we had with Russia? After such unqualified praise upon Russia, and after her defection, is not such language, I ask, inconsistent, absurd, and preposterous? If Germany possessed these wonderful forces before, why were they not called into action; and if not, why are we to subsidize the *posse comitatus*, the rabble of Germany? But who is the person that applies for this subsidy? As to the Elector of Bavaria, I leave him out of the question. It is the Emperor of Germany. Is there anything in his conduct and character to incline us to listen to him? I think not, and for these two reasons. First, he applied once on a false pretence, and secondly, he failed in performing his stipulated engagement. What was his false pretence? He said he could not open the campaign without the pecuniary assistance of this country; and yet he did do so, and displayed more vigour, energy, and resources than ever. Now, if to this we add experience, and the evidence of facts, when he dared, though bound to this country, to break faith with her, and make a separate peace, does it not furnish a reasonable cause for declining to grant a subsidy to such a Power? The honourable gentleman is offended at our connecting the situation of the country, and the present scarcity, with the question of war. I do not know to what extent this principle is to be carried. I see no more objection to state the pressure in this particular from the continuance of the war, than there would be to advance the increase of the public debt,

the situation of the finances, or any other of those reasons so often repeated without its having been ever objected that they were of an improper kind. Sir, I say, there is no more impropriety in urging this argument, than in urging Ministers not to press the people too far, but to apportion the burden to their strength to bear it. What has my honourable friend said? We see an opulent commercial prosperity; but look over the country, and we behold barracks and broth-houses, the cause and the effect, the poverty and distress of the country; for surely it will not be contended, but that among the calamities of war are to be reckoned families left without support, and thrown upon charity for subsistence. That the war is unnecessary, as being useless, is self-evident, and nobody can deny it. But, say they, Buonaparte has taken us at an unguarded moment: we do not object to peace, but we have a fear and jealousy of concluding one, except with the House of Bourbon: in a peace concluded with it we should have confidence, but we can have none in the present Government of France. I say, were that event arrived, and the House of Bourbon seated on the throne, the Minister should be impeached who would disband a single soldier; and that it would be equally criminal to make peace under a new King as under a republican government, unless her heart and mind were friendly to it. France, as a republic, may be a bad neighbour; but than monarchical France a more foul and treacherous neighbour never was. Is it, then, sufficient to say, let monarchy be restored, and let peace be given to all Europe? I come now, Sir, to the object of the war as expressed in the note. It is there stated,

that the restoration of monarchy is the *sine qua non* of present negotiation; and then it proceeds to say, that it is possible we may hereafter treat with some other form of government, after it shall be tried by experience and the evidence of facts. What length of time this trial may require is impossible to ascertain; yet we have, I acknowledge, some thing of experience here by which we may form a kind of conjecture.

At the time of the negotiation at Lisle, the then republican Government had stood two years and a half. Previous to that time, it had been declared improper to enter into negotiation with it; but, from experience and the evidence of facts, Ministers discovered that it was then become good and proper to treat with; and yet so it happened that, immediately after this judgement in its favour, it crumbled to pieces. Here, then, we have a tolerable rule to judge by, and may presume, on the authority of this case, that something more than two years and a half must expire before any new government will be pronounced stable. The note, Sir, then proceeds to pay an handsome compliment to the line of princes who maintained peace at home, and to round the period handsomely, it should have added, tranquillity abroad; but instead of this are substituted respect and consideration, by which we are to understand exactly what is meant by the consideration with which the note is subscribed, being equivalent to 'I am, Sir, with the highest respect and sincerest enmity, yours', for, Sir, this consideration which the line of princes maintained, consisted in involving all the Powers within their reach and influence in war and contentions. The note then proceeds to state, that

this restoration of monarchy would secure to France the uninterrupted possession of her ancient territory, by which we are to understand, I suppose, we would renounce our Quiberon expeditions. In this note, Sir, the gentlemen seem to have clubbed their talents, one found grammar, another logic, and a third some other ingredient; but is it not strange that they should all forget that the House of Bourbon, instead of maintaining peace and tranquillity in Europe, was always the disturber of both? In the very last transaction of monarchical France, I mean her conduct in the American war, His Majesty's speech begins thus: 'France, the disturber of the tranquillity of Europe.' But were a person to judge hereafter, from the history of the present time, of the war we carried on, and the millions we expended for the monarchy of France, he would be led to conclude that it was our nearest and dearest friend. Is there anything, then, in the knowledge of human nature, from which we can infer, that with the restoration of monarchy in France, a total change in the principles of the people would take place? or that Ministers of the new King would renounce them? What security have we, that a change of principles will take place in the restored monarch, and that he will not act upon the principles cherished by his ancestors? But if this security is effected by maiming France, does the right honourable gentleman think that the people of France would submit to it? Does he not know that even the emigrants have that partiality for the grandeur of their country, that even they cannot restrain their joy at republican victories? But with regard to the practicability of the course to be pursued, the

right honourable gentleman says, he is looking forward to a time when there shall be no dread of Jacobin principles. I ask whether he does not think, from the fraud, oppression, tyranny, and cruelty with which the conduct of France has marked them, that they are not now nearly dead, extinct, and detested? But who are the Jacobins? Is there a man in this country who has at any time opposed Ministers, who has resisted the waste of public money and the prostitution of honours, that has not been branded with the name? The Whig Club are Jacobins. Of this there can be no doubt, for a right honourable gentleman [Mr. Windham] on that account struck his name off the list. The Friends of the People are Jacobins. I am one of the Friends of the People, and consequently am a Jacobin. The honourable gentleman pledged himself never to treat with Jacobin France until we had

Toto certatum est corpore regni.

Now he did treat with France at Lisle and Paris, but perhaps there were not Jacobins in France at either of these times. You, then, the Friends of the People, are the Jacobins. I do think, Sir, Jacobin principles never existed much in this country; and even admitting they had, I say they have been found so hostile to true liberty, that in proportion as we love it, and whatever may be said, I must still consider liberty an inestimable blessing, we must hate and detest these principles. But more, I do not think they even exist in France; they have there died the best of deaths, a death I am more pleased to see than if it had been effected by a foreign force; they have stung themselves to

death, and died by their own poison. But the honourable gentleman, arguing from experience of human nature, tells us that Jacobin principles are such, that the mind that is once infected with them, no quarantine, no cure can cleanse. Now if this be the case, and that there are, according to Mr. Burke's statement, eighty thousand incorrigible Jacobins in England, we are in a melancholy situation. The right honourable gentleman must continue the war while one of the present generation remains, and consequently we cannot for that period expect those rights to be restored to us, to the suspension and restrictions of which the honourable gentleman attributes the suppression of these principles. A pretty consolation this, truly! Now I contend that they do not exist in France to the same extent as before, or nearly. If this, then, be the case, what danger can be apprehended? But if this, then, be true, and that Buonaparte, the child and champion of Jacobin principles, as he is called, be resolved to uphold them, upon what ground does the honourable gentleman presume to hope for the restoration of the House of Bourbon? So far I have argued on the probability of the object, but the honourable gentleman goes on, and says, there is no wish to restore the monarchy without the consent of the people. Now if this be the case, is it not better to leave the people to themselves, for if armies are to interfere, how can we ascertain that it is a legitimate government established with the pure consent of the people? As to Buonaparte, whose character has been represented as marked with fraud and insincerity, has he not made treaties with the Emperor and observed them? Is it not his interest

to make peace with us? Do you not think he feels it? And can you suppose, that if peace were made, he has not power to make it be observed by the people of France? And do not you think that the people of France are aware that an infraction of that peace would bring with it a new order of things, and a renewal of those calamities from which they are now desirous to escape? But, Sir, on the character of Buonaparte I have better evidence than the intercepted letters. I appeal to Carnot, whether the instructions given with respect to the conduct to be observed to the Emperor, were not moderate, open, and magnanimous? [Here Mr. Sheridan read an extract from Carnot's pamphlet, in support of his assertion.] With regard to the late note, in answer to his proposal to negotiate, it is foolish, insulting, and undignified. It is evidence to me, that the honourable gentlemen themselves do not believe his character to be such as they describe it; for, if they did, they must know their language would irritate such a mind; the passions will mix themselves with reason in the conduct of men, and they cannot say that they will not yet be obliged to treat with Buonaparte. I am warranted in saying this, for I do not believe in my heart, that since the defection of Russia, Ministers have been repenting of their answer. I say so because I do not consider them so obstinate and headstrong as to persevere with as much ardour for the restoration of monarchy as when they were pledged with Russia. There was not a nation in Europe which Ministers did not endeavour to draw into the war. On what was such conduct founded, but on Jacobinical principles? Indeed Ministers, by negotiating at one time with a Jacobinical government

in France, plainly proved they were not so hostile to its principles as they would now wish to appear. Prussia and Austria, as well as this country, have acted also on Jacobinical principles. The conduct of this country towards Ireland has been perfectly Jacobinical. How, then, can we define these principles, when persons who would now disavow them fall by some fatality into an unavoidable acknowledgement of them? The objections that have been raised to peace have been entirely Jacobinical. If we seek for peace, it must be done in the spirit of peace. We are not to make it a question who was the first aggressor, or endeavour to throw the blame that may attach to us on our enemy. Such circumstances should be consigned to oblivion, as tending to no one useful purpose. France, in the beginning of the Revolution, had conceived many romantic notions. She was to put an end to war, and produce, by a pure form of government, a perfectibility of mind which before had never been realized. The monarchs of Europe, seeing the prevalence of these new principles, trembled for their thrones. France, also, perceiving the hostility of kings to her projects, supposed she could not be a republic without the overthrow of thrones. Such has been the regular progress of cause and effect; but who was the first aggressor, with whom the jealousy first arose, need not now be a matter of discussion. Both the republic, and the monarchs who opposed her, acted on the same principles: the latter said they must exterminate Jacobins, and the former that they must destroy monarchs. From this source have all the calamities of Europe flowed; and it is now a waste of time and argument to inquire

farther into the subject. Now, Sir, let us come to matter of fact. Has not France renounced and reprobated those Jacobin principles, which created her so many enemies ? Are not all her violent invectives against regular governments come into disesteem ? Has not the Abbé Sièyes, who wrote in favour of monarchy—has not Buonaparte—condemned the Jacobinical excesses of the Revolution in the most pointed manner, the very men who have had so large a share in the formation of the present Government ? But I maintain that Buonaparte himself is also a friend to peace. There is in his correspondence with the Ministers of this country a total renunciation of Jacobinical principles. In the dread, therefore, of these, I can see no argument for the continuance of war. A man who is surprised at the revolution of sentiment in individuals or nations shows but little experience. Such instances occur every day. Neither would a wise man always attach to principles the most serious consequences. Left to themselves, the absurd and dangerous would soon disappear, and wisdom establish herself only the more secure on their ruins. I am a friend to peace at this time, because I think Buonaparte would be as good a friend and neighbour to this country as ever were any of the Bourbons. I think also that there can be no time when we can hope to have better terms. If the King of Prussia should join France, such an alliance would greatly change the state of things; and from her long and honourable neutrality, in spite of the remonstrance and entreaties of this country, an event of that kind is by no means unlikely to happen. It must be considered also that the First Consul of France must feel no little

portion of resentment towards this country, arising from the indignity with which his overtures of negotiation have been treated. It is not improbable that, to satisfy his revenge, he would make large sacrifices to the House of Austria, that he might contend more successfully against this country. Such are my fears and opinions; but I am unhappily in the habit of being numbered with the minority, and therefore their consequences are considerably diminished. But there have been occasions when the sentiments of the minority of this House have been those of the people at large: one, for instance, when a war was prevented with Russia concerning Oczakow. The minority told the Minister that the sentiments of the country were contrary to those of the majority: and the fact justified them in the assertion; the dispute was abandoned. In the year 1797, the opinions of the minority on peace were those of the people, and I believe the same coincidence exists now upon the same subject.

WILLIAM PITT

February 3, 1800

OVERTURES OF PEACE WITH FRANCE

Sir, I am induced at this period of the debate to offer my sentiments to the House, both from an apprehension that, at a later hour, the attention of the House must necessarily be exhausted, and because the sentiment with which the learned gentleman [1] began his speech, and with which he has thought proper to conclude it, places the question precisely on that ground on which I am most desirous of discussing it. The learned gentleman seems to assume, as the foundation of his reasoning, and as the great argument for immediate treaty, that every effort to overturn the system of the French revolution must be unavailing; and that it would be not only imprudent, but almost impious, to struggle longer against that order of things, which, on I know not what principle of predestination, he appears to consider as immortal. Little as I am inclined to accede to this opinion, I am not sorry that the honourable gentleman has contemplated the subject in this serious view. I do, indeed, consider the French revolution as the severest trial which the visitation of Providence has ever yet inflicted upon the nations of the earth;

[1] Mr. Erskine.

but I cannot help reflecting, with satisfaction, that this country, even under such a trial, has not only been exempted from those calamities which have covered almost every other part of Europe, but appears to have been reserved as a refuge and asylum to those who fled from its persecution, as a barrier to oppose its progress, and, perhaps, ultimately as an instrument to deliver the world from the crimes and miseries which have attended it. Under this impression, I trust the House will forgive me if I endeavour, as far as I am able, to take a large and comprehensive view of this important question. In doing so, I agree with my honourable friend, that it would, in any case, be impossible to separate the present discussion from the former crimes and atrocities of the French revolution; because both the papers now on the table, and the whole of the learned gentleman's argument, force upon our consideration the origin of the war, and all the material facts which have occurred during its continuance. The learned gentleman has revived and retailed all those arguments from his own pamphlet, which had before passed through thirty-seven or thirty-eight editions in print; and now gives them to the House embellished by the graces of his personal delivery. The First Consul has also thought fit to revive and retail the chief arguments used by all the Opposition speakers, and all the Opposition publishers, in this country during the last seven years. And (what is still more material) the question itself, which is now immediately at issue—the question, whether, under the present circumstances, there is such a prospect of security from any treaty with France as ought to induce us to negotiate, cannot be

properly decided upon without retracing, both from our own experience and from that of other nations, the nature, the causes, and the magnitude of the danger against which we have to guard, in order to judge of the security which we ought to accept.

I say, then, that before any man can concur in opinion with that learned gentleman—before any man can think that the substance of His Majesty's answer is any other than the safety of the country required ; before any man can be of opinion, that to the overtures made by the enemy, at such a time, and under such circumstances, it would have been safe to have returned an answer concurring in the negotiation—he must come within one of the three following descriptions: he must either believe that the French revolution neither does now exhibit, nor has at any time exhibited, such circumstances of danger, arising out of the very nature of the system and the internal state and condition of France, as to leave to foreign Powers no adequate ground of security in negotiation ; or, secondly, he must be of opinion, that the change which has recently taken place has given that security, which, in the former stages of the revolution, was wanting ; or, thirdly, he must be one who, believing that the danger existed, not undervaluing its extent, nor mistaking its nature, nevertheless thinks, from his view of the present pressure on the country, from his view of its situation and its prospects, compared with the situation and prospects of its enemies, that we are, with our eyes open, bound to accept of inadequate security for everything that is valuable and sacred, rather than endure the pressure, or incur the risk, which would result from a farther prolongation of the contest.

In discussing the last of these questions, we shall be led to consider what inference is to be drawn from the circumstances and the result of our own negotiations in former periods of the war;—whether, in the comparative state of this country and France, we now see the same reason for repeating our then unsuccessful experiments;—or whether we have not thence derived the lessons of experience, added to the deductions of reason, marking the inefficacy and danger of the very measures which are quoted to us as precedents for our adoption. Unwilling, Sir, as I am to go into much detail on ground which has been so often trodden before, yet, when I find the learned gentleman, after all the information which he must have received, if he has read any of the answers to his work (however ignorant he might be when he wrote it), still giving the sanction of his authority to the supposition that the order to M. Chauvelin to depart from this kingdom was the cause of the war between this country and France, I do feel it necessary to say a few words on that part of the subject.

Inaccuracy in dates seems to be a sort of fatality common to all who have written on that side of the question; for even the writer of the note to His Majesty is not more correct, in this respect, than if he had taken his information only from the pamphlet of the learned gentleman. The House will recollect the first professions of the French Republic, which are enumerated, and enumerated truly, in that note—they are tests of everything which would best recommend a Government to the esteem and confidence of foreign Powers, and the reverse of everything

which has been the system and practice of France now for near ten years. It is there stated, that their first principles were love of peace, aversion to conquest, and respect for the independence of other countries. In the same note, it seems, indeed, admitted, that they since have violated all those principles; but it is alleged that they have done so only in consequence of the provocation of other Powers. One of the first of those provocations is stated to have consisted in the various outrages offered to their Ministers, of which the example is said to have been set by the King of Great Britain in his conduct to M. Chauvelin. In answer to this supposition, it is only necessary to remark that, before the example was given, before Austria and Prussia are supposed to have been thus encouraged to combine in a plan for the partition of France, that plan, if it ever existed at all, had existed and been acted upon for above eight months: France and Prussia had been at war eight months before the dismissal of M. Chauvelin. So much for the accuracy of the statement.

[Mr. Erskine here observed that this was not the statement of his argument.]

I have been hitherto commenting on the arguments contained in the notes: I come now to those of the learned gentleman. I understand him to say that the dismissal of M. Chauvelin was the real cause, I do not say of the general war, but of the rupture between France and England; and the learned gentleman states, particularly, that this dismissal rendered all discussion of the points in dispute impossible. Now I desire to meet distinctly every part of this assertion: I maintain, on the contrary, that an opportunity was given for

discussing every matter in dispute between France and Great Britain, as fully as if a regular and accredited French Minister had been resident here;—that the causes of war which existed at the beginning, or arose during the course of this discussion, were such as would have justified, twenty times over, a declaration of war on the part of this country;—that all the explanations on the part of France were evidently unsatisfactory and inadmissible; and that M. Chauvelin had given in a peremptory ultimatum, declaring that, if these explanations were not received as sufficient, and if we did not immediately disarm, our refusal would be considered as a declaration of war. After this followed that scene which no man can even now speak of without horror, or think of without indignation; that murder and regicide from which I was sorry to hear the learned gentleman date the beginning of the legal government of France. Having thus given in their ultimatum, they added, as a further demand (while we were smarting under accumulated injuries, for which all satisfaction was denied), that we should instantly receive M. Chauvelin as their ambassador, with new credentials, representing them in the character which they had just derived from the murder of their sovereign. We replied, 'He came here as a representative of a sovereign whom you have put to a cruel and illegal death; we have no satisfaction for the injuries we have received, no security from the danger with which we are threatened. Under these circumstances we will not receive your new credentials; the former credentials you have yourselves recalled by the sacrifice of your King.'

What from that moment was the situation of

M. Chauvelin ? He was reduced to the situation of a private individual, and was required to quit the kingdom, under the provisions of the Alien Act, which, for the purpose of securing domestic tranquillity, had recently invested His Majesty with the power of removing out of this kingdom all foreigners suspected of revolutionary principles. Is it contended that he was, then, less liable to the provisions of that Act than any other individual foreigner, whose conduct afforded to Government just ground of objection or suspicion ? Did his conduct and connexions here afford no such ground ? or will it be pretended that the bare act of refusing to receive fresh credentials from an infant republic, not then acknowledged by any one Power of Europe, and in the very act of heaping upon us injuries and insults, was of itself the cause of war ? So far from it, that even the very nations of Europe, whose wisdom and moderation have been repeatedly extolled for maintaining neutrality, and preserving friendship, with the French Republic, remained for years subsequent to this period without receiving from it any accredited Minister, or doing any one act to acknowledge its political existence. In answer to a representation from the belligerent Powers, in December, 1793, Count Bernstorff, the Minister of Denmark, officially declared that 'It was well known that the National Convention had appointed M. Grouville Minister-Plenipotentiary at Denmark, but that it was also well known that he had neither been received nor acknowledged in that quality'. And as late as February, 1796, when the same Minister was at length, for the first time, received in his official capacity, Count Bernstorff, in a public note,

assigned this reason for that change of conduct—'So long as no other than a revolutionary Government existed in France, His Majesty could not acknowledge the Minister of that Government; but now that the French Constitution is completely organized, and a regular Government established in France, His Majesty's obligation ceases in that respect, and M. Grouville will therefore be acknowledged in the usual form.' How far the Court of Denmark was justified in the opinion that a revolutionary Government then no longer existed in France, it is not now necessary to inquire; but whatever may have been the fact, in that respect, the principle on which they acted is clear and intelligible, and is a decisive instance in favour of the proposition which I have maintained.

Is it then necessary to examine what were the terms of that ultimatum, with which we refused to comply? Acts of hostility had been openly threatened against our allies, an hostility founded upon the assumption of a right which would at once supersede the whole law of nations: a demand was made by France upon Holland to open the navigation of the Scheldt, on the ground of a general and national right, in violation of positive treaty; this claim we discussed, at the time, not so much on account of its immediate importance (though it was important both in a maritime and commercial view), as on account of the general principle on which it was founded. On the same arbitrary notion they soon afterwards discovered that sacred law of nature, which made the Rhine and the Alps the legitimate boundaries of France, and assumed the power which they have affected to exercise through the whole of the revo-

lution, of superseding, by a new code of their own, all the recognized principles of the law of nations. They were actually advancing towards the republic of Holland, by rapid strides, after the victory of Jemappe, and they had ordered their generals to pursue the Austrian troops into any neutral country: thereby explicitly avowing an intention of invading Holland. They had already shown their moderation and self-denial, by incorporating Belgium with the French Republic. These lovers of peace, who set out with a sworn aversion to conquest, and professions of respect for the independence of other nations; who pretend that they departed from this system only in consequence of your aggression, themselves in time of peace while you were still confessedly neutral, without the pretence or shadow of provocation, wrested Savoy from the King of Sardinia, and had proceeded to incorporate it likewise with France. These were their aggressions at this period; and more than these. They had issued an universal declaration of war against all the thrones of Europe; and they had, by their conduct, applied it particularly and specifically to you: they had passed the decree of November 19, 1792, proclaiming the promise of French succour to all nations who should manifest a wish to become free: they had, by all their language, as well as their example, shown what they understood to be freedom: they had sealed their principles by the deposition of their sovereign: they had applied them to England, by inviting and encouraging the addresses of those seditious and traitorous societies who, from the beginning, favoured their views, and who, encouraged by your forbearance, were even then

publicly avowing French doctrines, and anticipating their success in this country; who were hailing the progress of those proceedings in France which led to the murder of its king: they were even then looking to the day when they should behold a national convention in England, formed upon similar principles.

And what were the explanations they offered on these different grounds of offence? As to Holland, they contented themselves with telling us that the Scheldt was too insignificant for us to trouble ourselves about, and therefore it was to be decided as they chose, in breach of a positive treaty, which they had themselves guaranteed, and which we, by our alliance, were bound to support. If, however, after the war was over, Belgium should have consolidated its liberty (a term of which we now know the meaning, from the fate of every nation into which the arms of France have penetrated), then Belgium and Holland might, if they pleased, settle the question of the Scheldt by separate negotiation between themselves. With respect to aggrandizement, they assured us that they would retain possession of Belgium by arms no longer than they should find it necessary for the purpose already stated, of consolidating its liberty. And with respect to the decree of November 19, applied as it was pointedly to you, by all the intercourse I have stated with all the seditious and traitorous part of this country, and particularly by the speeches of every leading man among them, they contented themselves with asserting that the declaration conveyed no such meaning as was imputed to it, and that, so far from encouraging sedition, it could apply only to countries where a great majority of

the people should have already declared itself in favour of a revolution—a supposition which, as they asserted, necessarily implied a total absence of all sedition.

What would have been the effect of admitting this explanation ?—to suffer a nation, and an armed nation, to preach to the inhabitants of all the countries in the world, that themselves were slaves, and their rulers tyrants : to encourage and invite them to revolution, by a previous promise of French support, to whatever might call itself a majority, or to whatever France might declare to be so. This was their explanation : and this, they told you, was their ultimatum. But was this all ? Even at that very moment, when they were endeavouring to induce you to admit these explanations, to be contented with the avowal that France offered herself as a general guarantee for every successful revolution, and would interfere only to sanction and confirm whatever the free and uninfluenced choice of the people might have decided, what were their orders to their generals on the same subject ? In the midst of these amicable explanations with you, came forth a decree which I really believe must be effaced from the minds of gentlemen opposite to me, if they can prevail upon themselves for a moment to hint even a doubt upon the origin of this quarrel, not only as to this country, but as to all the nations of Europe with whom France has been subsequently engaged in hostility. I speak of the decree of December 15. This decree, more even than all the previous transactions, amounted to an universal declaration of war against all thrones, and against all civilized governments. It said, wherever the armies of France shall come

(whether within countries then at war or at peace is not distinguished), in all those countries it shall be the first care of their generals to introduce the principles and the practice of the French revolution; to demolish all privileged orders, and everything which obstructs the establishment of their new system.

If any doubt is entertained whither the armies of France were intended to come, if it is contended that they referred only to those nations with whom they were then at war, or with whom, in the course of this contest, they might be driven into war, let it be remembered that, at this very moment, they had actually given orders to their generals to pursue the Austrian army from the Netherlands into Holland, with whom they were at that time in peace. Or, even if the construction contended for is admitted, let us see what would have been its application; let us look at the list of their aggressions, which was read by my right honourable friend [1] near me. With whom have they been at war since the period of this declaration? With all the nations of Europe save two,[2] and if not with those two, it is only because, with every provocation that could justify defensive war, those countries have hitherto acquiesced in repeated violations of their rights, rather than recur to war for their vindication. Wherever their arms have been carried, it will be a matter of short subsequent inquiry to trace whether they have faithfully applied these principles. If in terms this decree is a denunciation of war against all governments; if in practice it has been applied against every one with which

[1] Mr. Dundas. [2] Sweden and Denmark.

France has come into contact; what is it but the deliberate code of the French revolution, from the birth of the Republic, which has never once been departed from, which has been enforced with unremitted rigour against all the nations that have come into their power?

If there could otherwise be any doubt whether the application of this decree was intended to be universal, whether it applied to all nations, and to England particularly, there is one circumstance which alone would be decisive—that nearly at the same period it was proposed, in the National Convention (on a motion of M. Baraillon), to declare expressly that the decree of November 19 was confined to the nations with whom they were then at war; and that proposal was rejected by a great majority of that very Convention from whom we were desired to receive these explanations as satisfactory.

Such, Sir, was the nature of the system. Let us examine a little farther, whether it was from the beginning intended to be acted upon, in the extent which I have stated. At the very moment when their threats appeared to many little else than the ravings of madmen, they were digesting and methodizing the means of execution, as accurately as if they had actually foreseen the extent to which they have since been able to realize their criminal projects; they sat down coolly to devise the most regular and effectual mode of making the application of this system the current business of the day, and incorporating it with the general orders of their army; for (will the House believe it?) this confirmation of the decree of November 19 was accompanied by an exposition and commentary

addressed to the general of every army of France, containing a schedule as coolly conceived, and as methodically reduced, as any by which the most quiet business of a justice of peace, or the most regular routine of any department of state in this country could be conducted. Each commander was furnished with one general blank formula of a letter for all the nations of the world! The people of France to the people of . . . greeting: 'We are come to expel your tyrants.' Even this was not all; one of the articles of the decree of December 15 was expressly, 'that those who should show themselves so brutish and so enamoured of their chains as to refuse the restoration of their rights, to renounce liberty and equality, or to preserve, recall, or treat with their Prince or privileged orders, were not entitled to the distinction which France, in other cases, had justly established between Government and people; and that such a people ought to be treated according to the rigour of war, and of conquest.'[1] Here is their love of peace; here is their aversion to conquest; here is their respect for the independence of other nations! It was then, after receiving such explanations as these, after receiving the ultimatum of France, and after M. Chauvelin's credentials had ceased, that he was required to depart. Even after that period, I am almost ashamed to record it, we did not on our part shut the door against other attempts to negotiate; but this transaction was immediately followed by the declaration of war, proceeding not from England in vindication of its rights, but from France as the

[1] Vide Decree of December 15, 1792.

completion of the injuries and insults they had offered. And on a war thus originating, can it be doubted, by an English House of Commons, whether the aggression was on the part of this country or of France? or whether the manifest aggression on the part of France was the result of anything but the principles which characterize the French revolution?

What, then, are the resources and subterfuges by which those who agree with the learned gentleman are prevented from sinking under the force of this simple statement of facts? None but what are found in the insinuation contained in the note from France, that this country had, previous to the transactions to which I have referred, encouraged and supported the combination of other Powers directed against them. Upon this part of the subject, the proofs which contradict such an insinuation are innumerable. In the first place, the evidence of dates; in the second place, the admission of all the different parties in France; of the friends of Brissot charging on Robespierre the war with this country, and of the friends of Robespierre charging it on Brissot; but both acquitting England; the testimonies of the French Government during the whole interval, since the declaration of Pilnitz, and the date assigned to the pretended treaty of Pavia; the first of which had not the slightest relation to any project of partition or dismemberment; the second of which I firmly believe to be an absolute fabrication and forgery; and in neither of which, even as they are represented, any reason has been assigned for believing that this country had any share. Even M. Talleyrand himself was sent by the constitutional King of the

French, after the period when that concert, which is now charged, must have existed, if it existed at all, with a letter from the King of France, expressly thanking His Majesty for the neutrality which he had uniformly observed. The same fact is confirmed by the recurring evidence of every person who knew anything of the plans of the King of Sweden in 1791 ; the only sovereign who, I believe, at that time meditated any hostile measures against France, and whose utmost hopes were expressly stated to be, that England would not oppose his intended expedition ; by all those, also, who knew anything of the conduct of the Emperor, or the King of Prussia ; by the clear and decisive testimony of M. Chauvelin himself, in his dispatches from hence to the French Government, since published by their authority ; by everything which has occurred since the war ; by the publications of Dumourier ; by the publications of Brissot ; by the facts that have since come to light in America, with respect to the mission of M. Ganet ; which show that hostility against this country was decided on the part of France long before the period when M. Chauvelin was sent from hence. Besides this, the reduction of our peace establishment in the year 1791, and continued to the subsequent year, is a fact from which the inference is indisputable : a fact which, I am afraid, shows, not only that we were not waiting for the occasion of war, but that, in our partiality for a pacific system, we had indulged ourselves in a fond and credulous security, which wisdom and discretion would not have dictated. In addition to every other proof, it is singular enough, that in a decree, on the eve of the declaration of war on the part of

France, it is expressly stated, as for the first time, that England was then departing from that system of neutrality which she had hitherto observed.

But, Sir, I will not rest merely on these testimonies or arguments, however strong and decisive. I assert, distinctly and positively, and I have the documents in my hand to prove it, that from the middle of the year 1791, upon the first rumour of any measure taken by the Emperor of Germany, and till late in the year 1792, we not only were no parties to any of the projects imputed to the Emperor, but, from the political circumstances in which we then stood with relation to that Court, we wholly declined all communications with him on the subject of France. To Prussia, with whom we were in connexion, and still more decisively to Holland, with whom we were in close and intimate correspondence, we uniformly stated our unalterable resolution to maintain neutrality, and avoid interference in the internal affairs of France, as long as France should refrain from hostile measures against us and our allies. No Minister of England had any authority to treat with foreign states, even provisionally, for any warlike concert, till after the battle of Jemappe ; till a period subsequent to the repeated provocations which had been offered to us, and subsequent particularly to the decree of fraternity of November 19 ; even then, to what object was it that the concert which we wish to establish was to be directed ? If we had then rightly cast the true character of the French revolution, I cannot now deny that we should have been better justified in a very different conduct. But it is material to the present argument to declare what that conduct actually was, because it is of

itself sufficient to confute all the pretexts by which the advocates of France have so long laboured to perplex the question of aggression.

At that period, Russia had at length conceived, as well as ourselves, a natural and just alarm for the balance of Europe, and applied to us to learn our sentiments on the subject. In our answer to this application, we imparted to Russia the principles upon which we then acted, and we communicated this answer to Prussia, with whom we were connected in defensive alliance. I will state shortly the leading part of those principles. A dispatch was sent from Lord Grenville to His Majesty's Minister in Russia, dated December 29, 1792, stating a desire to have an explanation set on foot on the subject of the war with France. I will read the material parts of it.

'The two leading points on which such explanation will naturally turn, are the line of conduct to be followed previous to the commencement of hostilities, and with a view, if possible, to avert them; and the nature and amount of the forces which the Powers engaged in this concert might be enabled to use, supposing such extremities unavoidable.

'With respect to the first, it appears on the whole, subject, however, to future consideration and discussion with the other Powers, that the most advisable step to be taken would be, that sufficient explanation should be had with the Powers at war with France, in order to enable those not hitherto engaged in the war, to propose to that country terms of peace. That these terms should be, the withdrawing their arms within the limits of the French territory; the abandoning their conquests; the rescinding

any acts injurious to the sovereignty or rights of any other nations, and the giving, in some public and unequivocal manner, a pledge of their intention no longer to foment troubles, or to excite disturbances against other governments. In return for these stipulations, the different Powers of Europe, who should be parties to this measure, might engage to abandon all measures or views of hostility against France, or interference in their internal affairs, and to maintain a correspondence and intercourse of amity with the existing powers in that country, with whom such a treaty may be concluded. If, on the result of this proposal so made by the Powers acting in concert, these terms should not be accepted by France, or being accepted, should not be satisfactorily performed, the different Powers might then engage themselves to each other to enter into active measures for the purpose of obtaining the ends in view; and it may be to be considered, whether, in such case, they might not reasonably look to some indemnity for the expenses and hazards to which they would necessarily be exposed.' The dispatch then proceeded to the second point, that of the forces to be employed, on which it is unnecessary now to speak.

Now, Sir, I would really ask any person who has been, from the beginning, the most desirous of avoiding hostilities, whether it is possible to conceive any measure to be adopted in the situation in which we then stood, which could more evidently demonstrate our desire, after repeated provocations, to preserve peace, on any terms consistent with our safety; or whether any sentiment could now be suggested which would have more plainly marked our moderation, forbearance, and sincerity?

In saying this, I am not challenging the applause and approbation of my country, because I must now confess that we were too slow in anticipating that danger of which we had, perhaps, even then sufficient experience, though far short, indeed, of that which we now possess, and that we might even then have seen, what facts have since but too incontestably proved, that nothing but vigorous and open hostility can afford complete and adequate security against revolutionary principles, while they retain a proportion of power sufficient to furnish the means of war.

I will enlarge no farther on the origin of the war. I have read and detailed to you a system which was in itself a declaration of war against all nations, which was so intended, and which has been so applied, which has been exemplified in the extreme peril and hazard of almost all who for a moment have trusted to treaty, and which has not at this hour overwhelmed Europe in one indiscriminate mass of ruin, only because we have not indulged, to a fatal extremity, that disposition, which we have, however, indulged too far; because we have not consented to trust to profession and compromise, rather than to our own valour and exertion, for security against a system from which we never shall be delivered till either the principle is extinguished or till its strength is exhausted. I might, Sir, if I found it necessary, enter into much detail upon this part of the subject; but at present I only beg leave to express my readiness at any time to enter upon it, when either my own strength, or the patience of the House will admit of it; but I say, without distinction, against every nation in Europe, and against some out of Europe, the

principle has been faithfully applied. You cannot look at the map of Europe and lay your hand upon that country against which France has not either declared an open and aggressive war, or violated some positive treaty, or broken some recognized principle of the law of nations.

This subject may be divided into various periods. There were some acts of hostility committed previous to the war with this country, and very little indeed subsequent to that declaration, which abjured the love of conquest. The attack upon the Papal State, by the seizure of Avignon, in 1791, was accompanied by a series of the most atrocious crimes and outrages that ever disgraced a revolution. Avignon was separated from its lawful sovereign, with whom not even the pretence of quarrel existed, and forcibly incorporated in the tyranny of one and indivisible France. The same system led, in the same year, to an aggression against the whole German Empire, by the seizure of Porentrui, part of the dominions of the Bishop of Basle. Afterwards, in 1792, unpreceded by any declaration of war, or any cause of hostility, and in direct violation of the solemn pledge to abstain from conquest, an attack was made upon the King of Sardinia, by the seizure of Savoy, for the purpose of incorporating it, in like manner, with France. In the same year, they had proceeded to the declaration of war against Austria, against Prussia, and against the German Empire, in which they have been justified only on a ground of rooted hostility, combination, and league of sovereigns for the dismemberment of France. I say that some of the documents brought to support this pretence are spurious and false; I say that even in those that

are not so there is not one word to prove the charge principally relied upon, that of an intention to effect the dismemberment of France, or to impose upon it by force any particular constitution. I say that, as far as we have been able to trace what passed at Pilnitz, the declaration there signed referred to the imprisonment of Louis XVI; its immediate view was to effect his deliverance, if a concert sufficiently extensive could be formed with other sovereigns for that purpose. It left the internal state of France to be decided by the King restored to his liberty, with the free consent of the states of his kingdom, and it did not contain one word relative to the dismemberment of France.

In the subsequent discussions, which took place in 1792, and which embraced at the same time all the other points of jealousy which had arisen between the two countries, the declaration of Pilnitz was referred to, and explained on the part of Austria in a manner precisely conformable to what I have now stated; and the amicable explanations which took place, both on this subject and on all the matters in dispute, will be found in the official correspondence between the two Courts, which has been made public; and it will be found, also, that, as long as the negotiation continued to be conducted through M. Delessart, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, there was a great prospect that those discussions would be amicably terminated; but it is notorious, and has since been clearly proved, on the authority of Brissot himself, that the violent party in France considered such an issue of the negotiation as likely to be fatal to their projects, and thought, to use his own words, that 'war was necessary to consolidate the revolution'. For the

express purpose of producing the war, they excited a popular tumult in Paris; they insisted upon and obtained the dismissal of M. Delessart. A new Minister was appointed in his room, the tone of the negotiation was immediately changed, and an ultimatum was sent to the Emperor, similar to that which was afterwards sent to this country, affording him no satisfaction on his just grounds of complaint, and requiring him, under those circumstances, to disarm. The first events of the contest proved how much more France was prepared for war than Austria, and afford a strong confirmation of the proposition which I maintain—that no offensive intention was entertained on the part of the latter Power.

War was then declared against Austria; a war which I state to be a war of aggression on the part of France. The King of Prussia had declared that he should consider war against the Emperor or Empire, as war against himself. He had declared that, as a co-estate of the Empire, he was determined to defend their rights; that, as an ally of the Emperor, he would support him to the utmost against any attack; and that, for the sake of his own dominions, he felt himself called upon to resist the progress of French principles, and to maintain the balance of power in Europe. With this notice before them, France declared war upon the Emperor, and the war with Prussia was the necessary consequence of this aggression, both against the Emperor and the Empire. The war against the King of Sardinia follows next. The declaration of that war was the seizure of Savoy, by an invading army; and on what ground? On that which has been stated already. They had

found out, by some light of nature, that the Rhine and the Alps were the natural limits of France. Upon that ground Savoy was seized; and Savoy was also incorporated with France.

Here finishes the history of the wars in which France was engaged, antecedent to the war with Great Britain, with Holland, and with Spain. With respect to Spain, we have seen nothing in any part of its conduct which leads us to suspect that either attachment to religion, or the ties of consanguinity, or regard to the ancient system of Europe, was likely to induce that Court to connect itself in offensive war against France. The war was evidently and incontestably begun by France against Spain. The case of Holland is so fresh in every man's recollection, and so connected with the immediate causes of the war with this country, that it cannot require one word of observation. What shall I say, then, on the case of Portugal? I cannot indeed say that France ever declared war against that country; I can hardly say even that she ever made war, but she required them to make a treaty of peace, as if they had been at war; she obliged them to purchase that treaty; she broke it as soon as it was purchased, and she had originally no other ground of complaint than this: that Portugal had performed, though inadequately, the engagements of its ancient defensive alliance with this country, in the character of an auxiliary—a conduct which cannot of itself make any Power a principal in a war.

I have now enumerated all the nations at war at that period, with the exception only of Naples. It can hardly be necessary to call to the recollection of the House the characteristic feature of revolu-

tionary principles which was shown, even at this early period, in the personal insult offered to the King of Naples by the commander of a French squadron, riding uncontrolled in the Mediterranean, and (while our fleets were yet unarmed) threatening destruction to all the coast of Italy.

It was not till a considerably later period that almost all the other nations of Europe found themselves equally involved in actual hostility: but it is not a little material to the whole of my argument, compared with the statement of the learned gentleman, and with that contained in the French note, to examine at what period this hostility extended itself. It extended itself, in the course of 1796, to the states of Italy which had hitherto been exempted from it. In 1797 it had ended in the destruction of most of them; it had ended in the virtual deposition of the King of Sardinia, it had ended in the conversion of Genoa and Tuscany into democratic republics; it had ended in the revolution of Venice, in the violation of treaties with the new Venetian republic; and finally, in transferring that very republic, the creature and vassal of France, to the dominion of Austria.

I observe from the gestures of some honourable gentlemen that they think we are precluded from the use of any argument founded on this last transaction. I already hear them saying, that it was as criminal in Austria to receive, as it was in France to give. I am far from defending or palliating the conduct of Austria upon this occasion: but because Austria, unable at last to contend with the arms of France, was forced to accept an unjust and insufficient indemnification from the conquests France had made from it, are we to be

debarred from stating what, on the part of France, was not merely an unjust acquisition, but an act of the grossest and most aggravated perfidy and cruelty, and one of the most striking specimens of that system which has been uniformly and indiscriminately applied to all the countries which France has had within its grasp? This can only be said in vindication of France (and it is still more a vindication of Austria), that, practically speaking, if there is any part of this transaction for which Venice itself has reason to be grateful, it can only be for the permission to exchange the embraces of French fraternity for what is called the despotism of Vienna.

Let these facts, and these dates, be compared with what we have heard. The honourable gentleman has told us, and the author of the note from France has told us also, that all the French conquests were produced by the operations of the allies. It was when they were pressed on all sides, when their own territory was in danger, when their own independence was in question, when the confederacy appeared too strong; it was then they used the means with which their power and their courage furnished them; and, 'attacked upon all sides, they carried everywhere their defensive arms' (vide M. Talleyrand's note). I do not wish to misrepresent the learned gentleman, but I understood him to speak of this sentiment with approbation: the sentiment itself is this, that if a nation is unjustly attacked in any one quarter by others, she cannot stop to consider by whom, but must find means of strength in other quarters, no matter where; and is justified in attacking, in her turn, those with whom she is at peace, and

from whom she has received no species of provocation.

Sir, I hope I have already proved, in a great measure, that no such attack was made upon France; but, if it was made, I maintain, that the whole ground on which that argument is founded cannot be tolerated. In the name of the laws of nature and nations, in the name of everything that is sacred and honourable, I demur to that plea, and I tell that honourable and learned gentleman that he would do well to look again into the law of nations, before he ventures to come to this House, to give the sanction of his authority to so dreadful and execrable a system.

[Mr. Erskine here said across the House, that he had never maintained such a proposition.]

I certainly understood this to be distinctly the tenor of the learned gentleman's argument; but as he tells me he did not use it, I take it for granted he did not intend to use it: I rejoice that he did not: but, at least, then I have a right to expect that the learned gentleman should now transfer to the French note some of the indignation which he has hitherto lavished upon the declarations of this country. This principle, which the learned gentleman disclaims, the French note avows: and I contend, without the fear of contradiction, it is the principle upon which France has uniformly acted. But while the learned gentleman disclaims this proposition, he certainly will admit, that he himself asserted, and maintained in the whole course of his argument, that the pressure of the war upon France imposed upon her the necessity of those exertions which produced most of the enormities of the revolution, and most of the enormities

practised against the other countries of Europe. The House will recollect, that, in the year 1796, when all these horrors in Italy were beginning, which are the strongest illustrations of the general character of the French revolution, we had begun that negotiation to which the learned gentleman has referred. England then possessed numerous conquests; England, though not having at that time had the advantage of three of her most splendid victories, England, even then, appeared undisputed mistress of the sea; England, having then engrossed the whole wealth of the colonial world; England, having lost nothing of its original possessions; England then comes forward, proposing general peace, and offering—what? offering the surrender of all that it had acquired, in order to obtain—what? not the dismemberment, not the partition of ancient France, but the return of a part of those conquests, no one of which could be retained but in direct contradiction to that original and solemn pledge which is now referred to as the proof of the just and moderate disposition of the French Republic. Yet even this offer was not sufficient to procure peace, or to arrest the progress of France in her defensive operations against other offending countries. From the pages, however, of the learned gentleman's pamphlet (which, after all its editions, is now fresher in his memory than in that of any other person in this House, or in the country), he is furnished with an argument on the result of the negotiation, on which he appears confidently to rely. He maintains, that the single point on which the negotiation was broken off, was the question of the possession of the Austrian Netherlands; and that it is, therefore, on

that ground only, that the war has, since that time, been continued. When this subject was before under discussion, I stated, and I shall state again (notwithstanding the learned gentleman's accusation of my having endeavoured to shift the question from its true point), that the question then at issue was not whether the Netherlands should, in fact, be restored, though even on that question I am not, like the learned gentleman, unprepared to give any opinion; I am ready to say, that to leave that territory in the possession of France would be obviously dangerous to the interests of this country, and is inconsistent with the policy which it has uniformly pursued at every period in which it has concerned itself in the general system of the Continent; but it was not on the decision of this question of expediency and policy that the issue of the negotiation then turned; what was required of us by France was, not merely that we should acquiesce in her retaining the Netherlands, but that, as a preliminary to all treaty, and before entering upon the discussion of terms, we should recognize the principle, that whatever France, in time of war, had annexed to the Republic must remain inseparable for ever, and could not become the subject of negotiation. I say that, in refusing such a preliminary, we were only resisting the claim of France to arrogate to itself the power of controlling, by its own separate and municipal acts, the rights and interests of other countries, and moulding, at its discretion, a new and general code of the law of nations.

In reviewing the issue of this negotiation, it is important to observe that France, who began by abjuring a love of conquest, was desired to give up

nothing of her own, not even to give up all that she had conquered; that it was offered to her to receive back all that had been conquered from her; and when she rejected the negotiation for peace upon these grounds, are we then to be told of the unrelenting hostility of the combined Powers, for which France was to revenge itself upon other countries, and which is to justify the subversion of every established government, and the destruction of property, religion, and domestic comfort, from one end of Italy to the other? Such was the effect of the war against Modena, against Genoa, against Tuscany, against Venice, against Rome, and against Naples; all of which she engaged in, or prosecuted, subsequent to this very period.

After this, in the year 1797, Austria had made peace, England and its ally, Portugal (from whom we could expect little active assistance, but whom we felt it our duty to defend), alone remained in the war. In that situation, under the pressure of necessity, which I shall not disguise, we made another attempt to negotiate. In 1797, Prussia, Spain, Austria, and Naples having successively made peace, the princes of Italy having been destroyed, France having surrounded itself, in almost every part in which it is not surrounded by the sea, with revolutionary republics, England made another offer of a different nature. It was not now a demand that France should restore anything. Austria having made a peace upon her own terms, England had nothing to require with regard to her allies; she asked no restitution of the dominions added to France in Europe. So far from retaining anything French out of Europe, we freely offered

them all, demanding only, as a poor compensation, to retain a part of what we had acquired by arms from Holland, then identified with France, and that part useless to Holland and necessary for the security of our Indian possessions. This proposal also, Sir, was proudly refused, in a way which the learned gentleman himself has not attempted to justify, indeed of which he has spoken with detestation. I wish, since he has not finally abjured his duty in this House, that that detestation had been stated earlier, that he had mixed his own voice with the general voice of his country on the result of that negotiation.

Let us look at the conduct of France immediately subsequent to this period. She had spurned at the offers of Great Britain; she had reduced her Continental enemies to the necessity of accepting a precarious peace; she had (in spite of those pledges repeatedly made and uniformly violated) surrounded herself by new conquests, on every part of her frontier but one; that one was Switzerland. The first effect of being relieved from the war with Austria, of being secured against all fears of Continental invasion on the ancient territory of France, was their unprovoked attack against this unoffending and devoted country. This was one of the scenes which satisfied even those who were the most incredulous, that France had thrown off the mask, '*if indeed she had ever worn it.*'[1] It collected, in one view, many of the characteristic features of that revolutionary system which I have endeavoured to trace. The perfidy which alone rendered their arms successful, the pretext of which

[1] Vide Speeches at the Whig Club.

they availed themselves to produce division and prepare the entrance of Jacobinism in that country, the proposal of armistice, one of the known and regular engines of the revolution, which was, as usual, the immediate prelude to military execution, attended with cruelty and barbarity, of which there are few examples: all these are known to the world. The country they attacked was one which had long been the faithful ally of France, which, instead of giving cause of jealousy to any other Power, had been, for ages, proverbial for the simplicity and innocence of its manners, and which had acquired and preserved the esteem of all the nations of Europe; which had almost, by the common consent of mankind, been exempted from the sound of war, and marked out as a land of Goshen, safe and untouched in the midst of surrounding calamities.

Look, then, at the fate of Switzerland, at the circumstances which led to its destruction, add this instance to the catalogue of aggression against all Europe, and then tell me whether the system I have described has not been prosecuted with an unrelenting spirit, which cannot be subdued in adversity, which cannot be appeased in prosperity, which neither solemn professions, nor the general law of nations, nor the obligation of treaties (whether previous to the revolution or subsequent to it), could restrain from the subversion of every state into which, either by force or fraud, their arms could penetrate. Then tell me whether the disasters of Europe are to be charged upon the provocation of this country and its allies, or on the inherent principle of the French revolution, of which the natural result produced so much misery and carnage in France, and

carried desolation and terror over so large a portion of the world.

Sir, much as I have now stated, I have not finished the catalogue. America, almost as much as Switzerland, perhaps, contributed to that change, which has taken place in the minds of those who were originally partial to the principles of the French Government. The hostility against America followed a long course of neutrality adhered to, under the strongest provocations, or rather of repeated compliances to France, with which we might well have been dissatisfied. It was, on the face of it, unjust and wanton; and it was accompanied by those instances of sordid corruption which shocked and disgusted even the enthusiastic admirers of revolutionary purity, and threw a new light on the genius of revolutionary government.

After this, it remains only shortly to remind gentlemen of the aggression against Egypt, not omitting, however, to notice the capture of Malta, in the way to Egypt. Inconsiderable as that island may be thought, compared with the scenes we have witnessed, let it be remembered, that it is an island of which the Government had long been recognized by every state of Europe, against which France pretended no cause of war, and whose independence was as dear to itself and as sacred as that of any country in Europe. It was, in fact, not unimportant from its local situation to the other Powers of Europe, but in proportion as any man may diminish its importance the instance will only serve the more to illustrate and confirm the proposition which I have maintained. The all-searching eye of the French revolution looks to every part of Europe, and every quarter of the world. in

which can be found an object either of acquisition or plunder. Nothing is too great for the temerity of its ambition, nothing too small or insignificant for the grasp of its rapacity. From hence Buonaparte and his army proceeded to Egypt. The attack was made, pretences were held out to the natives of that country in the name of the French King, whom they had murdered; they pretended to have the approbation of the grand seignior, whose territories they were violating; their project was carried on under the profession of a zeal for Mahometanism; it was carried on by proclaiming that France had been reconciled to the Mussulman faith, had abjured that of Christianity, or, as he in his impious language termed it, of '*the sect of the Messiah*'.

The only plea which they have since held out to colour this atrocious invasion of a neutral and friendly territory, is, that it was the road to attack the English power in India. It is most unquestionably true, that this was one and a principal cause of this unparalleled outrage; but another, and an equally substantial cause (as appears by their own statements), was the division and partition of the territories of what they thought a falling Power. It is impossible to dismiss this subject without observing that this attack against Egypt was accompanied by an attack upon the British possessions in India, made on true revolutionary principles. In Europe, the propagation of the principles of France had uniformly prepared the way for the progress of its arms. To India, the lovers of peace had sent the messengers of Jacobinism, for the purpose of inculcating war in those distant regions, on Jacobin principles, and of forming Jacobin

clubs, which they actually succeeded in establishing, and which in most respects resembled the European model, but which were distinguished by this peculiarity, that they were required to swear in one breath, *hatred to tyranny, the love of liberty, and the destruction of all kings and sovereigns—except the good and faithful ally of the French Republic*, CITIZEN TIPPOO.

What, then, was the nature of this system? Was it anything but what I have stated it to be—an insatiable love of aggrandizement, an implacable spirit of destruction directed against all the civil and religious institutions of every country? This is the first moving and acting spirit of the French revolution; this is the spirit which animated it at its birth, and this is the spirit which will not desert it till the moment of its dissolution, 'which grew with its growth, which strengthened with its strength,' but which has not abated under its misfortunes nor declined in its decay; it has been invariably the same in every period, operating more or less, according as accident or circumstances might assist it; but it has been inherent in the revolution in all its stages, it has equally belonged to Brissot, to Robespierre, to Tallien, to Reubel, to Barras, and to every one of the leaders of the Directory, but to none more than to Buonaparte, in whom now all their powers are united. What are its characters? Can it be accident that produced them? No, it is only from the alliance of the most horrid principles with the most horrid means, that such miseries could have been brought upon Europe. It is this paradox, which we must always keep in mind when we are discussing any question relative to the effects of the French revo-

lution. Groaning under every degree of misery, the victim of its own crimes, and, as I once before expressed it in this House, asking pardon of God and of man for the miseries which it has brought upon itself and others, France still retains (while it has neither left means of comfort nor almost of subsistence to its own inhabitants) new and unexampled means of annoyance and destruction against all the other Powers of Europe.

Its first fundamental principle was to bribe the poor against the rich, by proposing to transfer into new hands, on the delusive notion of equality, and in breach of every principle of justice, the whole property of the country; the practical application of this principle was to devote the whole of that property to indiscriminate plunder, and to make it the foundation of a revolutionary system of finance, productive in proportion to the misery and desolation which it created. It has been accompanied by an unwearied spirit of proselytism, diffusing itself over all the nations of the earth; a spirit which can apply itself to all circumstances and all situations, which can furnish a list of grievances, and hold out a promise of redress equally to all nations, which inspired the teachers of French liberty with the hope of alike recommending themselves to those who live under the feudal code of the German Empire; to the various states of Italy, under all their different institutions; to the old republicans of Holland, and to the new republicans of America; to the Catholic of Ireland, whom it was to deliver from Protestant usurpation; to the Protestant of Switzerland, whom it was to deliver from popish superstition; and to the Mussulman of Egypt, whom it was to deliver from

Christian persecution; to the remote Indian, blindly bigoted to his ancient institutions; and to the natives of Great Britain, enjoying the perfection of practical freedom, and justly attached to their constitution, from the joint result of habit, of reason, and of experience. The last and distinguishing feature is a perfidy which nothing can bind, which no tie of treaty, no sense of the principles generally received among nations, no obligation, human or divine, can restrain. Thus qualified, thus armed for destruction, the genius of the French revolution marched forth, the terror and dismay of the world. Every nation has in its turn been the witness, many have been the victims, of its principles, and it is left for us to decide whether we will compromise with such a danger, while we have yet resources to supply the sinews of war, while the heart and spirit of the country is yet unbroken, and while we have the means of calling forth and supporting a powerful co-operation in Europe.

Much more might be said on this part of the subject; but if what I have said already is a faithful, though only an imperfect, sketch of those excesses and outrages, which even history itself will hereafter be unable fully to record, and a just representation of the principle and source from which they originated, will any man say that we ought to accept a precarious security against so tremendous a danger? Much more will he pretend, after the experience of all that has passed, in the different stages of the French revolution, that we ought to be deterred from probing this great question to the bottom, and from examining, without ceremony or disguise, whether the change

which has recently taken place in France is sufficient now to give security, not against a common danger, but against such a danger as that which I have described ?

In examining this part of the subject, let it be remembered that there is one other characteristic of the French revolution, as striking as its dreadful and destructive principles ; I mean the instability of its Government, which has been of itself sufficient to destroy all reliance, if any such reliance could, at any time, have been placed on the good faith of any of its rulers. Such has been the incredible rapidity with which the revolutions in France have succeeded each other, that I believe the names of those who have successively exercised absolute power, under the pretence of liberty, are to be numbered by the years of the revolution ; and each of the new constitutions, which, under the same pretence, has, in its turn, been imposed by force on France, every one of which alike was founded upon principles which professed to be universal, and was intended to be established and perpetuated among all the nations of the earth—each of these will be found, upon an average, to have had about two years as the period of its duration.

Under this revolutionary system, accompanied with this perpetual fluctuation and change, both in the form of the Government and in the persons of the rulers, what is the security which has hitherto existed, and what new security is now offered ? Before an answer is given to this question, let me sum up the history of all the revolutionary Governments of France, and of their characters in relation to other Powers, in words more emphatical than

any which I could use—the memorable words pronounced, on the eve of this last constitution, by the orator[1] who was selected to report to an assembly, surrounded by a file of grenadiers, the new form of liberty which it was destined to enjoy under the auspices of General Buonaparte. From this reporter, the mouth and organ of the new Government, we learn this important lesson: 'It is easy to conceive why peace was not concluded before the establishment of the constitutional Government. The only Government which then existed described itself as revolutionary; it was, in fact, only the tyranny of a few men who were soon overthrown by others, and it consequently presented no stability of principles or of views, no security either with respect to men, or with respect to things. It should seem that that stability and that security ought to have existed from the establishment, and as the effect, of the constitutional system; and yet they did not exist more, perhaps even less, than they had done before. In truth, we did make some partial treaties, we signed a continental peace, and a general congress was held to confirm it; but these treaties, these diplomatic conferences, appear to have been the source of a new war, more inveterate and more bloody than before. Before the 18th Fructidor (September 4) of the 5th year, the French Government exhibited to foreign nations so uncertain an existence that they refused to treat with it. After this great event the whole power was absorbed in the Directory; the legislative body can hardly be said to have

[1] Vide Speech of Boulay de la Meurthe, in the Council of Five Hundred, at St. Cloud, 18th Brumaire (9th November), 1799.

existed; treaties of peace were broken, and war carried everywhere, without that body having any share in those measures. The same Directory, after having intimidated all Europe, and destroyed, at its pleasure, several Governments, neither knowing how to make peace or war, or how even to establish itself, was overturned by a breath, on the 13th Prairial (June 18), to make room for other men, influenced, perhaps, by different views, or who might be governed by different principles. Judging, then, only from notorious facts, the French Government must be considered as exhibiting nothing fixed, neither in respect to men or to things.'

Here, then, is the picture, down to the period of the last revolution, of the state of France under all its successive Governments!

Having taken a view of what it was, let us now examine what it is. In the first place, we see, as has been truly stated, a change in the description and form of the sovereign authority; a supreme power is placed at the head of this nominal republic, with a more open avowal of military despotism than at any former period; with a more open and undisguised abandonment of the names and pretences under which that despotism long attempted to conceal itself. The different institutions, republican in their form and appearance, which were before the instruments of that despotism, are now annihilated; they have given way to the absolute power of one man, concentrating in himself all the authority of the State, and differing from other monarchs only in this, that, as my honourable friend [1] truly stated

[1] Mr. Canning.

it, he wields a sword instead of a sceptre. What, then, is the confidence we are to derive either from the frame of the Government or from the character and past conduct of the person who is now the absolute ruler of France? Had we seen a man, of whom we had no previous knowledge, suddenly invested with the sovereign authority of the country; invested with the power of taxation, with the power of the sword, the power of war and peace, the unlimited power of commanding the resources, of disposing of the lives and fortunes of every man in France; if we had seen, at the same moment, all the inferior machinery of the revolution, which, under the variety of successive shocks, had kept the system in motion, still remaining entire, all that, by requisition and plunder, had given activity to the revolutionary system of finance, and had furnished the means of creating an army, by converting every man, who was of age to bear arms, into a soldier, not for the defence of his own country, but for the sake of carrying unprovoked war into surrounding countries; if we had seen all the subordinate instruments of Jacobin power subsisting in their full force, and retaining (to use the French phrase) all their original organization; and had then observed this single change in the conduct of their affairs, that there was now one man, with no rival to thwart his measures, no colleague to divide his powers, no council to control his operations, no liberty of speaking or writing, no expression of public opinion to check or influence his conduct; under such circumstances, should we be wrong to pause, or wait for the evidence of facts and experience, before we consented to trust our safety to the forbearance of a single

man, in such a situation, and to relinquish those means of defence which have hitherto carried us safe through all the storms of the revolution? if we were to ask what are the principles and character of this stranger, to whom Fortune has suddenly committed the concerns of a great and powerful nation?

But is this the actual state of the present question? Are we talking of a stranger of whom we have heard nothing? No, Sir; we have heard of him; we, and Europe, and the world, have heard both of him and the satellites by whom he is surrounded; and it is impossible to discuss fairly the propriety of any answer which could be returned to his overtures of negotiation, without taking into consideration the inferences to be drawn from his personal character and conduct. I know it is the fashion with some gentlemen to represent any reference to topics of this nature as invidious and irritating; but the truth is, that they rise unavoidably out of the very nature of the question. Would it have been possible for Ministers to discharge their duty, in offering their advice to their Sovereign, either for accepting or declining negotiation, without taking into their account the reliance to be placed on the disposition and the principles of the person on whose disposition and principles the security to be obtained by treaty must, in the present circumstances, principally depend? or would they act honestly or candidly towards Parliament and towards the country, if, having been guided by these considerations, they forbore to state publicly and distinctly the real grounds which have influenced their decision; and if, from a false delicacy and groundless timidity,

they purposely declined an examination of a point, the most essential towards enabling Parliament to form a just determination on so important a subject ?

What opinion, then, are we led to form of the pretensions of the Consul to those particular qualities which, in the official note, are represented as affording us, from his personal character, the surest pledge of peace ? We are told this is his *second attempt* at general pacification. Let us see, for a moment, how this *second attempt* has been conducted. There is, indeed, as the learned gentleman has said, a word in the first declaration which refers to general peace, and which states this to be the second time in which the Consul has endeavoured to accomplish that object. We thought fit, for the reasons which have been assigned, to decline altogether the proposal of treating, under the present circumstances ; but we, at the same time, expressly stated that, whenever the moment for treaty should arrive, we would in no case treat but in conjunction with our allies. Our general refusal to negotiate at the present moment did not prevent the Consul from renewing his overtures ; but were they renewed for the purpose of general pacification ? Though he had hinted at general peace in the terms of his first note ; though we had shown, by our answer, that we deemed negotiation, even for general peace, at this moment, inadmissible ; though we added that, even at any future period, we would treat only in conjunction with our allies ; what was the proposal contained in his last note ?—To treat, not for *general peace*, but for a *separate peace* between Great Britain and France.

Such was the second attempt to effect *general*

pacification: a proposal for a *separate* treaty with Great Britain. What had been the first?—The conclusion of a *separate* treaty with Austria: and, in addition to this fact, there are two anecdotes connected with the conclusion of this treaty which are sufficient to illustrate the disposition of this pacificator of Europe. This very treaty of Campo Formio was ostentatiously professed to be concluded with the Emperor, for the purpose of enabling Buonaparte to take the command of the army of England, and to dictate a separate peace with this country on the banks of the Thames. But there is this additional circumstance, singular beyond all conception, considering that we are now referred to the Treaty of Campo Formio as a proof of the personal disposition of the Consul to general peace; he sent his two confidential and chosen friends, *Berthier* and *Monge*, charged to communicate to the Directory this Treaty of Campo Formio; to announce to them that one enemy was humbled, that the war with Austria was terminated, and, therefore, that now was the moment to prosecute their operations against this country; they used, on this occasion, the memorable words, '*the Kingdom of Great Britain and the French Republic cannot exist together.*' This, I say, was the solemn declaration of the deputies and ambassadors of Buonaparte himself, offering to the Directory the first-fruits of this first attempt at general pacification.

So much for his disposition towards general pacification: let us look next at the part he has taken in the different stages of the French revolution, and let us then judge whether we are to look to him as the security against revolutionary

principles ; let us determine what reliance we can place on his engagements with other countries, when we see how he has served his engagements to his own. When the constitution of the third year was established under Barras, that constitution was imposed by the arms of Buonaparte, then commanding the army of the Triumvirate in Paris. To that constitution he then swore fidelity. How often he has repeated the same oath I know not ; but twice, at least, we know that he has not only repeated it himself, but tendered it to others, under circumstances too striking not to be stated.

Sir, the House cannot have forgotten the revolution of September 4, which produced the dismissal of Lord Malmesbury from Lisle. How was that revolution procured ? It was procured chiefly by the promise of Buonaparte (in the name of his army) decidedly to support the Directory in those measures which led to the infringement and violation of everything that the authors of the constitution of 1795, or its adherents, could consider as fundamental, and which established a system of despotism inferior only to that now realized in his own person. Immediately before this event, in the midst of the desolation and bloodshed of Italy, he had received the sacred present of new banners from the Directory ; he delivered them to his army with this exhortation : ' Let us swear, fellow soldiers, by the manes of the patriots who have died by our side, eternal hatred to the enemies of the constitution of the third year '—that very constitution which he soon after enabled the Directory to violate, and which, at the head of his grenadiers, he has now finally destroyed. Sir, that oath was again renewed, in the midst of that

very scene to which I have last referred ; the oath of fidelity to the constitution of the third year was administered to all the members of the assembly then sitting (under the terror of the bayonet), as the solemn preparation for the business of the day ; and the morning was ushered in with swearing attachment to the constitution, that the evening might close with its destruction.

If we carry our views out of France, and look at the dreadful catalogue of all the breaches of treaty, all the acts of perfidy at which I have only glanced, and which are precisely commensurate with the number of treaties which the Republic have made (for I have sought in vain for any one which it has made and which it has not broken) ; if we trace the history of them all from the beginning of the revolution to the present time, or if we select those which have been accompanied by the most atrocious cruelty, and marked the most strongly with the characteristic features of the revolution, the name of Buonaparte will be found allied to more of them than that of any other that can be handed down in the history of the crimes and miseries of the last ten years. His name will be recorded with the horrors committed in Italy, in the memorable campaign of 1796 and 1797, in the Milanese, in Genoa, in Modena, in Tuscany, in Rome, and in Venice.

His entrance into Lombardy was announced by a solemn proclamation, issued on April 27, 1796, which terminated with these words : ' Nations of Italy ! the French army is come to break your chains ; the French are the friends of the people in every country ; your religion, your property, your customs, shall be respected.' This was

followed by a second proclamation, dated from Milan, May 20, and signed 'Buonaparte', in these terms: 'Respect for property and personal security, respect for the religion of countries: these are the sentiments of the Government of the French Republic, and of the army of Italy. The French, victorious, consider the nations of Lombardy as their brothers.' In testimony of this fraternity, and to fulfil the solemn pledge of respecting property, this very proclamation imposed on the Milanese a provisional contribution to the amount of twenty millions of livres, or near one million sterling; and successive exactions were afterwards levied on that single state to the amount, in the whole, of near six millions sterling. The regard to religion and to the customs of the country was manifested with the same scrupulous fidelity. The churches were given up to indiscriminate plunder. Every religious and charitable fund, every public treasure, was confiscated. The country was made the scene of every species of disorder and rapine. The priests, the established form of worship, all the objects of religious reverence, were openly insulted by the French troops; at Pavia, particularly, the tomb of St. Augustine, which the inhabitants were accustomed to view with peculiar veneration, was mutilated and defaced. This last provocation having roused the resentment of the people, they flew to arms, surrounded the French garrison, and took them prisoners, but carefully abstained from offering any violence to a single soldier. In revenge for this conduct, Buonaparte, then on his march to the Mincio, suddenly returned, collected his troops, and carried the extremity of military execution over the country: he burnt the town of

Benasco, and massacred eight hundred of its inhabitants; he marched to Pavia, took it by storm, and delivered it over to general plunder, and published, at the same moment, a proclamation, of May 26, ordering his troops to shoot all those who had not laid down their arms and taken an oath of obedience, and to burn every village where the *tocsin* should be sounded, and to put its inhabitants to death.

The transactions with Modena were on a smaller scale, but in the same character. Buonaparte began by signing a treaty, by which the Duke of Modena was to pay twelve millions of livres, and neutrality was promised him in return; this was soon followed by the personal arrest of the Duke, and by a fresh extortion of two hundred thousand sequins; after this he was permitted, on the payment of a further sum, to sign another treaty, called a *Convention de. Sûereté*, which of course was only the prelude to the repetition of similar exactions. Nearly at the same period, in violation of the rights of neutrality, and of the treaty which had been concluded between the French Republic and the Grand Duke of Tuscany in the preceding year, and in breach of a positive promise given only a few days before, the French army forcibly took possession of Leghorn, for the purpose of seizing the British property which was deposited there, and confiscating it as prize; and shortly after, when Buonaparte agreed to evacuate Leghorn in return for the evacuation of the island of Elba, which was in the possession of the British troops, he insisted upon a separate article, by which, in addition to the plunder before obtained, by the infraction of the law of nations, it was stipulated

that the Grand Duke should pay to the French the expense which they had incurred by this invasion of his territory.

In the proceedings towards Genoa we shall find not only a continuation of the same system of extortion and plunder (in violation of the solemn pledge contained in the proclamations already referred to), but a striking instance of the revolutionary means employed for the destruction of independent governments. A French Minister was at that time resident at Genoa, which was acknowledged by France to be in a state of neutrality and friendship: in breach of this neutrality, Buonaparte began, in the year 1796, with the demand of a loan; he afterwards, from the month of September, required and enforced the payment of a monthly subsidy, to the amount which he thought proper to stipulate: these exactions were accompanied by repeated assurances and protestations of friendship; they were followed, in May, 1797, by a conspiracy against the Government, fomented by the emissaries of the French Embassy, and conducted by the partisans of France, encouraged and afterwards protected by the French Minister. The conspirators failed in their first attempt; overpowered by the courage and voluntary exertions of the inhabitants, their force was dispersed, and many of their number were arrested. Buonaparte instantly considered the defeat of the conspirators as an act of aggression against the French Republic; he dispatched an aide-de-camp with an order to the Senate of this independent state; first, to release all the French who were detained; secondly, to punish those who had arrested them; thirdly, to declare that they had had no share in the in-

surrection; and fourthly, to disarm the people. Several French prisoners were immediately released, and a proclamation was preparing to disarm the inhabitants, when, by a second note, Buonaparte required the arrest of the three Inquisitors of State, and immediate alterations in the constitution; he accompanied this with an order to the French Minister to quit Genoa if his commands were not immediately carried into execution; at the same moment his troops entered the territory of the republic, and shortly after the councils, intimidated and overpowered, abdicated their functions. Three deputies were then sent to Buonaparte to receive from him a new constitution; on June 6, after the conferences at Montebello, he signed a convention, or rather issued a decree, by which he fixed the new form of their Government; he himself named provisionally all the members who were to compose it, and he required the payment of seven millions of livres, as the price of the subversion of their constitution and their independence. These transactions require but one short comment; it is to be found in the official account given of them at Paris, which is in these memorable words: 'General Buonaparte has pursued the only line of conduct which could be allowed in the representative of a nation which has supported the war only to procure the solemn acknowledgement of the right of nations to change the form of their Government. He contributed nothing towards the revolution of Genoa, but he seized the first moment to acknowledge the new Government, as soon as he saw that it was the result of the wishes of the people.' [1]

[1] Rédacteur Officiel, June 30, 1797.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the wanton attacks against Rome, under the direction of Buonaparte himself, in the year 1796, and in the beginning of 1797, which led first to the Treaty of Tolentino, concluded by Buonaparte, in which, by enormous sacrifices, the Pope was allowed to purchase the acknowledgement of his authority as a sovereign prince; and secondly, to the violation of that very treaty, and to the subversion of the papal authority by Joseph Buonaparte, the brother and the agent of the general, and the Minister of the French Republic to the Holy See: a transaction accompanied by outrages and insults towards the pious and venerable Pontiff (in spite of the sanctity of his age and the unsullied purity of his character), which even to a Protestant seemed hardly short of the guilt of sacrilege.

But of all the disgusting and tragical scenes which took place in Italy, in the course of the period I am describing, those which passed at Venice are perhaps the most striking and the most characteristic: in May, 1796, the French army, under Buonaparte, in the full tide of its success against the Austrians, first approached the territories of this Republic, which, from the commencement of the war, had observed a rigid neutrality. Their entrance on these territories was as usual accompanied by a solemn proclamation in the name of their general. 'Buonaparte to the Republic of Venice.' 'It is to deliver the finest country in Europe from the iron yoke of the proud House of Austria that the French army has braved obstacles the most difficult to surmount. Victory in union with justice has crowned its efforts. The wreck of the enemy's army has retired behind the Mincio.

The French army, in order to follow them, passes over the territory of the Republic of Venice; but it will never forget, that ancient friendship unites the two republics. Religion, government, customs, and property, shall be respected. That the people may be without apprehension, the most severe discipline shall be maintained. All that may be provided for the army shall be faithfully paid for in money. The general-in-chief engages the officers of the Republic of Venice, the magistrates, and the priests, to make known these sentiments to the people, in order that confidence may cement that friendship which has so long united the two nations, faithful in the path of honour, as in that of victory. The French soldier is terrible only to the enemies of his liberty and his Government. Buonaparte.'

This proclamation was followed by exactions similar to those which were practised against Genoa, by the renewal of similar professions of friendship, and the use of similar means to excite insurrection. At length, in the spring of 1797, occasion was taken from disturbances thus excited, to forge, in the name of the Venetian Government, a proclamation,[1] hostile to France; and this proceeding was made the ground for military execution against the country, and for effecting by force the subversion of its ancient government and the establishment of the democratic forms of the French revolution. This revolution was sealed by a treaty, signed in May, 1797, between Buonaparte and commissioners appointed on the part of the new and revolutionary Government of Venice. By the

[1] Vide account of this transaction in the Proclamation of the Senate of Venice, April 12, 1798.

second and third secret articles of this treaty, Venice agreed to give as a ransom, to secure itself against all farther exactions or demands, the sum of three millions of livres in money, the value of three millions more in articles of naval supply, and three ships of the line; and it received in return the assurances of the friendship and support of the French Republic. Immediately after the signature of this treaty, the arsenal, the library, and the palace of St. Marc were ransacked and plundered, and heavy additional contributions were imposed upon its inhabitants: and, in not more than four months afterwards, this very Republic of Venice, united by alliance to France, the creature of Buonaparte himself, from whom it had received the present of French liberty, was by the same Buonaparte transferred under the Treaty of Campo Formio, to 'that iron yoke of the proud House of Austria', to deliver it from which he had represented in his first proclamation to be the great object of all his operations.

Sir, all this is followed by the memorable expedition into Egypt, which I mention, not merely because it forms a principal article in the catalogue of those acts of violence and perfidy in which Buonaparte has been engaged; not merely because it was an enterprise peculiarly his own, of which he was himself the planner, the executor, and the betrayer; but chiefly because, when from thence he retires to a different scene to take possession of a new throne, from which he is to speak upon an equality with the kings and governors of Europe, he leaves behind him, at the moment of his departure, a specimen, which cannot be mistaken, of his principles of negotiation. The intercepted corre-

spondence, which has been alluded to in this debate, seems to afford the strongest ground to believe that his offers to the Turkish Government to evacuate Egypt were made solely with a view '*to gain time*';[1] that the ratification of any treaty on this subject was to be delayed with the view of finally eluding its performance, if any change of circumstances favourable to the French should occur in the interval. But whatever gentlemen may think of the intention with which these offers were made, there will at least be no question with respect to the credit due to those professions by which he endeavoured to prove, in Egypt, his pacific dispositions. He expressly enjoins his successor strongly and steadily to insist, in all his intercourse with the Turks, that he came to Egypt with no hostile design, and that he never meant to keep possession of the country; while, on the opposite page of the same instructions, he states in the most unequivocal manner his regret at the discomfiture of his favourite project of colonizing Egypt, and of maintaining it as a territorial acquisition. Now, Sir, if in any note addressed to the Grand Vizier, or the Sultan, Buonaparte had claimed credit for the sincerity of his professions, that he forcibly invaded Egypt with no view hostile to Turkey, and solely for the purpose of molesting the British interests, is there any one argument now used to induce us to believe his present professions to us which might not have been equally urged on that occasion to the Turkish Government? Would not those professions have been equally supported by solemn asseverations, by the same reference

[1] Vide 'Intercepted Letters from Egypt'.

which is now made to personal character, with this single difference, that they would then have been accompanied with one instance less of that perfidy which we have had occasion to trace in this very transaction ?

It is unnecessary to say more with respect to the credit due to his professions, or the reliance to be placed on his general character : but it will, perhaps, be argued that, whatever may be his character, or whatever has been his past conduct, he has now an interest in making and observing peace. That he has an interest in making peace is at best but a doubtful proposition, and that he has an interest in preserving it is still more uncertain. That it is his interest to negotiate, I do not indeed deny ; it is his interest above all to engage this country in separate negotiation, in order to loosen and dissolve the whole system of the confederacy on the Continent, to palsy, at once, the arms of Russia or of Austria, or of any other country that might look to you for support ; and then either to break off his separate treaty, or if he should have concluded it, to apply the lesson which is taught in his school of policy in Egypt ; and to revive, at his pleasure, those claims of indemnification which *may have been reserved to some happier period.*[1]

This is precisely the interest which he has in negotiation ; but on what grounds are we to be convinced that he has an interest in concluding and observing a solid and permanent pacification ? Under all the circumstances of his personal character, and his newly acquired power, what other security has he for retaining that power, but the

[1] Vide ' Intercepted Letters from Egypt '.

sword? His hold upon France is the sword, and he has no other. Is he connected with the soil, or with the habits, the affections, or the prejudices of the country? He is a stranger, a foreigner, and an usurper; he unites in his own person everything that a pure Republican must detest; everything that an enraged Jacobin has abjured; everything that a sincere and faithful Royalist must feel as an insult. If he is opposed at any time in his career, what is his appeal? *He appeals to his fortune;* in other words, to his army and his sword. Placing, then, his whole reliance upon military support, can he afford to let his military renown pass away, to let his laurels wither, to let the memory of his achievements sink in obscurity? Is it certain that, with his army confined within France, and restrained from inroads upon her neighbours, he can maintain at his devotion a force sufficiently numerous to support his power? Having no object but the possession of absolute dominion, no passion but military glory, is it certain that he can feel such an interest in permanent peace as would justify us in laying down our arms, reducing our expense, and relinquishing our means of security, on the faith of his engagements? Do we believe that, after the conclusion of peace, he would not still sigh over the lost trophies of Egypt, wrested from him by the celebrated victory of Aboukir and the brilliant exertions of that heroic band of British seamen whose influence and example rendered the Turkish troops invincible at Acre? Can he forget that the effect of these exploits enabled Austria and Russia, in one campaign, to recover from France all which she had acquired by his victories, to dissolve the

charm which, for a time, fascinated Europe, and to show that their generals, contending in a just cause, could efface, even by their success and their military glory, the most dazzling triumphs of his victories and desolating ambition ?

Can we believe, with these impressions on his mind, that if, after a year, eighteen months, or two years, of peace had elapsed, he should be tempted by the appearance of a fresh insurrection in Ireland, encouraged by renewed and unrestrained communication with France, and fomented by the fresh infusion of Jacobin principles, if we were at such a moment without a fleet to watch the ports of France, or to guard the coasts of Ireland, without a disposable army, or an embodied militia, capable of supplying a speedy and adequate reinforcement, and that he had suddenly the means of transporting thither a body of twenty or thirty thousand French troops : can we believe, that at such a moment his ambition and vindictive spirit would be restrained by the recollection of engagements, or the obligation of treaty ? Or, if in some new crisis of difficulty and danger to the Ottoman Empire, with no British navy in the Mediterranean, no confederacy formed, no force collected to support it, an opportunity should present itself for resuming the abandoned expedition to Egypt, for renewing the avowed and favourite project of conquering and colonizing that rich and fertile country, and of opening the way to wound some of the vital interests of England, and to plunder the treasures of the East, in order to fill the bankrupt coffers of France, would it be the interest of Buonaparte, under such circumstances, or his principles, his moderation, his love of peace, his aversion to con-

quest, and his regard for the independence of other nations—would it be all or any of these that would secure us against an attempt, which would leave us only the option of submitting, without a struggle, to certain loss and disgrace, or of renewing the contest which we had prematurely terminated, and renewing it without allies, without preparation, with diminished means, and with increased difficulty and hazard ?

Hitherto I have spoken only of the reliance which we can place on the professions, the character, and the conduct of the present First Consul ; but it remains to consider the stability of his power. The revolution has been marked throughout by a rapid succession of new depositaries of public authority, each supplanting his predecessor ; what grounds have we as yet to believe that this new usurpation, more odious and more undisguised than all that preceded it, will be more durable ? Is it that we rely on the particular provisions contained in the code of the pretended constitution, which was proclaimed as accepted by the French people, as soon as the garrison of Paris declared their determination to exterminate all its enemies, and before any of its articles could even be known to half the country, whose consent was required for its establishment ?

I will not pretend to inquire deeply into the nature and effects of a constitution which can hardly be regarded but as a farce and a mockery. If, however, it could be supposed that its provisions were to have any effect, it seems equally adapted to two purposes ; that of giving to its founder for a time an absolute and uncontrolled authority, and that of laying the certain foundation of future

disunion and discord, which, if they once prevail, must render the exercise of all the authority under the constitution impossible, and leave no appeal but to the sword.

Is, then, military despotism that which we are accustomed to consider as a stable form of government? In all ages of the world it has been attended with the least stability to the persons who exercised it, and with the most rapid succession of changes and revolutions. The advocates of the French revolution boasted in its outset, that by their new system they had furnished a security for ever, not to France only but to all countries in the world, against military despotism; that the force of standing armies was vain and delusive; that no artificial power could resist public opinion; and that it was upon the foundation of public opinion alone that any government could stand. I believe that in this instance, as in every other, the progress of the French revolution has belied its professions; but so far from its being a proof of the prevalence of public opinion against military force, it is, instead of the proof, the strongest exception from that doctrine which appears in the history of the world. Through all the stages of the revolution military force has governed; public opinion has scarcely been heard. But still I consider this as only an exception from a general truth; I still believe that in every civilized country (not enslaved by a Jacobin faction) public opinion is the only sure support of any government: I believe this with the more satisfaction, from a conviction that, if this contest is happily terminated, the established Governments of Europe will stand upon that rock firmer than ever; and whatever may be the defects

of any particular constitution, those who live under it will prefer its continuance to the experiment of changes which may plunge them in the unfathomable abyss of revolution, or extricate them from it only to expose them to the terrors of military despotism. And to apply this to France, I see no reason to believe that the present usurpation will be more permanent than any other military despotism which has been established by the same means, and with the same defiance of public opinion.

What, then, is the inference I draw from all that I have now stated? Is it that we will in no case treat with Buonaparte? I say no such thing. But I say, as has been said in the answer returned to the French note, that we ought to wait for *experience, and the evidence of facts*, before we are convinced that such a treaty is admissible. The circumstances I have stated would well justify us if we should be slow in being convinced; but on a question of peace and war, everything depends upon degree, and upon comparison. If, on the one hand, there should be an appearance that the policy of France is at length guided by different maxims from those which have hitherto prevailed; if we should hereafter see signs of stability in the Government, which are not now to be traced; if the progress of the allied army should not call forth such a spirit in France as to make it probable that the act of the country itself will destroy the system now prevailing; if the danger, the difficulty, the risk of continuing the contest, should increase, while the hope of complete ultimate success should be diminished; all these, in their due place, are considerations which, with myself and (I can

answer for it) with every one of my colleagues, will have their just weight. But at present these considerations all operate one way; at present there is nothing from which we can presage a favourable disposition to change in the French councils. There is the greatest reason to rely on powerful co-operation from our allies; there are the strongest marks of a disposition in the interior of France to active resistance against this new tyranny; and there is every ground to believe, on reviewing our situation, and that of the enemy, that if we are ultimately disappointed of that complete success which we are at present entitled to hope, the continuance of the contest, instead of making our situation comparatively worse, will have made it comparatively better.

If, then, I am asked how long are we to persevere in the war, I can only say, that no period can be accurately assigned beforehand. Considering the importance of obtaining complete security for the objects for which we contend, we ought not to be discouraged too soon: but on the other hand, considering the importance of not impairing and exhausting the radical strength of the country, there are limits beyond which we ought not to persist, and which we can determine only by estimating and comparing fairly, from time to time, the degree of security to be obtained by treaty, and the risk and disadvantage of continuing the contest.

But, Sir, there are some gentlemen in the House who seem to consider it already certain that the ultimate success to which I am looking is unattainable: they suppose us contending only for the restoration of the French monarchy, which they believe to be impracticable, and deny to be

desirable for this country. We have been asked in the course of this debate, do you think you can impose monarchy upon France, against the will of the nation? I never thought it, I never hoped it, I never wished it: I have thought, I have hoped, I have wished, that the time might come when the effect of the arms of the allies might so far overpower the military force which keeps France in bondage as to give vent and scope to the thoughts and actions of its inhabitants. We have, indeed, already seen abundant proof of what is the disposition of a large part of the country; we have seen almost through the whole of the revolution the western provinces of France deluged with the blood of its inhabitants, obstinately contending for their ancient laws and religion. We have recently seen, in the revival of that war, a fresh instance of the zeal which still animates those countries in the same cause. These efforts (I state it distinctly, and there are those near me who can bear witness to the truth of the assertion) were not produced by any instigation from hence; they were the effects of a rooted sentiment prevailing through all those provinces, forced into action by the *Law of the Hostages* and the other tyrannical measures of the Directory, at the moment when we were endeavouring to discourage so hazardous an enterprise. If, under such circumstances, we find them giving proofs of their unalterable perseverance in their principles; if there is every reason to believe that the same disposition prevails in many other extensive provinces of France; if every party appears at length equally wearied and disappointed with all the successive changes which the revolution has produced; if the question is no

longer between monarchy, and even the pretence and name of liberty, but between the ancient line of hereditary princes on the one hand, and a military tyrant, a foreign usurper, on the other; if the armies of that usurper are likely to find sufficient occupation on the frontiers, and to be forced at length to leave the interior of the country at liberty to manifest its real feeling and disposition; what reason have we to anticipate that the restoration of monarchy, under such circumstances, is impracticable?

The learned gentleman has, indeed, told us that almost every man now possessed of property in France must necessarily be interested in resisting such a change, and that therefore it never can be effected. If that single consideration were conclusive against the possibility of a change, for the same reason the revolution itself, by which the whole property of the country was taken from its ancient possessors, could never have taken place. But though I deny it to be an insuperable obstacle, I admit it to be a point of considerable delicacy and difficulty. It is not, indeed, for us to discuss minutely what arrangement might be formed on this point to conciliate and unite opposite interests; but whoever considers the precarious tenure and depreciated value of lands held under the revolutionary title, and the low price for which they have generally been obtained, will think it, perhaps, not impossible that an ample compensation might be made to the bulk of the present possessors, both for the purchase-money they have paid and for the actual value of what they now enjoy; and that the ancient proprietors might be reinstated in the possession of their former rights, with only such

a temporary sacrifice as reasonable men would willingly make to obtain so essential an object.

The honourable and learned gentleman, however, has supported his reasoning on this part of the subject by an argument which he undoubtedly considers as unanswerable—a reference to what would be his own conduct in similar circumstances; and he tells us that every landed proprietor in France must support the present order of things in that country from the same motive that he and every proprietor of three per cent stock would join in the defence of the constitution of Great Britain. I must do the learned gentleman the justice to believe that the habits of his profession must supply him with better and nobler motives for defending a constitution which he has had so much occasion to study and examine, than any which he can derive from the value of his proportion (however large) of three per cents, even supposing them to continue to increase in price as rapidly as they have done during the last three years, in which the security and prosperity of the country has been established by following a system directly opposed to the counsels of the learned gentleman and his friends.

The learned gentleman's illustration, however, though it fails with respect to himself, is happily and aptly applied to the state of France; and let us see what inference it furnishes with respect to the probable attachment of moneyed men to the continuance of the revolutionary system, as well as with respect to the general state of public credit in that country. I do not, indeed, know that there exists precisely any fund of three per cents in France, to furnish a test for the patriotism and

public spirit of the lovers of French liberty. But there is another fund which may equally answer our purpose—the capital of three per cent stock which formerly existed in France has undergone a whimsical operation, similar to many other expedients of finance which we have seen in the course of the revolution—this was performed by a decree which, as they termed it, *republicanized* their debt; that is, in other words, struck off, at once, two-thirds of the capital, and left the proprietors to take their chance for the payment of interest on the remainder. This remnant was afterwards converted into the present five per cent stock. I had the curiosity very lately to inquire what price it bore in the market, and I was told that the price had somewhat risen from confidence in the new Government, and was actually as high as *seventeen*. I really at first supposed that my informer meant seventeen years' purchase for every pound of interest, and I began to be almost jealous of revolutionary credit; but I soon found that he literally meant seventeen pounds for every hundred pounds capital stock of five per cent, that is, a little more than three and a half years' purchase. So much for the value of revolutionary property, and for the attachment with which it must inspire its possessors towards the system of government to which that value is to be ascribed!

On the question, Sir, how far the restoration of the French monarchy, if practicable, is desirable, I shall not think it necessary to say much. Can it be supposed to be indifferent to us or to the world, whether the throne of France is to be filled by a prince of the House of Bourbon, or by him

whose principles and conduct I have endeavoured to develop? Is it nothing, with a view to influence and example, whether the fortune of this last adventurer in the lottery of revolutions shall appear to be permanent? Is it nothing whether a system shall be sanctioned which confirms by one of its fundamental articles that general transfer of property from its ancient and lawful possessors, which holds out one of the most terrible examples of national injustice, and which has furnished the great source of revolutionary finance and revolutionary strength against all the Powers of Europe?

In the exhausted and impoverished state of France, it seems for a time impossible that any system but that of robbery and confiscation, anything but the continued torture, which can be applied only by the engines of the revolution, can extort from its ruined inhabitants more than the means of supporting, in peace, the yearly expenditure of its Government. Suppose, then, the heir of the House of Bourbon reinstated on the throne; he will have sufficient occupation in endeavouring, if possible, to heal the wounds, and gradually to repair the losses, of ten years of civil convulsion; to reanimate the drooping commerce, to rekindle the industry, to replace the capital, and to revive the manufactures of the country. Under such circumstances, there must probably be a considerable interval before such a monarch, whatever may be his views, can possess the power which can make him formidable to Europe; but while the system of the revolution continues, the case is quite different. It is true, indeed, that even the gigantic and unnatural means by which that revolution has been

supported are so far impaired; the influence of its principles and the terror of its arms so far weakened; and its power of action so much contracted and circumscribed, that against the embodied force of Europe, prosecuting a vigorous war, we may justly hope that the remnant and wreck of this system cannot long oppose an effectual resistance. But, supposing the confederacy of Europe prematurely dissolved; supposing our armies disbanded, our fleets laid up in our harbours, our exertions relaxed, and our means of precaution and defence relinquished; do we believe that the revolutionary power, with this rest and breathing-time given it to recover from the pressure under which it is now sinking, possessing still the means of calling suddenly and violently into action whatever is the remaining physical force of France, under the guidance of military despotism; do we believe that this power, the terror of which is now beginning to vanish, will not again prove formidable to Europe? Can we forget that, in the ten years in which that power has subsisted, it has brought more misery on surrounding nations, and produced more acts of aggression, cruelty, perfidy, and enormous ambition, than can be traced in the history of France for the centuries which have elapsed since the foundation of its monarchy, including all the wars which, in the course of that period, have been waged by any of those sovereigns whose projects of aggrandizement, and violations of treaty, afford a constant theme of general reproach against the ancient government of France? And with these considerations before us, can we hesitate whether we have the best prospect of permanent peace, the best security for the independence and

safety of Europe, from the restoration of the lawful government, or from the continuance of revolutionary power in the hands of Buonaparte?

In compromise and treaty with such a power, placed in such hands as now exercise it, and retaining the same means of annoyance which it now possesses, I see little hope of permanent security. I see no possibility at this moment of concluding such a peace as would justify that liberal intercourse which is the essence of real amity; no chance of terminating the expenses or the anxieties of war, or of restoring to us any of the advantages of established tranquillity; and as a sincere lover of peace, I cannot be content with its nominal attainment; I must be desirous of pursuing that system which promises to attain, in the end, the permanent enjoyment of its solid and substantial blessings for this country, and for Europe. As a sincere lover of peace, I will not sacrifice it by grasping at the shadow, when the reality is not substantially within my reach—*Cur igitur pacem nolo? Quia infida est, quia periculosa, quia esse non potest.*

If, Sir, in all that I have now offered to the House, I have succeeded in establishing the proposition that the system of the French revolution has been such as to afford to foreign Powers no adequate ground for security in negotiation, and that the change which has recently taken place has not yet afforded that security; if I have laid before you a just statement of the nature and extent of the danger with which we have been threatened; it would remain only shortly to consider, whether there is anything in the circumstances of the present moment to induce us to accept a security

confessedly inadequate against a danger of such a description.

It will be necessary here to say a few words on the subject on which gentlemen have been so fond of dwelling; I mean our former negotiations, and particularly that at Lisle in 1797. I am desirous of stating frankly and openly the true motives which induced me to concur in then recommending negotiation; and I will leave it to the House, and to the country, to judge whether our conduct at that time was inconsistent with the principles by which we are guided at present. That revolutionary policy which I have endeavoured to describe, that gigantic system of prodigality and bloodshed by which the efforts of France were supported, and which counts for nothing the lives and the property of a nation, had at that period driven us to exertions which had, in a great measure, exhausted the ordinary means of defraying our immense expenditure, and had led many of those who were the most convinced of the original justice and necessity of the war, and of the danger of Jacobin principles, to doubt the possibility of persisting in it till complete and adequate security could be obtained. There seemed, too, much reason to believe that, without some new measure to check the rapid accumulation of debt, we could no longer trust to the stability of that funding system by which the nation had been enabled to support the expense of all the different wars in which we have engaged in the course of the present century. In order to continue our exertions with vigour, it became necessary that a new and solid system of finance should be established, such as could not be rendered effectual but by the general

and decided concurrence of public opinion. Such a concurrence in the strong and vigorous measures necessary for the purpose could not then be expected but from satisfying the country, by the strongest and most decided proofs, that peace on terms in any degree admissible was unattainable.

Under this impression we thought it our duty to attempt negotiation, not from the sanguine hope, even at that time, that its result could afford us complete security, but from the persuasion that the danger arising from peace under such circumstances was less than that of continuing the war with precarious and inadequate means. The result of those negotiations proved that the enemy would be satisfied with nothing less than the sacrifice of the honour and independence of the country. From this conviction a spirit and enthusiasm was excited in the nation, which produced the efforts to which we are indebted for the subsequent change in our situation. Having witnessed that happy change, having observed the increasing prosperity and security of the country from that period, seeing how much more satisfactory our prospects now are than any which we could then have derived from the successful result of negotiation, I have not scrupled to declare, that I consider the rupture of the negotiation, on the part of the enemy, as a fortunate circumstance for the country. But because these are my sentiments at this time, after reviewing what has since passed, does it follow that we were, at that time, insincere in endeavouring to obtain peace ? The learned gentleman, indeed, assumes that we were ; and he even makes a concession, of which I desire not to claim the benefit ; he is willing to admit that, on our principles, and

our view of the subject, insincerity would have been justifiable. I know, Sir, no plea that would justify those who are entrusted with the conduct of public affairs, in holding out to Parliament and to the nation one object while they were, in fact, pursuing another. I did, in fact, believe, at the moment, the conclusion of peace (if it could have been obtained) to be preferable to the continuance of the war under its increasing risks and difficulties. I therefore wished for peace; I sincerely laboured for peace. Our endeavours were frustrated by the act of the enemy. If, then, the circumstances are since changed, if what passed at that period has afforded a proof that the object we aimed at was unattainable, and if all that has passed since has proved that, if peace had been then made, it could not have been durable, are we bound to repeat the same experiment, when every reason against it is strengthened by subsequent experience, and when the inducements, which led to it at that time, have ceased to exist?

When we consider the resources and the spirit of the country, can any man doubt that if adequate security is not now to be obtained by treaty, we have the means of prosecuting the contest without material difficulty or danger, and with a reasonable prospect of completely attaining our object? I will not dwell on the improved state of public credit, on the continually increasing amount (in spite of extraordinary temporary burthens) of our permanent revenue, on the yearly accession of wealth to a degree unprecedented even in the most flourishing times of peace, which we are deriving, in the midst of war, from our extended and flourishing commerce; on the progressive improvement

and growth of our manufactures; on the proofs which we see on all sides of the uninterrupted accumulation of productive capital; and on the active exertion of every branch of national industry, which can tend to support and augment the population, the riches, and the power of the country.

As little need I recall the attention of the House to the additional means of action which we have derived from the great augmentation of our disposable military force, the continued triumphs of our powerful and victorious navy, and the events which, in the course of the last two years, have raised the military ardour and military glory of the country to a height unexampled in any period of our history.

In addition to these grounds of reliance on our own strength and exertions, we have seen the consummate skill and valour of the arms of our allies proved by that series of unexampled success which distinguished the last campaign, and we have every reason to expect a co-operation on the Continent, even to a greater extent, in the course of the present year. If we compare this view of our own situation with everything we can observe of the state and condition of our enemy; if we can trace him labouring under equal difficulty in finding men to recruit his army, or money to pay it; if we know that in the course of the last year the most rigorous efforts of military conscription were scarcely sufficient to replace to the French armies, at the end of the campaign, the numbers which they had lost in the course of it; if we have seen that the force of the enemy, then in possession of advantages which it has since lost, was unable to contend with the efforts of the combined armies;

if we know that, even while supported by the plunder of all the countries which they had overrun, the French armies were reduced, by the confession of their commanders, to the extremity of distress, and destitute not only of the principal articles of military supply, but almost of the necessaries of life; if we see them now driven back within their own frontiers, and confined within a country whose own resources have long since been proclaimed by their successive governments to be unequal either to paying or maintaining them; if we observe that, since the last revolution, no one substantial or effectual measure has been adopted to remedy the intolerable disorder of their finances, and to supply the deficiency of their credit and resources; if we see, through large and populous districts of France, either open war levied against the present usurpation, or evident marks of disunion and distraction, which the first occasion may call forth into a flame; if, I say, Sir, this comparison be just, I feel myself authorized to conclude from it, not that we are entitled to consider ourselves certain of ultimate success, not that we are to suppose ourselves exempted from the unforeseen vicissitudes of war; but that, considering the value of the object for which we are contending, the means for supporting the contest, and the probable course of human events, we should be inexcusable if at this moment we were to relinquish the struggle on any grounds short of entire and complete security against the greatest danger which has ever yet threatened the world; that from perseverance in our efforts under such circumstances we have the fairest reason to expect the full attainment of that object; but that at all events, even

if we are disappointed in our more sanguine hopes, we are more likely to gain than to lose by the continuation of the contest; that every month to which it is continued, even if it should not in its effects lead to the final destruction of the Jacobin system, must tend so far to weaken and exhaust it as to give us at least a greater comparative security in any other termination of the war; that on all these grounds this is not the moment at which it is consistent with our interest or our duty to listen to any proposals of negotiation with the present ruler of France; but that we are not therefore pledged to any unalterable determination as to our future conduct; that in this we must be regulated by the course of events; and that it will be the duty of His Majesty's Ministers from time to time to adapt their measures to any variation of circumstances, to consider how far the effects of the military operations of the allies, or of the internal disposition of France, correspond with our present expectations; and, on a view of the whole, to compare the difficulties or risks which may arise in the prosecution of the contest, with the prospect of ultimate success, or of the degree of advantage which may be derived from its farther continuance, and to be governed by the result of all these considerations in the opinion and advice which they may offer to their Sovereign.

GEORGE CANNING

April 30, 1823

NEGOTIATIONS RELATIVE TO SPAIN

I am exceedingly sorry, Mr. Speaker, to stand in the way of any honourable gentleman who wishes to address the House on this important occasion. But, considering the length of time which the debate has already occupied, considering the late hour to which we have now arrived on the third night of discussion, I fear that my own strength, as well as that of the House, would be exhausted, if I were longer to delay the explanations which it is my duty to offer, of the conduct which His Majesty's Government have pursued, and of the principles by which they have been guided, through a course of negotiations as full of difficulty as any that have ever occupied the attention of a Ministry, or the consideration of Parliament.

If gratitude be the proper description of that sentiment which one feels towards the unconscious bestower of an unintended benefit, I acknowledge myself sincerely grateful to the honourable gentleman (Mr. Macdonald) who has introduced the present motion. Although I was previously aware that the conduct of the Government in the late negotiations had met with the individual concurrence of many, perhaps of a great majority,

of the members of this House; although I had received intimations not to be mistaken, of the general satisfaction of the country; still, as from the manner in which the papers have been laid before Parliament, it was not the intention of the Government to call for any opinion upon them, I feel grateful to the honourable gentleman who has, in so candid and manly a manner, brought them under distinct discussion; and who, I hope, will become, however unwillingly, the instrument of embodying the sentiments of individuals and of the country into a vote of parliamentary approbation.

The Government stands in a singular situation with respect to these negotiations. They have maintained peace: they have avoided war. Peace or war—the one or the other—is usually the result of negotiations between independent States. But all the gentlemen on the other side, with one or two exceptions (exceptions which I mention with honour), have set out with declaring, that whatever the question before the House may be, it is *not* a question of peace or war. Now this does appear to me to be a most whimsical declaration; especially when I recollect, that before this debate commenced, it was known—it was not disguised, it was vaunted without scruple or reserve—that the dispositions of those opposed to Ministers were most heroically warlike. It was not denied that they considered hostilities with France to be desirable as well as necessary. The cry 'to arms' was raised, and caps were thrown up for war, from a crowd which, if not numerous, was yet loud in their exclamations. But now, when we come to inquire whence these manifestations of

feeling proceeded, two individuals only have acknowledged that they had joined in the cry; and for the caps which have been picked up it is difficult to find a wearer.

But, Sir, whatever may be contended to be the question now before the House, the question which the Government had to consider, and on which they had to decide, was—peace or war? Disguise or overshadow it how you will, that question was at the bottom of all our deliberations; and I have a right to require that the negotiations should be considered with reference to that question; and to the decision, which, be it right or wrong, we early adopted upon that question—the decision that war was to be avoided, and peace, if possible, maintained.

How can we discuss with fairness, I might say with common sense, any transactions, unless in reference to the object which was in the view of those who carried them on? I repeat it, whether gentlemen in this House do or do not consider the question to be one of peace or war, the Ministers could not take a single step in the late negotiations, till they had well weighed that question; till they had determined what direction ought to be given to those negotiations, so far as that question was concerned. We determined that it was our duty, in the first instance, to endeavour to preserve peace if possible for all the world: next, to endeavour to preserve peace between the nations whose pacific relations appeared most particularly exposed to hazard; and failing in this, to preserve at all events peace for this country; but a peace consistent with the good faith, the interests, and the honour of the nation.

I am far from intending to assert that our decision in this respect is not a fit subject of examination. Undoubtedly the conduct of the Government is liable to a twofold trial. First, was the object of Ministers a right object? Secondly, did they pursue it in a right way? The first of these questions, whether Ministers did right in aiming at the preservation of peace, I postpone. I will return to the consideration of it hereafter. My first inquiry is as to the merits or demerits of the negotiations: and, in order to enter into that inquiry, I must set out with assuming, for the time, that peace is the object which we ought to have pursued.

With this assumption, I proceed to examine, whether the papers on the table show that the best means were employed for attaining the given object? If the object was unfit, there is an end of any discussion as to the negotiations;—they must necessarily be wrong from the beginning to the end; it is only in reference to their fitness for the end proposed, that the papers themselves can be matter worthy of discussion.

In reviewing, then, the course of these negotiations, as directed to maintain, first, the peace of Europe; secondly, the peace between France and Spain; and lastly, peace for this country, they divide themselves naturally into three heads:—first, the negotiations at Verona; secondly, those with France; and thirdly, those with Spain. Of each of these in their order.

I say, emphatically, in their order; because there can be no greater fallacy than that which has pervaded the arguments of many honourable gentlemen, who have taken up expressions used

in one stage of these negotiations, and applied them to another. An honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett), for instance, who addressed the House last night, employed—or, I should rather say, adopted—a fallacy of this sort, with respect to an expression of mine in the extract of a dispatch to the Duke of Wellington, which stands second in the first series of papers. It is but just to the honourable baronet to admit that his observation was adopted, not original; because, in a speech eminent for its ability and for its fairness of reasoning (however I may disagree both with its principles and its conclusions), this, which he condescended to borrow, was in truth the only very weak and ill-reasoned part. By my dispatch of the 27th of September the Duke of Wellington was instructed to declare, that 'to any interference by force or menace on the part of the allies against Spain, *come what may*, His Majesty will not be party'. Upon this the honourable baronet, borrowing, as I have said, the remark itself, and borrowing also the air of astonishment, which, as I am informed, was assumed by the noble proprietor of the remark, in another place, exclaimed '"Come what may"! What is the meaning of this ambiguous menace, this mighty phrase, "that thunders in the index"?—"Come what may!" Surely a denunciation of war is to follow. But no—no such thing. Only—come what may—"His Majesty will be no party to such proceedings." Was ever such a *bathos*! Such a specimen of sinking in policy? "*Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?*"'

Undoubtedly, Sir, if the honourable baronet could show that this declaration was applicable

to the whole course of the negotiations, or to a more advanced stage of them, there would be something in the remark, and in the inference which he wished to be drawn from it. But, before the declaration is condemned as utterly feeble and inconclusive, let us consider what was the question to which it was intended as an answer. That question, Sir, was not as to what England would do in a war between France and Spain, but as to what part she would take if, in the Congress at Verona, a determination should be avowed by *the allies* to interfere forcibly in the affairs of Spain. What then was the meaning of the answer to that proposition,—that, '*come what might*, His Majesty would be no party to such a project'? Why, plainly that His Majesty would not concur in such a determination, even though a difference with his allies, even though the dissolution of the alliance, should be the consequence of his refusal. The answer, therefore, was exactly adapted to the question. This specimen of the *bathos*, this instance of perfection in the art of sinking, as it has been described to be, had its effect; and the Congress separated without determining in favour of any joint operation of a hostile character against Spain.

Sir, it is as true in politics as in mechanics, that the test of skill and of success is to achieve the greatest purpose with the least power. If, then, it be found that, by this little intimation, we gained the object that we sought for, where was the necessity for greater flourish or greater pomp of words? An idle waste of effort would only have risked the loss of the object which by temperance we gained!

But where is the testimony in favour of the effect which this intimation produced? I have it, both written and oral. My first witness is the Duke Mathieu de Montmorency, who states, in his official note of the 26th of December, that the measures conceived and proposed at Verona '*would have been* completely successful, *if* England had thought herself at liberty to concur in them'. Such was the opinion entertained by the Plenipotentiary of France of the failure at Verona, and of the cause of that failure. What was the opinion of Spain? My voucher for that opinion is the dispatch from Sir W. A'Court, of the 7th of January; in which he describes the comfort and relief that were felt by the Spanish Government, when they learnt that the Congress at Verona had broken up with no other result than the *bruta fulmina* of the three dispatches from the courts in alliance with France. The third witness whom I produce, and not the least important, because an unwilling and most unexpected, and in this case surely a most unsuspected witness, is the honourable member for Westminster (Mr. Hobhouse), who seems to have had particular sources of information as to what was passing at the Congress. According to the antechamber reports which were furnished to the honourable member (and which, though not always the most authentic, were in this instance tolerably correct), it appears that there was to be *no joint* declaration against Spain; and it was, it seems, generally understood at Verona, that the instructions given to His Majesty's Plenipotentiary, by the Liberal—I beg pardon, to be quite accurate I am afraid I must say, the Radical—Foreign Minister of England, were the

cause. Now the essence of those instructions was comprised in that little sentence, which has been so much criticized for meagreness and insufficiency.

In this case, then, the English Government is impeached, not for failure, but for success; and the honourable baronet, with taste not his own, has expressed himself dissatisfied with that success, only because the machinery employed to produce it did not make noise enough in its operation.

I contend, Sir, that whatever might grow out of a separate conflict between Spain and France (though matter for grave consideration) was less to be dreaded, than that all the Great Powers of the Continent should have been arrayed together against Spain; and that although the first object, in point of importance, indeed, was to keep the peace altogether—to prevent *any* war against Spain—the first, in point of time, was to prevent a *general* war; to change the question from a question between the allies on one side and Spain on the other, to a question between nation and nation. This, whatever the result might be, would reduce the quarrel to the size of ordinary events, and bring it within the scope of ordinary diplomacy. The immediate object of England, therefore, was to hinder the impress of a joint character from being affixed to the war—if war there must be—with Spain; to take care that the war should not grow out of an assumed jurisdiction of the Congress; to keep within reasonable bounds that predominating *areopagitical* spirit, which the memorandum of the British Cabinet of May, 1820, describes as 'beyond the sphere of the original conception, and understood principles

of the alliance',—'an alliance never intended as a union for the government of the world, or for the superintendence of the internal affairs of other States.' And this, I say, was accomplished.

With respect to Verona, then, what remains of accusation against the Government? It has been charged, not so much that the object of the Government was amiss, as that the negotiations were conducted in too low a tone. But the case was obviously one in which a high tone might have frustrated the object. I beg, then, of the House, before they proceed to adopt an Address which exhibits more of the ingenuity of philologists than of the policy of statesmen—before they found a censure of the Government for its conduct in negotiations of transcendent practical importance, upon refinements of grammatical nicety—I beg that they will at least except from the proposed censure, the transactions at Verona, where I think I have shown that a tone of reproach and invective was unnecessary, and, therefore, would have been misplaced.

Among those who have made unjust and unreasonable objections to the tone of our representations at Verona, I should be grieved to include the honourable member for Bramber (Mr. Wilberforce), with whose mode of thinking I am too well acquainted not to be aware that his observations are founded on other and higher motives than those of political controversy. My honourable friend, through a long and amiable life, has mixed in the business of the world without being stained by its contaminations: and he, in consequence, is apt to place—I will not say too high, but higher, I am afraid, than the ways of

the world will admit, the standard of political morality. I fear my honourable friend is not aware how difficult it is to apply to politics those pure, abstract principles which are indispensable to the excellence of private ethics. Had we employed in the negotiations that serious moral strain which he might have been more inclined to approve, many of the gentlemen opposed to me would, I doubt not, have complained, that we had taken a leaf from the book of the Holy Alliance itself; that we had framed in their own language a canting protest against their purposes, not in the spirit of sincere dissent, but the better to cover our connivance. My honourable friend, I admit, would not have been of the number of those who would so have accused us: but he may be assured that he would have been wholly disappointed in the practical result of our didactic reprehensions. In truth, the principle of *non-interference* is one on which we were already irrecoverably at variance in opinion with the allies; it was no longer debatable ground. On the one hand, the alliance upholds the doctrine of an European police; this country, on the other hand, as appears from the memorandum already quoted, protests against that doctrine. The question is, in fact, settled, as many questions are, by each party retaining its own opinions; and the points reserved for debate are points only of practical application. To such a point it was that we directed our efforts at Verona.

There are those, however, who think that with a view of conciliating the Continental Powers, and of winning them away the more readily from their purposes, we should have addressed them as

tyrants and despots—tramplers on the rights and liberties of mankind. This experiment would, to say the least of it, be a very singular one in diplomacy. It may be possible, though I think not very probable, that the allies would have borne such an address with patience; that they would have retorted only with the 'whispering humbleness' of Shylock in the play, and said,—

> Fair Sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
> You spurn'd me such a day; another time
> You called me—dog; and, for these courtesies,

'we are ready to comply with whatever you desire.' This, I say, may be possible. But I confess I would rather make such an experiment, when the issue of it was matter of more indifference. Till then, I shall be loath to employ towards our allies a language, to which if they yielded, we should ourselves despise them. I doubt whether it is wise, even in this House, to indulge in such a strain of rhetoric; to call 'wretches' and 'barbarians', and a hundred other hard names, Powers with whom, after all, if the map of Europe cannot be altogether cancelled, we must, even according to the admission of the most anti-continental politicians, maintain *some* international intercourse. I doubt whether these sallies of raillery—these flowers of Billingsgate—are calculated to soothe, any more than to adorn; whether, on some occasion or other, we may not find that those on whom they are lavished have not been utterly unsusceptible of feelings of irritation and resentment.—

> —— Medio de fonte leporum
> Surget amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.

But be the language of good sense or good taste in this House what it may, clear I am that, in diplomatic correspondence, no Minister would be justified in risking the friendship of foreign countries, and the peace of his own, by coarse reproach and galling invective; and that even while we are pleading for the independence of nations, it is expedient to respect the independence of those with whom we plead. We differ widely from our Continental allies on one great principle, it is true: nor do we, nor ought we to disguise that difference; nor to omit any occasion of practically upholding our own opinion. But every consideration, whether of policy or of justice, combines with the recollection of the counsels which we have shared, and of the deeds which we have achieved in concert and companionship, to induce us to argue our differences of opinion, however freely, with temper; and to enforce them, however firmly, without insult.

Before I quit Verona, there are other detached objections which have been urged against our connexion with the Congress, of which it may be proper to take notice. It has been asked why we sent a Plenipotentiary to the Congress at all. It may, perhaps, be right here to observe, that it was not originally intended to send the British Plenipotentiary to *Verona*. The Congress at Verona was originally convened solely for the consideration of the affairs of Italy, with which, the House is aware, England had declined to interfere two years before. England was, therefore, not to participate in those proceedings; and all that required her participation was to be arranged in a previous Congress at *Vienna*. But

circumstances had delayed the Duke of Wellington's departure from England, so that he did not reach Vienna till many weeks after the time appointed. The Sovereigns had waited to the last hour consistent with their Italian arrangements. The option was given to our Plenipotentiary to meet them on their return to Vienna; but it was thought, upon the whole, more convenient to avoid further delay; and the Duke of Wellington therefore proceeded to Verona.

Foremost among the objects intended to be discussed at Vienna was the impending danger of hostilities between Russia and the Porte. I have no hesitation in saying that, when I accepted the seals of office, *that* was the object to which the anxiety of the British Government was principally directed. The negotiations at Constantinople had been carried on through the British Ambassador. So completely had this business been placed in the hands of Lord Strangford, that it was thought necessary to summon him to Vienna. Undoubtedly it might be presumed, from facts which were of public notoriety, that the affairs of Spain could not altogether escape the notice of the assembled Sovereigns and Ministers; but the bulk of the instructions which had been prepared for the Duke of Wellington related to the disputes between Russia and the Porte: and how little the British Government expected that so prominent a station would be assigned to the affairs of Spain, may be inferred from the Duke of Wellington's finding it necessary to write from Paris for specific instructions on that subject.

But it is said that Spain ought to have been invited to send a Plenipotentiary to the Congress.

So far as Great Britain is concerned, I answer—in the first place, as we did not wish the affairs of Spain to be brought into discussion at all, we could not take or suggest a preliminary step which would have seemed to recognize the necessity of such a discussion. In the next place, if Spain had been invited, the answer to that invitation might have produced a contrary effect to that which we aimed at producing. Spain must either have sent a Plenipotentiary, or have refused to do so. The refusal would not have failed to be taken by the allies as a proof of the *duresse* of the King of Spain. The sending one, if sent (as he must have been) jointly by the King of Spain and the Cortes, would at once have raised the whole question of the *legitimacy* of the existing Government of Spain, and would, almost to a certainty, have led to a joint declaration from the alliance, such as it was our special object to avoid.

But was there anything in the general conduct of Great Britain at Verona, which lowered, as has been asserted, the character of England ? Nothing like it. Our Ambassador at Constantinople returned from Verona to his post, with full powers from Russia to treat on her behalf with the Turkish Government; from which Government, on the other hand, he enjoys as full confidence as perhaps any Power ever gave to one of its own Ambassadors. Such is the manifest decay of our authority, so fallen in the eyes of all mankind is the character of this country, that two of the greatest States of the world are content to arrange their differences through a British Minister, from reliance on British influence, and from confidence in British equity and British wisdom!

Such then was the issue of the Congress, as to the question between Russia and the Porte; the question (I beg it to be remembered) upon which we expected to be principally if not entirely engaged at that Congress, if it had been held (as was intended when the Duke of Wellington left London) at Vienna.

As to Italy, I have already said, it was distinctly understood that we had resolved to take no share in the discussions. But it is almost needless to add that the evacuation of Naples and of Piedmont was a measure with respect to which, though the Plenipotentiary of Great Britain was not entitled to give or to withhold the concurrence of his Government, he could not but signify its cordial approbation.

The result of the Congress as to Spain was simply the discontinuance of diplomatic intercourse with that Power, on the part of Austria, Russia, and Prussia; a step neither necessarily nor probably leading to war; perhaps (in some views) rather diminishing the risk of it; a step which had been taken by the same monarchies towards Portugal two years before, without leading to any ulterior consequences. The concluding expression of the Duke of Wellington's last note at Verona, in which he states that all that Great Britain could do was to 'endeavour to allay irritation at Madrid', describes all that in effect was necessary to be done there, after the Ministers of the allied Powers should be withdrawn: and the House have seen in Sir W. A'Court's dispatches how scrupulously the Duke of Wellington's promise was fulfilled by the representations of our Minister at Madrid. They have seen, too, how

insignificant the result of the Congress of Verona was considered at Madrid, in comparison with what had been apprehended.

The result of the Congress as to France was a promise of countenance and support from the allies in three specified hypothetical cases:—(1) of an attack made by Spain on France; (2) of any outrage on the person of the King or Royal Family of Spain; (3) of any attempt to change the dynasty of that kingdom. Any unforeseen case, if any such should arise, was to be the subject of new deliberation, either between Court and Court, or in the conferences of their Ministers at Paris.

It is unnecessary now to argue, whether the cases specified are cases which would justify interference. It is sufficient for the present argument, that no one of these cases has occurred. France is therefore not at war on a case foreseen and provided for at Verona: and so far as I know, there has not occurred, since the Congress of Verona, any new case to which the assistance of the allies can be considered as pledged; or which has, in fact, been made the subject of deliberation among the Ministers of the several Courts who were members of the Congress.

We quitted Verona, therefore, with the satisfaction of having prevented any *corporate* act of force or menace, on the part of *the alliance*, against Spain; with the knowledge of the three cases on which alone France would be entitled to claim the support of her Continental allies, in a conflict with Spain; and with the certainty that in any other case we should have to deal with France alone, in any interposition which we

might offer for averting, or for terminating, hostilities.

From Verona we now come, with our Plenipotentiary, to Paris.

I have admitted on a former occasion, and I am perfectly prepared to repeat the admission, that, after the dissolution of the Congress of Verona, we might, if we had so pleased, have withdrawn ourselves altogether from any communication with France upon the subject of her Spanish quarrel; that, having succeeded in preventing a joint operation against Spain, we might have rested satisfied with that success, and trusted, for the rest, to the reflections of France herself on the hazards of the project in her contemplation. Nay, I will own that we did hesitate, whether we should not adopt this more selfish and cautious policy. But there were circumstances attending the return of the Duke of Wellington to Paris, which directed our decision another way. In the first place, we found, on the Duke of Wellington's arrival in that capital, that M. de Villèle had sent back to Verona the drafts of the dispatches of the three Continental allies to their Ministers at Madrid, which M. de Montmorency had brought with him from the Congress;—had sent them back for reconsideration;—whether with a view to obtain a change in their context, or to prevent their being forwarded to their destination at all, did not appear: but, be that as it might, the reference itself was a proof of vacillation, if not of change, in the French counsels.

In the second place, it was notorious that a change was likely to take place in the Cabinet of the Tuileries, which did in fact take place

shortly afterwards, by the retirement of M. de Montmorency: and M. de Montmorency was as notoriously the adviser of war against Spain.

In the third place, it was precisely at the time of the Duke of Wellington's return to Paris, that we received a direct and pressing overture from the Spanish Government, which placed us in the alternative of either affording our good offices to Spain, or of refusing them.

This last consideration would perhaps alone have been decisive; but when it was coupled with the others which I have stated, and with the hopes of doing good which they inspired, I think it will be conceded to me that we should have incurred a fearful responsibility, if we had not consented to make the effort, which we did make, to effect an adjustment between France and Spain, through our mediation.

Add to this, that the question which we had now to discuss with France was a totally new question. It was no longer a question as to that general right of interference, which we had disclaimed and denied—disclaimed for ourselves, and denied for others,—in the conferences at Verona. France knew that upon that question our opinion was formed, and was unalterable. Our mediation therefore, if accepted by France, set out with the plain and admitted implication, that the discussion must turn, not on the general principle, but upon a case of exception to be made out by France, showing, to our satisfaction, wherein Spain had offended and aggrieved her.

It has been observed, as if it were an inconsistency, that at Verona a discouraging answer

had been given by our Plenipotentiary to a hint that it might, perhaps, be advisable for us to offer our mediation with Spain; but that no sooner had the Duke of Wellington arrived at Paris, than he was instructed to offer that mediation. Undoubtedly this is true: and the difference is one which flows out of, and verifies, the entire course of our policy at Verona. We declined mediating between Spain and an alliance assuming to itself that character of general superintendence of the concerns of nations. But a negotiation between kingdom and kingdom, in the old, intelligible, accustomed, European form, was precisely the issue to which we were desirous of bringing the dispute between France and Spain. We eagerly grasped at this chance of preserving peace; and the more eagerly because, as I have before said, we received, at that precise moment, the application from Spain for our good offices.

But France refused our offered mediation: and it has been represented by some gentlemen, that the refusal of our mediation by France was an affront which we ought to have resented. Sir, speaking not of this particular instance only, but generally of the policy of nations, I contend, without fear of contradiction, that the refusal of a mediation is no affront; and that, after the refusal of mediation, to accept or to tender good offices is no humiliation. I beg leave to cite an authority on such points, which, I think, will not be disputed. Martens, in the dissertation which is prefixed to his collection of treaties, distinguishing between mediation and good offices, lays it down expressly, that a nation may accept the good offices of another after rejecting her media-

tion. The following is the passage to which I refer:

'Amicable negotiations may take place, either between the Powers themselves between whom a dispute has arisen, or jointly with a third Power. The part to be taken by the latter, for the purpose of ending the dispute, differs essentially according to one or other of two cases; whether the Power, in the first place, merely interposes its good offices to bring about an agreement; or, secondly, is chosen by the two parties, to act as a mediator between them.' And he adds: 'mediation differs essentially from good offices; a State may accept the latter, at the same time that it rejects mediation.'

If there were any affront indeed in this case, it was an affront received equally from both parties; for Spain also declined our mediation, after having solicited our good offices, and solicited again our good offices, after declining our mediation. Nor is the distinction, however apparently technical, so void of reason as it may at first sight appear. There did not exist between France and Spain that corporeal, that material, that *external* ground of dispute, on which a mediation could operate. The offence, on the side of each party, was an offence rankling in the minds of each, from a long course of irritating discussions; it was to be allayed rather by appeal to the good sense of the parties, than by reference to any tangible object. To illustrate this: suppose, for example, that France had in time of peace possessed herself, by a *coup de main*, of Minorca; or suppose any unsettled pecuniary claims, on one side or the other, or any litigation with respect to

territory; a mediator might be called in, in the first case to recommend restitution, in the others to estimate the amount of claim, or to adjust the terms of compromise. There would, in either of these cases, be a tangible object for mediation. But where the difference was not external; where it arose from irritated feelings, from vague and perhaps exaggerated apprehensions, from charges not proved, nor perhaps capable of proof, on either side, in such cases each party felt that there was nothing definite and precise which either could submit to the decision of a judge, or to the discretion of an arbitrator; though each might at the same time feel that the good offices of a third party, friendly to both, would be well employed to soothe exasperation, to suggest concession, and, without probing too deeply the merits of the dispute, to exhort to mutual forbearance and oblivion. The difference is perfectly intelligible; and, in fact, on the want of a due appreciation of the nature of that difference, turns much of the objection which has been raised against our having suggested concession to Spain.

Our mediation then, as I have said, was refused by Spain as well as by France; but before it was offered to France, our good offices had been asked by Spain. They were asked in the dispatch of M. San Miguel, which has been quoted with so much praise, a praise in which I have no indisposition to concur. I agree in admiring that paper for its candour, manliness, and simplicity. But the honourable member for Westminster has misunderstood the early part of it. He has quoted it, as if it complained of some want of kindness on the part of the British Government

towards Spain. The complaint was quite of another sort. It complained of want of communication from this Government, of what was passing at Verona. The substance of this complaint was true; but in that want of communication there was no want of kindness. The date of M. San Miguel's dispatch is the 15th of November; the Congress did not close till the 29th. It is true that I declined making any communication to Spain, of the transactions which were passing at Verona, whilst the Congress was still sitting. I appeal to any man of honour, whether it would not have been ungenerous to our allies to make such a communication, so long as we entertained the smallest hope that the result of the Congress might not be hostile to Spain; and whether, considering the peculiar situation in which we were placed at that time, by the negotiation which we were carrying on at Madrid for the adjustment of our claims upon the Spanish Government, such a communication would not have been liable to the suspicion that we were courting favour with Spain, at the expense of our allies, for our own separate objects? We might, to be sure, have said to her, 'You complain of our reserve, but you don't know how stoutly we are fighting your battles at Verona.' But, Sir, I did hope that she never would have occasion to know that such battles had been fought for her. She never should have known it, if the negotiations had turned out favourably. When the result proved unfavourable, I immediately made a full disclosure of what had passed; and with that disclosure, it is unnecessary to say, the Spanish Government were, so far as Great Britain was concerned, entirely

satisfied. The expressions of that satisfaction are scattered through Sir W. A'Court's reports of M. San Miguel's subsequent conversations; and are to be found particularly in M. San Miguel's note to Sir William A'Court of the 12th of January.

In the subsequent part of the dispatch of M. San Miguel, of the 15th of November (which we are now considering), that Minister defines the course which he wishes Great Britain to pursue; and I desire to be judged and justified in the eyes of the warmest advocate for Spain, by no other rules than those laid down in that dispatch.

'The acts to which I allude', says M. San Miguel, 'would in no wise compromise the most strictly conceived system of neutrality. *Good offices*, counsels, the reflections of one friend in favour of another, do not place a nation in concert of attack or defence with another, do not expose it to the enmity of the opposite party, even if they do not deserve its gratitude; they are not (in a word) effective aid, troops, arms, subsidies, which augment the force of one of the contending parties. It is of *reason* only that we are speaking; and it is with the *pen of conciliation* that a Power, situated like Great Britain, might support Spain, *without exposing herself to take part in a war*, which she may perhaps prevent, with general utility.' Again: 'England might act in this manner; being able, ought she so to act? and if she ought, has she acted so? In the wise, just, and generous views of the Government of St. James's, no other answer can exist than the affirmative. Why then does she not notify to Spain what has been done, and what it is proposed to do *in that mediatory sense* (*en aquel sentido*

mediador) ? Are there weighty inconveniences which enjoin discretion, which show the necessity of secrecy ? They do not appear to an ordinary penetration.'

I have already told the House why I had not made such a notification ; I have told them also that as soon as the restraint of honour was removed, I did make it ; and that the Spanish Government was perfectly satisfied with it. And with respect to the part which I have just quoted of the dispatch of M. San Miguel, that in which he solicits our good offices, and points out the mode in which they are to be applied, I am sure the House will see that we scrupulously followed *his* suggestions.

Most true it is, and lamentable as true, that our representations to France were not successful. The honourable member for Westminster attributes our failure to the intrigues of Russia ; and has told us of a bet made by the Russian Ambassador in a coffee-house at Paris, that he would force France into a war with Spain.

[Mr. Hobhouse disclaimed this version of his words. He had put it as a conjecture.]

I assure the honourable gentleman that I understood him to state it as a fact : but if it was only conjecture, it is of a piece with the whole of the Address which he supports ; every paragraph of which teems with guesses and suppositions, equally groundless.

The honourable member for Bridgenorth (Mr. Whitmore) has given a more correct opinion of the cause of the war. I believe, with him, that the war was forced on the French Government by the violence of a political party in France.

I believe that at one time the French Government hoped to avert it; and that, up to the latest period, some members of that Cabinet would gladly have availed themselves of the smallest loophole through which the Spanish Government would have enabled them to find their retreat. But we, forsooth, are condemned as dupes, because our opponents gratuitously ascribe to France one settled, systematic, and invariable line of policy; because it is assumed that, from the beginning, France had but one purpose in view; and that she merely amused the British Cabinet from time to time with pretences, which we ought to have had the sagacity to detect. If so, the French Government made singular sacrifices to appearance. M. de Montmorency was sent to Verona; he negotiated with the allies; he brought home a result so satisfactory to France, that he was made a duke for his services. He had enjoyed his new title but a few days when he quitted his office. On this occasion I admit that I was a dupe—I believe all the world were dupes with me, for all understood this change of Ministers to be indicative of a change in the counsels of the French Cabinet, a change from war to peace. For eight-and-forty hours I certainly was under that delusion; but I soon found that it was only a change, not of the question of war, but of the character of that question; a change—as it was somewhat quaintly termed—from *European* to *French*. The Duke M. de Montmorency, finding himself unable to carry into effect the system of policy which he had engaged, at the Congress, to support in the Cabinet at Paris, in order to testify the sincerity of his engagement, promptly

and most honourably resigned. But this event, honourable as it is to the Duke M. de Montmorency, completely disproves the charge of dupery brought against us. That man is not a dupe, who, not foreseeing the vacillations of others, is not prepared to meet them; but he who is misled by false pretences, put forward for the purpose of misleading him. Before a man can be said to be duped, there must have been some settled purpose concealed from him, and not discovered by him; but here there was a variation of purpose; a variation, too, which, so far from considering it then, or now, as an evil, we then hailed and still consider as a good. It was no dupery on our part to acquiesce in a change of counsel on the part of the French Cabinet, which proved the result of the Congress at Verona to be such as I have described it, by giving to the quarrel with Spain the character of a *French* quarrel.

If gentlemen will read over the correspondence about our offer of mediation, with this key, they will understand exactly the meaning of the difference of tone between the Duke M. de Montmorency and M. de Chateaubriand: they will observe that when I first described the question respecting Spain as a *French* question, the Duke de Montmorency loudly maintained it to be a question *toute européenne*; but that M. de Chateaubriand, upon my repeating the same description in the sequel of that correspondence, admitted it to be a question at once and equally *toute française, et toute européenne*: an explanation the exact meaning of which I acknowledge I do not precisely understand; but which, if it

does not distinctly admit the definition of a question *française*, seems at least to negative M. de Montmorency's definition of a question TOUTE *européenne*.

In thus unavoidably introducing the names of the French Ministers, I beg I may be understood to speak of them with respect and esteem. Of M. de Montmorency I have already said that, in voluntarily relinquishing his office, he made an honourable sacrifice to the sincerity of his opinions, and to the force of obligations which he had undertaken but could not fulfil. As to M. de Chateaubriand, with whom I have the honour of a personal acquaintance, I admire his talents and his genius; I believe him to be a man of an upright mind, of untainted honour, and most capable of discharging adequately the high functions of the station which he fills. Whatever I may think of the political conduct of the French Government in the present war, I think this tribute justly due to the individual character of M. de Chateaubriand. I think it further due to him in fairness to correct a misrepresentation to which I have, however innocently, exposed him. From a dispatch of Sir W. A'Court, which has been laid upon the table of the House, it appears as if M. de Chateaubriand had spoken of the failure of the mission of Lord F. Somerset as of an event which had actually happened, at a time when that nobleman had not even reached Madrid. I have recently received a corrected copy of that dispatch, in which the tense employed in speaking of Lord F. Somerset's mission is not *past* but *future*; and the failure of that mission is only anticipated, not announced as having occurred.

The dispatch was sent *in cipher* to M. Lagarde (from whom Sir W. A'Court received his copy of it), and nothing is more natural in such cases than a mistake in the inflection of a verb.

It is also just to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, to allude (although it is rather out of place in this argument) to another circumstance, of which I yesterday received an explanation. A strong feeling has been excited in this country by the reported capture of a rich Spanish prize in the West Indies by a French ship of war. If the French captain had acted under orders, most unquestionably those orders must have been given at a time when the French Government was most warm in its professions of a desire to maintain peace. If this had been the case, it might still perhaps be doubtful whether this country ought to be the first to complain. Formal declarations of war, anterior to warlike acts, have been for some time growing into disuse in Europe. The war of 1756, and the Spanish war in 1804, both, it must be admitted, commenced with premature capture and anticipated hostilities on the part of Great Britain. But—be that as it may—I wrote to Sir C. Stuart, as soon as the intelligence reached this country, desiring him to require an explanation of the affair; the reply, as I have said, arrived yesterday by a telegraphic communication from Paris. It runs thus:—'Paris, April 28, 1823. We have not received anything official as to the prize made by the *Jean Bart*. This vessel had no instructions to make any such capture. If this capture has really been made, there must have been some particular circumstances which were the cause of

it. In any case, the French Government will see justice done.' I have thought it right to clear up this transaction, and to show the promptitude of the French Government in giving the required explanation. I now return to the more immediate subject of discussion, and pass from France to Spain.

It has been maintained that it was an insult to the Spanish Government to ask them, as we did, for assurances of the safety of the Royal Family of Spain. Have I not already accounted for that suggestion? I have shown that one of the causes of war, prospectively agreed upon at Verona, was any act of personal violence to the King of Spain or his family. I endeavoured, therefore, to obtain such assurances from Spain as should remove the apprehension of any such outrage; not because the British Cabinet thought those assurances necessary, but because it might be of the greatest advantage to the cause of Spain, that we should be able to proclaim *our* conviction, that upon this point there was nothing to apprehend; that we should thus possess the means of proving to France that she had no case, arising out of the conferences of Verona, to justify a war. Such assurances Spain might have refused—she would have refused them—to France. To us she might, she did give them, without lowering her dignity.

And here I cannot help referring, with some pain, to a speech delivered by an honourable and learned friend of mine (Sir J. Mackintosh), last night, in which he dwelt upon this subject in a manner totally unlike himself. He pronounced a high-flown eulogy upon M. Arguelles; he envied him, he said, for many things, but he envied him

most for the magnanimity which he had shown in sparing his Sovereign.

[Sir J. Mackintosh said that he had only used the word 'sparing', as sparing the *delicacy*, not the *life* of the King.]

I am glad to have occasioned this explanation. I have no doubt that my honourable and learned friend must have intended so to express himself, for I am sure that he must agree with me in thinking that nothing could be more pernicious than to familiarize the world with the contemplation of events so calamitous. I am sure that my honourable and learned friend would not be forward to anticipate for the people of Spain an outrage so alien to their character.

Great Britain asked these assurances, then, without offence; forasmuch as she asked them—not for herself—not because she entertained the slightest suspicion of the supposed danger, but because that danger constituted one of those hypothetical cases on which alone France could claim eventual support from the allies; and because she wished to be able to satisfy France that she was not likely to have such a justification.

In the same spirit, and with the like purpose, the British Cabinet proposed to Spain to do that, without which not only the disposition but perhaps the power was wanting on the part of the French Government, to recede from the menacing position which it had somewhat precipitately occupied.

And this brings me to the point on which the longest and fiercest battle has been fought against us—the suggestion to Spain of the expediency of

modifying her Constitution. As to this point, I should be perfectly contented, Sir, to rest the justification of Ministers upon the argument stated the night before last by a noble young friend of mine (Lord Francis Leveson Gower), in a speech which, both from what it promised and what it performed, was heard with delight by the House. 'If Ministers', my noble friend observed, 'had refused to offer such suggestions, and if, being called to account for that refusal, they had rested their defence on the ground of delicacy to Spain, would they not have been taunted with something like these observations? "What! had you not among you a member of your Government, sitting at the same council board, a man whom you ought to have considered as an instrument furnished by Providence, at once to give efficacy to your advice, and to spare the delicacy of the Spanish nation? Why did you not employ the Duke of Wellington for this purpose? Did you forget the services which he had rendered to Spain, or did you imagine that Spain had forgotten them? Might not any advice, however unpalatable, have been offered by such a benefactor, without liability to offence or misconstruction? Why did you neglect so happy an opportunity, and leave unemployed so fit an agent? Oh! blind to the interests of the Spanish people! Oh! insensible to the feelings of human nature!"' Such an argument would have been unanswerable; and, however the intervention of Great Britain has failed, I would much rather have to defend myself against the charge of having tendered advice officiously, than against that of having stupidly neglected to employ the means which the posses-

sion of such a man as the Duke of Wellington put into the hands of the Government, for the salvation of a nation which he had already once rescued from destruction.

With respect to the memorandum of the noble duke, which has been so much the subject of cavil, it is the offspring of a manly mind, pouring out its honest opinions with an earnestness characteristic of sincerity, and with a zeal too warm to stand upon nice and scrupulous expression. I am sure that it contains nothing but what the noble duke really thought. I am sure that what he thought at the time of writing it, he would still maintain; and what he thinks and maintains regarding Spain, must, I should imagine, be received with respect and confidence by all who do not believe themselves to be better qualified to judge of Spain than he is. Whatever may be thought of the Duke of Wellington's suggestions here, confident I am that there is not an individual in Spain, to whom this paper was communicated, who took it as an offence, or who did not do full justice to the motives of the adviser, whatever they might think of the immediate practicability of his advice. Would to God that some part of it, at least, had been accepted! I admit the point of honour, I respect those who have acted upon it, I do not blame the Spaniards that they refused to make any sacrifice to temporary necessity; but still—still I lament the result of that refusal. Of this I am quite sure, that even if the Spaniards were justified in objecting to concede, it would have been a most romantic point of honour which should have induced Great Britain to abstain from recommending concession.

It is said that everything was required of Spain, and nothing of France. I utterly deny it. I have already described the relative situation of the two countries. I will repeat, though the term has been so much criticized, that they had no *external* point of difference. France said to Spain, 'Your revolution disquiets me;' and Spain replied to France, 'Your army of observation disquiets me.' There were but two remedies to this state of things—war or concession; and why was England fastidiously, and (as I think) most mistakenly, to say, 'Our notions of non-interference are so strict that we cannot advise you even for your safety: though whatever concession you may make may probably be met by corresponding concession on the part of France'? Undoubtedly the withdrawing of the army of observation would have been, if not purely, yet in a great degree, an *internal* measure on the part of France; and one which, though I will not assert it to be precisely equivalent with the alteration by Spain of any fault in her Constitution; yet, considering its immediate practical advantage to Spain, would not, I think, have been too dearly purchased by such an alteration. That France was called upon to make the corresponding concession, appears as well from the memorandum of the Duke of Wellington, as from the dispatches of Sir Charles Stuart, and from mine; and this concession was admitted by M. San Miguel to be the object which Spain most desired. England saw that war must be the inevitable consequence of the existing state of things between the two kingdoms; and, if something were yielded on the one side, it would undoubtedly have been for

England to insist upon a countervailing sacrifice on the other.

The propriety of maintaining the army of observation depended wholly upon the truth of the allegations on which France justified its continuance. I do not at all mean to say that the truth of those allegations was to be taken for granted. But what I do mean to say is, that it was not the business of the British Government to go into a trial and examine evidence, to ascertain the foundation of the conflicting allegations on either side. It was clear that nothing but some modification of the Spanish Constitution could avert the calamity of war; and in applying the means in our hands to that object (an object interesting not to Spain only, but to England, and to Europe), it was not our business to take up the cause of either party, and to state it with the zeal and with the aggravations of an advocate; but rather to endeavour to reduce the demands of each within such limits as might afford a reasonable hope of mutual conciliation.

Grant, even, that the justice was wholly on the side of Spain; still, in entreating the Spanish Ministers, with a view to peace, to abate a little of their just pretensions, the British Government did not go beyond the duty which the law of nations prescribes. No, Sir, it was our duty to induce Spain to relax something of her positive right, for a purpose so essential to her own interests and to those of the world. Upon this point let me fortify myself once more, by reference to the acknowledged law of nations. 'The duty of a mediator', says Vattel, 'is to favour well-founded claims, and to effect the restoration to each party

of what belongs to him ; but he ought not scrupulously to insist on rigid justice. He is a conciliator, not a judge : his business is to procure peace ; and he ought to induce him who has right on his side, to relax something of his pretensions, if necessary, with a view to so great a blessing.'

The conduct of the British Government is thus fortified by an authority, not interested, not partial, not special in its application, but universal, untinctured by favour, uninfluenced by the circumstances of any particular case, and applicable to the general concerns and dealings of mankind. Is it not plain, then, that we have been guilty of no violation of duty towards the weaker party ? Our duty, Sir, was discharged not only without any unfriendly bias against Spain, but with tenderness, with preference, with partiality in her favour ; and, while I respect (as I have already said) the honourable obstinacy of the Spanish character, so deeply am I impressed with the desirableness of peace for Spain, that, should the opportunity recur, I would again, without scruple, tender the same advice to her Government. The point of honour was in truth rather individual than national ; but the safety put to hazard was assuredly that of the whole nation. Look at the state of Spain, and consider whether the filling up a blank in the scheme of her representative Constitution with an amount, more or less high, of qualification for the members of the Cortes—whether the promising to consider hereafter of some modifications in other questionable points—was too much to be conceded, if by such a sacrifice peace could have been preserved ! If we had declined to interfere on such grounds

of *punctilio*, would not the very passage which I have now read from Vattel, as our vindication, have been brought against us with justice as a charge?

I regret, deeply regret, for the sake of Spain, that our efforts failed. I must fairly add, that I regret it for the sake of France also. Convinced as I may be of the injustice of the course pursued by the French Government, I cannot shut my eyes to its impolicy. I cannot lose sight of the gallant character and mighty resources of the French nation, of the central situation of France, and of the weight which she ought to preserve in the scale of Europe; I cannot be insensible to the dangers to which she is exposing herself; nor omit to reflect what the consequences may be to that country—what the consequences to Europe—of the hazardous enterprise in which she is now engaged; and which, for aught that human prudence can foresee, may end in a dreadful revulsion. As mere matter of abstract right, morality, perhaps, ought to be contented when injury recoils upon an aggressor. But such a revulsion as I am speaking of would not affect France alone: it would touch the Continental States at many points; it would touch even Great Britain. France could not be convulsed without communicating danger to the very extremities of Europe. With this conviction, I confess I thought any sacrifice, short of national honour or national independence, cheap, to prevent the first breach in that pacific settlement, by which the miseries and agitations of the world have been so recently composed.

I apologize, Sir, for the length of time which

I have consumed upon these points. The case is complicated; the transactions have been much misunderstood, and the opinions regarding them are various and discordant. The true understanding of the case, however, and the vindication of the conduct of Government, would be matters of comparatively light importance, if censure or approbation for the past were the only result in contemplation. But, considering that we are now only at the threshold, as it were, of the war, and that great events are pending, in which England may hereafter be called upon to take her part, it is of the utmost importance that no doubt should rest upon the conduct and policy of this country.

One thing more there is, which I must not forget to notice with regard to the advice given to Spain. I have already mentioned the Duke of Wellington as the chosen instrument of that counsel: a Spaniard by adoption, by title, and by property, he had a right to offer the suggestions which he thought fit, to the Government of the country which had adopted him. But it has been complained that the British Government would have induced the Spaniards to break an oath: that, according to the oath taken by the Cortes, the Spanish institutions could be revised only at the expiration of eight years; and that, by calling upon the Cortes to revise them before that period was expired, we urged them to incur the guilt of perjury. Sir, this supposed restriction is assumed gratuitously.

There are two opinions upon it in Spain. One party calculates the eight years from the time which has elapsed since the first establishment of

the Constitution; the other reckons only the time during which it has been in operation. The latter insist that the period has yet at least two years to run, because the Constitution has been in force only from 1812 to 1814, and from 1820 to the present time: those who calculate from the original establishment of it in 1812, argue of course that more than the eight years are already expired, and that the period of revision is fully come. I do not pretend to decide between these two constructions; but I assert that they are both Spanish constructions. A Spaniard, of no mean name and reputation,—one eminently friendly to the Constitution of 1812,—by whose advice Ministers were in this respect guided, gave it as his opinion, that not only consistently with their oath, but in exact fulfilment of it, the Spaniards might now reconsider and modify their Constitution—that they might have done so nearly three years ago. 'Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?' say the Cortes. The answer is, 'No; we do not ask you to lay perjury upon your souls; for as good a Spanish soul as is possessed by any of you declares, that you may now, in due conformity to your oaths, reconsider, and, where advisable, reform your Constitution.' Do we not know what constructions have been put in this country, on the coronation oath, as to its operation on what is called the Catholic Question? Will any man say that it has been my intention, or the intention of my honourable friend, the member for Bramber, every time that we have supported a motion for communicating to our Roman Catholic fellow subjects the full benefit of the Constitution, to lay perjury on the soul of the Sovereign?

Sir, I do not pretend to decide whether the number of legislative chambers in Spain should be one, or two, or three. In God's name, let them try what experiment in political science they will, provided we are not affected by the trial. All that Great Britain has done on this occasion has been, not to disturb the course of political experiment, but to endeavour to avert the calamity of war. Good God! when it is remembered how many evils are compressed into that little word 'war', is it possible for any man to hesitate in urging every expedient that could avert it, without sacrificing the honour of the party to which his advice was tendered? Most earnestly do I wish that the Duke of Wellington had succeeded: but great is the consolation that, according to the best accounts from Spain, his counsels have not been misunderstood there, however they have been misrepresented here. I believe that I might with truth go further, and say, that there are those in Spain who now repent the rigid course pursued, and who are beginning to ask each other why they held out so pertinaciously against suggestions at once so harmless and so reasonable. My wish was, that Spain should be saved; that she should be saved before the extremity of evil had come upon her, even by the making of those concessions which, in the heat of national pride, she refused. Under any circumstances, however, I have still another consolation —the consolation of knowing, that never, from the commencement of these negotiations, has Spain been allowed by the British Government to lie under the delusion that her refusal of all modifications would induce England to join her in the war.

The very earliest communication made to Spain forbade her to entertain any such reliance. She was told at the beginning, as she was told in the end, that neutrality was our determined policy. From the first to the last, there was never the slightest variation in this language—never a pause during which she could be for one moment in doubt as to the settled purpose of England.

France, on the contrary, was never assured of the neutrality of England, till my dispatch of the 31st of March (the last of the first series of printed papers) was communicated to the French Ministry at Paris. The speech of the King of France, on the opening of the Chambers (I have no difficulty in saying), excited not only strong feelings of disapprobation, by the principles which it avowed, but serious apprehensions for the future, from the designs which it appeared to disclose. I have no difficulty in saying that the speech delivered from the British throne at the commencement of the present session did, as originally drawn, contain an avowal of our intention to preserve neutrality; but, upon the arrival of the King of France's speech, the paragraph containing that avowal was withdrawn. Nay, I have no difficulty in adding that I plainly told the French Chargé d'Affaires that such an intimation had been intended, but that it was withdrawn in consequence of the speech of the King, his master. Was this truckling to France?

It was not, however, on account of Spain that the pledge of neutrality was withdrawn: it was withdrawn upon principles of general policy on the part of this country. It was withdrawn,

because there was that in the King of France's speech which appeared to carry the two countries (France and England) back to their position in older times, when France, as regarded the affairs of Spain, had been the successful rival of England. Under such circumstances, it behoved the English Ministers to be upon their guard. We *were* upon our guard. Could we prove our caution more than by withholding that assurance, which would at once have set France at ease? We *did* withhold that assurance. But it was one thing to withhold the declaration of neutrality, and another to vary the purpose.

Spain, then, I repeat, has never been misled by the British Government. But I fear, nevertheless, that a notion was in some way or other created at Madrid, that if Spain would but hold out resolutely, the Government of England would be forced, by the popular voice in this country, to take part in her favour. I infer no blame against any one; but I do firmly believe that such a notion was propagated in Spain, and that it had great share in producing the peremptory refusal of any modification of the Constitution of 1812. Regretting, as I do, the failure of our endeavours to adjust those disputes, which now threaten so much evil to the world, I am free at least from the self-reproach of having contributed to that delusion in the mind of the Spanish Government or nation, as to the eventual decision of England, which, if it existed in such a degree as to produce reliance upon our co-operation, must have added to the other calamities of her present situation, the bitterness of disappointment. This disappointment, Sir, was from the beginning, certain, inevitable:

for the mistake of those who excited the hopes of Spain was not only as to the conduct of the British Government, but as to the sentiments of the British nation. No man, whatever his personal opinion or feeling may be, will pretend that the opinion of the country is not decidedly against war. No man will deny that, if Ministers had plunged the country into a war for the sake of Spain, they would have come before Parliament with a heavier weight of responsibility than had ever lain upon the shoulders of any Government. I impute not to those who may thus have misled the Spanish Ministry, the intention either of thwarting (though such was the effect) the policy of their own Government, or of aggravating (though such must be the consequence) the difficulties of Spain. But for myself I declare, that even the responsibility of plunging this country into an unnecessary war, would have weighed less heavily upon my conscience, than that, which I thank God I have not incurred, of instigating Spain to the war, by exciting hopes of assistance which I had not the means of realizing.

I have thus far, Sir, taken the liberty of assuming that the late negotiations were properly directed to the preservation of peace; and have argued the merits of the negotiations, on that assumption. I am aware that it is still to be established, that peace, under all the circumstances of the times, *was* the proper course for this country. I address myself now to that branch of the subject.

I believe I may venture to take it as universally admitted, that any question of war involves not

only a question of right, not only a question of justice, but also a question of expediency. I take it to be admitted on all hands, that before any Government determines to go to war, it ought to be convinced not only that it has just cause of war, but that there is something which renders war its duty: a duty compounded of two considerations—the first, what the country may owe to others; the second, what she owes to herself. I do not know whether any gentleman on the other side of the House has thought it worth while to examine and weigh these considerations, but Ministers had to weigh them well before they took their resolution. Ministers did weigh them well; wisely, I hope; I am sure, conscientiously and deliberately: and, if they came to the decision that peace was the policy prescribed to them, that decision was founded on a reference, first, to the situation of Spain; secondly, to the situation of France; thirdly, to the situation of Portugal; fourthly, to the situation of the Alliance; fifthly, to the peculiar situation of England; and lastly, to the general state of the world. And first, Sir, as to Spain.

The only gentleman by whom (as it seems to me) this part of the question has been fairly and boldly met, is the honourable member for Westminster (Mr. Hobhouse), who, in his speech of yesterday evening (a speech which, however extravagant, as I may perhaps think, in its tone, was perfectly intelligible and straightforward), not only declared himself openly for war, but, aware that one of the chief sinews of war is money, did no less than offer a subsidy to assist in carrying it on. He declared that his constituents

were ready to contribute all their means to invigorate the hands of Government in the war; but he annexed, to be sure, the trifling condition, that the war was to be a war of people against kings. Now this, which, it must be owned, was no unimportant qualification of the honourable member's offer of assistance, is also one to which, I confess, I am not quite prepared to accede. I do not immediately remember any case in which such a principle of war has been professed by any Government, except in the decree of the National Convention of the year 1793, which laid the foundation of the war between this country and France—the decree which offered assistance to all nations who would shake off the tyranny of their rulers.

Even the honourable member for Westminster, therefore, is after all but conditionally in favour of war: and, even in that conditional pledge, he has been supported by so few members that I cannot help suspecting that if I were to proceed on the faith of his encouragement, I should find myself left with the honourable gentleman, pretty nearly in the situation of King James with his bishops. King James, we all remember, asked Bishop Neale if he might not take his subjects' money without the authority of Parliament? To which Bishop Neale replied, 'God forbid, Sire, but you should; you are the breath of our nostrils.' The King then turned to Bishop Andrews, and repeated the same question; when Bishop Andrews answered, 'Sire, I think it is lawful for your Majesty to take my brother Neale's money, for he offers it.' Now, if I were to appeal to the House, on the hint of the honourable gentleman,

I should, indeed, on his own terms, have an undoubted right to the money of the honourable gentleman; but if the question were put, for instance, to the honourable member for Surrey (Mr. Holme Sumner), *his* answer would probably be, 'You may take my brother of Westminster's money, as he says his constituents have authorized him to offer it; but *my* constituents have certainly given me no such authority.'

But however single, or however conditional,—the voice of the honourable member for Westminster is still for war; and he does me the honour to tempt me to take the same course, by reminding me of a passage in my political life to which I shall ever look back with pride and satisfaction. I allude to that period when the bold spirit of Spain burst forth indignant against the oppression of Buonaparte. Then unworthily filling the same office which I have the honour to hold at the present moment, I discharged the glorious duty (if a portion of glory may attach to the humble instrument of a glorious cause) of recognizing without delay the rights of the Spanish nation, and of at once adopting that gallant people into the closest amity with England. It was indeed a stirring, a kindling occasion: and no man who has a heart in his bosom can think even now of the noble enthusiasm, the animated exertions, the undaunted courage, the unconquerable perseverance of the Spanish nation, in a cause apparently so desperate, finally so triumphant, without feeling his blood glow and his pulses quicken with tumultuous throbs of admiration. But I must remind the honourable gentleman of three circumstances, calculated to qualify a little the feelings

of enthusiasm, and to suggest lessons of caution: I must remind him first of the state of this country—secondly, of that of Spain—at that period, as compared with the present; and thirdly, of the manner in which the enterprise in behalf of Spain was viewed by certain parties in this country. We are now at peace. In 1808, we were already at war—we were at war with Buonaparte, the invader of Spain. In 1808 we were, as now, the allies of Portugal, bound by treaty to defend her from aggression; but Portugal was at that time not only menaced by the power of France, but overrun by it; her Royal Family was actually driven into exile, and their kingdom occupied by the French. Bound by treaty to protect Portugal, how natural was it, under such circumstances, to extend our assistance to Spain! Again: Spain was at that time, comparatively speaking, an united nation. I do not mean to say that there were no differences of opinion; I do not mean to deny that some few among the higher classes had been corrupted by the gold of France: but still the great bulk of the people were united in one cause; their loyalty to their Sovereign had survived his abdication; and though absent and a prisoner, the name of Ferdinand VII was the rallying-point of the nation. But let the House look at the situation in which England would be placed should she, at the present moment, march her armies to the aid of Spain. As against France alone, her task might not be more difficult than before; but is it only with France that she would now have to contend? England could not strike in the cause of Spain against the invading foe alone. Fighting in

Spanish ranks, should we not have to point our bayonets against Spanish bosoms? But this is not the whole of the difference between the present moment and the year 1808. In 1808 we had a large army prepared for foreign service; a whole war establishment ready appointed; and the simple question was, in what quarter we could best apply its force against the common enemy of England, of Spain, of Portugal,—of Europe. This country had no hopes of peace: our abstinence from the Spanish war could in no way have accelerated the return of that blessing; and the Peninsula presented, plainly and obviously, the theatre of exertion in which we could contend with most advantage. Compare, then, I say, that period with the present; in which none of the inducements, or incitements, which I have described as belonging to the opportunity of 1808, can be found.

But is the absence of inducement and incitement all? Is there no positive discouragement in the recollections of that time, to check too hasty a concurrence in the warlike views of the honourable member for Westminster? When England, in 1808, under all the circumstances which I have enumerated, did not hesitate to throw upon the banks of the Tagus, and to plunge into all the difficulties of the Peninsular War, an army destined to emerge in triumph through the Pyrenees, was that course hailed with sympathy and exultation by all parties in the State? Were there no warnings against danger? no chastisements for extravagance? no doubts—no complaints—no charges of rashness and impolicy? I have heard of persons, Sir,—persons of high

authority too—who, in the very midst of the general exaltation of spirit throughout this country, declared that, 'in order to warrant England in embarking in a military co-operation with Spain, something more was necessary than to show that the Spanish cause was just.' 'It was not enough,' said these enlightened monitors, 'it was not enough that the attack of France upon the Spanish nation was unprincipled, perfidious, and cruel—that the resistance of Spain was dictated by every principle, and sanctioned by every motive, honourable to human nature—that it made every English heart burn with a holy zeal to lend its assistance against the oppressor: there were other considerations of a less brilliant and enthusiastic, but not less necessary and commanding nature, which should have preceded the determination of putting to hazard the most valuable interests of the country. It is not with nations as with individuals. Those heroic virtues which shed a lustre upon individual man must, in their application to the conduct of nations, be chastened by reflections of a more cautious and calculating cast. That generous magnanimity and high-minded disinterestedness, proud distinctions of national virtue (and happy were the people whom they characterize), which, when exercised at the risk of every personal interest, in the prospect of every danger, and at the sacrifice even of life itself, justly immortalize the hero, cannot and ought not to be considered justifiable motives of political action, because nations cannot afford to be chivalrous and romantic.' History is philosophy teaching by example; and the words of the wise are treasured for ages that are to come.

'The age of chivalry', said Mr. Burke, 'is gone; and an age of economists and calculators has succeeded.' That an age of economists and calculators is come, we have indeed every night's experience. But what would be the surprise, and at the same time the gratification, of the mighty spirit of Burke, at finding his splendid lamentation so happily disproved!—at seeing that chivalrous spirit, the total extinction of which he deplored, revive, *qua minime reris*, on the very benches of the economists and calculators themselves! But in truth, Sir, it revives at a most inconvenient opportunity. It would be as ill-advised to follow a chivalrous impulse now, as it would in 1808 have been inexcusable to disobey it. Under the circumstances of 1808, I would again act as I then acted. But though inapplicable to the period to which it was applied, I confess I think the caution which I have just quoted does apply, with considerable force, to the present moment.

Having shown, then, that in reference to the state of Spain, war was not the course prescribed by any rational policy to England, let us next try the question in reference to France.

I do not stop here to refute and disclaim again the unworthy notion, which was early put forward, but has been since silently retracted and disowned, that it might have been advisable to try the chance of what might be effected by a *menace* of war, unsupported by any serious design of carrying that menace into execution. Those by whom this manœuvre was originally supposed to be recommended are, I understand, anxious to clear themselves from the suspicion of having intended to countenance it, and profess

indeed to wonder by whom such an idea can have been entertained. Be it so: I will not press the point invidiously—it is not necessary for my argument. I have a right then to take it as admitted, that we could not have threatened war without being thoroughly prepared for it; and that, in determining to threaten, we must virtually have determined (whatever the chances of escaping that ultimate result) to go to war—that the determinations were in fact identical.

Neither will I discuss over again that other proposition, already sufficiently exhausted in former debates, of the applicability of a purely maritime war to a struggle in aid of Spain, in the campaign by which her fate is to be decided. I will not pause to consider what consolation it would have been to the Spanish nation—what source of animation, and what encouragement to perseverance in resisting their invader—to learn that, though we could not, as in the last war, march to their aid, and mingle our banners with theirs in battle, we were, nevertheless, scouring their coasts for prizes, and securing to ourselves an indemnification for our own expenses in the capture of Martinico.

To go to war therefore directly, unsparingly, vigorously against France, in behalf of Spain, in the way in which alone Spain could derive any essential benefit from our co-operation—to join her with heart and hand, or to wrap ourselves up in a real and bona fide neutrality—that was the true alternative.

Some gentlemen have blamed me for a want of enthusiasm upon this occasion—some, too, who formerly blamed me for an excess of that quality;

but though I am charged with not being now sufficiently enthusiastic, I assure them that I do not contemplate the present contest with indifference. Far otherwise. I contemplate, I confess, with fearful anxiety, the peculiar character of the war in which France and Spain are engaged, and the peculiar direction which that character may possibly give to it. I was—I still am—an enthusiast for national independence; but I am not—I hope I never shall be—an enthusiast in favour of revolution. And yet how fearfully are those two considerations intermingled, in the present contest between France and Spain! This is no war for territory or for commercial advantages. It is unhappily a war of principle. France has invaded Spain from enmity to her new institutions. Supposing the enterprise of France not to succeed, what is there to prevent Spain from invading France, in return, from hatred of the principle upon which her invasion has been justified? Looking upon both sides with an impartial eye, I may avow that I know no equity which should bar the Spaniards from taking such a revenge. But it becomes quite another question whether I should choose to place myself under the necessity of actively contributing to successes which might inflict on France so terrible a retribution. If I admit that such a retribution by the party first attacked could scarcely be censured as unjust, still the punishment retorted upon the aggressor would be so dreadful, that nothing short of having received direct injury could justify any third Power in taking part in it.

War between France and Spain (as the Duke of Wellington has said) must always, to a certain

degree, partake of the character of a civil war; a character which palliates, if it does not justify, many acts that do not belong to a regular contest between two nations. But why should England voluntarily enter into a co-operation in which she must either take part in such acts, or be constantly rebuking and coercing her allies? If we were at war with France upon any question such as I must again take the liberty of describing by the term 'external' question, we should not think ourselves (I trust no government of this country would think itself) justified in employing against France the arms of internal revolution. But what, I again ask, is there to restrain Spain from such means of defensive retaliation, in a struggle begun by France avowedly from enmity to the internal institutions of Spain? And is it in such a quarrel that we would mix ourselves? If one of two contending parties poisons the well-springs of national liberty, and the other employs against its adversary the venomed weapons of political fanaticism, shall we voluntarily and unnecessarily associate ourselves with either, and become responsible for the infliction upon either of such unusual calamities? While I reject, therefore, with disdain, a suggestion which I have somewhere heard, of the possibility of our engaging against the Spanish cause, still I do not feel myself called upon to join with Spain in hostilities of such peculiar character as those which she may possibly retaliate upon France. Not being bound to do so by any obligation, expressed or implied, I cannot consent to be a party to a war in which, if Spain should chance to be successful, the result to France, and, through France, to all Europe, might, in the

case supposed, be such as no thinking man can contemplate without dismay; and such as I (for my own part) would not assist in producing, for all the advantages which England could reap from the most successful warfare.

I now come to the third consideration which we had to weigh—the situation of Portugal. It is perfectly true, as was stated by the honourable gentleman (Mr. Macdonald) who opened this debate, that we are bound by treaty to assist Portugal in case of her being attacked. It is perfectly true that this is an ancient and reciprocal obligation. It is perfectly true that Portugal has often been in jeopardy; and equally true that England has never failed to fly to her assistance. But much misconception has been exhibited during the last two nights, with respect to the real nature of the engagements between Portugal and this country; a misconception which has undoubtedly been, in part, created by the publication of some detached portions of diplomatic correspondence at Lisbon. The truth is, that some time ago an application was made to this Government by Portugal to 'guarantee the new political institutions' of that kingdom. I do not know that it has been the practice of this country to guarantee the political institutions of another. Perhaps something of the sort may be found in the history of our connexion with the united provinces of Holland, in virtue of which we interfered, in 1786, in the internal disputes of the authorities in that State. But that case was a special exception: the general rule is undoubtedly the other way. I declined, therefore, on the part of Great Britain, to accede to this strange application; and I

endeavoured to reconcile the Portuguese Government to our refusal, by showing that the demand was one which went directly to the infraction of that principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, which we professed for ourselves, and which it was obviously the interest of Portugal to see respected and maintained. Our obligations had been contracted with the old Portuguese monarchy. Our treaty bound us to consult the external safety of Portugal; and not to examine, to challenge, or to champion its internal institutions. If *we* examined their new institutions for the sake of deriving from them new motives for fulfilling our old engagements, with what propriety could we prohibit *other* Powers from examining them for the purpose of drawing any other conclusion? It was enough to say that such internal changes no way affected our engagements with Portugal; that we felt ourselves as much bound to defend her, under her altered constitution, as under the ancient monarchy, with which our alliance had been contracted. More than this we could not say; and more than this it was not her interest to require.

And what is the obligation of this alliance? To defend Portugal—to assist her, if necessary, with all our forces, in case of an unprovoked attack upon her territory. This, however, does not give to Portugal any right to call on us, if she were attacked in consequence of her *voluntarily* declaring war against another Power. By engaging in the cause of Spain, without any direct provocation from France, she would unquestionably lose all claim upon our assistance. The rendering that assistance would then become a question of

policy, not of duty. Surely my honourable and learned friend (Sir James Mackintosh), who has declaimed so loudly on this subject, knows as well as any man, that the course which we are bound to follow, in any case affecting Portugal, is marked out in our treaties with that Crown, with singular accuracy and circumspection. In case of the suspicion of any design being entertained against Portugal by another Power, our first duty is to call on such Power for explanation: in case of such interposition failing, we are to support Portugal by arms; first with a limited force, and afterwards with all our might. This treaty we have fulfilled to the letter, in the present instance. We long ago reminded France of our engagements with Portugal; and we have received repeated assurances that it is the determination of France rigidly to respect the independence of that kingdom. Portugal certainly did show some jealousy (as has been asserted) with respect to the Congress of Verona; and she applied to this Government to know whether her affairs had been brought before the Congress. I was half afraid of giving offence when I said 'the name of Portugal was never mentioned'. 'What, not mentioned? not a word about the new institutions?' 'No, not one. If mentioned at all, it was only with reference to the slave trade.' In truth, from the beginning to the close of the proceedings of the Congress, not the most distant intimation was given of any unfriendly design against Portugal.

Now, before I quit the Peninsula, a single word more to the honourable member for Westminster and his constituents. Have they estimated the burdens of a Peninsular War? God forbid that,

if honour, or good faith, or national interest required it, we should decline the path of duty because it is encompassed with difficulties; but at least we ought to keep some consideration of these difficulties in our minds. We have experience to teach us, with something like accuracy, what are the pecuniary demands of the contest for which we must be prepared, if we enter into a war in the Peninsula. To take only two years and a half of the last Peninsular War of which I happen to have the accounts at hand, from the beginning of 1812 to the glorious conclusion of the campaign of 1814, the expense incurred in Spain and Portugal was about £33,000,000. Is that an expense to be incurred again, without some peremptory and unavoidable call of duty, of honour, or of interest?

Such a call we are at all times ready to answer, *come* (to use the expression so much decried), *come what may*. But there is surely sufficient ground for pausing, before we acquiesce in the short and flippant deduction of a rash consequence from false premises, which has been so glibly echoed from one quarter to another, during the last four months. 'Oh! we must go to war with France, for we are bound to go to war in defence of Portugal. Portugal will certainly join Spain against France; France will then attack Portugal; and then our defensive obligation comes into play.' Sir, it does no such thing. If Portugal is attacked by France, or by any other Power, without provocation, Great Britain *is* indeed bound to defend her: but if Portugal wilfully seeks the hostility of France, by joining against France in a foreign quarrel, there is no such obligation on Great

Britain. The letter of treaties is as clear as the law of nations is precise upon this point: and as I believe no British statesman ever lived, so I hope none ever will live, unwise enough to bind his country by so preposterous an obligation, as that she should go to war, not merely in defence of an ally, but at the will and beck of that ally, whenever ambition, or false policy, or a predominant faction, may plunge that ally into wars of her own seeking and contriving.

On the other hand, would it have been advisable for us to precipitate Portugal into the war? Undoubtedly we might have done so. For by declaring war against France, on behalf of Spain, we should have invited France (and there was perhaps a party in Portugal ready enough to second the invitation) to extend her hostilities to the whole of the Peninsula. But was it an object of sound policy to bring a war upon our hands, of which it was clear that we must bear all the burden? And was not the situation of Portugal, then, so far from being a reason for war, that it added the third motive, and one of the greatest weight, to our preference for a pacific policy?

Fourthly.—As to our Continental allies. There was surely nothing in their situation to induce Great Britain to take a part in the war. Their Ministers have indeed been withdrawn from Madrid; but no alarm has been excited, by that act, in Spain. No case has occurred which gives to France a right to call for the assistance of the allies. But had the British Government taken a decided part in support of the Spaniards, a material change might have been produced in the aspect of affairs. Spain, who has now to contend

with France alone, might in that case have had to contend with other and more overwhelming forces. Without pushing these considerations farther, enough surely has been said to indicate the expediency of adhering to that line of policy which we successfully pursued at Verona; and of endeavouring, by our example as well as by our influence, to prevent the complication and circumscribe the range of hostilities. Let it be considered how much the duration and the disasters of a war may depend upon the multitude or the fewness of its elements; and how much the accession of any new party, or parties, to a war must add to the difficulties of pacification.

I come next to consider the situation of this country. And first, as to our ability for the undertaking of a war. I have already said, that the country is yet rich enough in resources, in means, in strength, to engage in any contest to which national honour may call her; but I must at the same time be allowed to say, that her strength has very recently been strained to the utmost; that her means are at that precise stage of recovery which makes it most desirable that the progress of that recovery should not be interrupted; that her resources, now in a course of rapid reproduction, would, by any sudden check, be thrown into a disorder more deep and difficult of cure. It is in reference to this particular condition of the country, that I said on a former evening, what the honourable member for Surrey (Mr. Holme Sumner) has since done me the honour to repeat, 'If we are to be driven into war, sooner or later, let it be later': let it be after we have had time to turn, as it were, the corner of our difficulties—

after we shall have retrieved a little more effectively our exhausted resources, and have assured ourselves of means and strength, not only to begin, but to keep up the conflict, if necessary, for an indefinite period of time.

For let no man flatter himself that a war now entered upon would be a short one. Have we so soon forgotten the course and progress of the last war? For my part, I remember well the anticipations with which it began. I remember hearing a man, who will be allowed to have been distinguished by as great sagacity as ever belonged to the most consummate statesman—I remember hearing Mr. Pitt, not in his place in Parliament (where it might have been his object and his duty to animate zeal and to encourage hope), but in the privacy of his domestic circle, among the friends in whom he confided—I remember well hearing him say, in 1793, that he expected that war to be of very short duration. That duration ran out to a period beyond the life of him who made the prediction. It outlived his successor, and the successors of that successor, and at length came suddenly and unexpectedly to an end, through a combination of miraculous events, such as the most sanguine imagination could not have anticipated. With that example full in my recollection, I could not act upon the presumption that a new war, once begun, would be speedily ended. Let no such expectation induce us to enter a path, which, however plain and clear it may appear at the outset of the journey, we should presently see branching into intricacies, and becoming encumbered with obstructions, until we were involved in a labyrinth from which not we ourselves only,

but the generation to come, might in vain endeavour to find the means of extrication.

For the confirmation of these observations I appeal to that which I have stated as the last of the considerations in reference to which the policy of the British Government was calculated—I mean, to the present state of the world. No man can witness with more delight than I do the widening diffusion of political liberty. Acknowledging all the blessings which we have long derived from liberty ourselves, I do not grudge to others a participation in them. I would not prohibit other nations from kindling their torches at the flame of British freedom. But let us not deceive ourselves. The general acquisition of free institutions is not necessarily a security for general peace. I am obliged to confess that its immediate tendency is the other way. Take an example from France herself. The Representative Chamber of France has undoubtedly been the source of those hostilities, which I should not have despaired of seeing averted through the pacific disposition of the French King. Look at the democracies of the ancient world. Their existence, I may say, was in war. Look at the petty republics of Italy in more modern times. In truth, long intervals of profound peace are much more readily to be found under settlements of a monarchical form. Did the Republic of Rome, in the whole career of her existence, enjoy an interval of peace of as long duration as that which this country enjoyed under the administration of Sir Robert Walpole ?—and that interval, be it remembered, was broken short through the instigation of popular feeling. I am not saying that this is right

or wrong—but that it is so. It is in the very nature of free governments—and more especially, perhaps, of governments newly free. The principle which for centuries has given ascendancy to Great Britain is that she was the single free State in Europe. The spread of the representative system destroys that singularity, and must (however little we may like it) proportionably enfeeble our preponderating influence—unless we measure our steps cautiously, and accommodate our conduct to the times. Let it not be supposed that I would disparage the progress of freedom, that I wish checks to be applied to it, or that I am pleased at the sight of obstacles thrown in its way. Far, very far from it. I am only desiring it to be observed, that we cannot expect to enjoy at the same time incompatible advantages. Freedom must ever be the greatest of blessings; but it ceases to be a distinction, in proportion as other nations become free.

But, Sir, this is only a partial view of the subject; and one to which I have been led by the unreasonable expectations of those who, while they make loud complaints of the diplomacy of England, as less commanding than heretofore, unconsciously specify the very causes which necessarily diminish and counteract its efficacy.

There are, however, other considerations to which I beg leave to turn the attention of the House.

It is perfectly true, as has been argued by more than one honourable member in this debate, that there is a contest going on in the world, between the spirit of unlimited monarchy, and the spirit of unlimited democracy. Between these two spirits,

it may be said that strife is either openly in action or covertly at work, throughout the greater portion of Europe. It is true, as has also been argued, that in no former period in history is there so close a resemblance to the present, as in that of the Reformation. So far my honourable and learned friend (Sir J. Mackintosh) and the honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett) were justified in holding up Queen Elizabeth's reign as an example for our study. The honourable member for Westminster, too, has observed that, in imitation of Queen Elizabeth's policy, the proper place for this country, in the present state of the world, is at the head of free nations struggling against arbitrary power. Sir, undoubtedly there is, as I have admitted, a general resemblance between the two periods; forasmuch as in both we see a conflict of opinions, and in both a bond of union growing out of those opinions, which establishes, between parts and classes of different nations, a stricter communion than belongs to community of country. It is true—it is, I own I think, a formidable truth—that in this respect the two periods do resemble each other. But though there is this general similarity, there is one circumstance which mainly distinguishes the present time from the reign of Elizabeth; and which, though by no means unimportant in itself, has been overlooked by all those to whose arguments I am now referring. Elizabeth was herself amongst the revolters against the authority of the Church of Rome; but we are not amongst those who are engaged in a struggle against the spirit of unlimited monarchy. We have fought that fight. We have taken our station. We have long ago assumed a character

differing altogether from that of those around us. It may have been the duty and the interest of Queen Elizabeth to make common cause with—to put herself at the head of—those who supported the Reformation: but can it be either our interest or our duty to ally ourselves with revolution? Let us be ready to afford refuge to the sufferers of either extreme party; but it is not surely our policy to become the associate of either. Our situation now is rather what that of Elizabeth *would have been*, if the Church of England had been, in her time, already completely established, in uncontested supremacy; acknowledged as a legitimate settlement, unassailed and unassailable by papal power. Does my honourable and learned friend believe that the policy of Elizabeth would in that case have been the same?

Now, our complex constitution is established with so happy a mixture of its elements—its tempered monarchy and its regulated freedom—that we have nothing to fear from foreign despotism, nothing at home but from capricious change. We have nothing to fear, unless, distasteful of the blessings which we have earned, and of the calm which we enjoy, we let loose again, with rash hand, the elements of our constitution, and set them once more to fight against each other. In this enviable situation, what have we in common with the struggles which are going on in other countries, for the attainment of objects of which we have been long in undisputed possession? We look down upon those struggles from the point to which we have happily attained, not with the cruel delight which is described by the poet, as arising from the contemplation of agita-

tions in which the spectator is not exposed to share; but with an anxious desire to mitigate, to enlighten, to reconcile, to save—by our example in all cases, by our exertions where we can usefully interpose.

Our station, then, is essentially neutral: neutral not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles. The object of the Government has been to preserve that station; and for the purpose of preserving it, to maintain peace. By remaining at peace ourselves, we best secure Portugal; by remaining at peace, we take the best chance of circumscribing the range and shortening the duration of the war, which we could not prevent from breaking out between France and Spain. By remaining at peace, we shall best enable ourselves to take an effectual and decisive part in any contest into which we may be hereafter forced against our will.

The papers on the table, the last paper at least (I mean the dispatch of the 31st of March, in which is stated what we expect from France), ought, I think, to have satisfied the honourable baronet, who said that, provided the Government was firm in purpose, he should not be disposed to find fault with their having acted *suaviter in modo*. In that dispatch our neutrality is qualified with certain specified conditions. To those conditions France has given her consent. When we say in that dispatch, we are 'satisfied' that those conditions will be observed, is it not obvious that we use a language of courtesy, which is always most becomingly employed between independent Powers? Who does not know that, in diplomatic correspondence, under that suavity of

expression is implied an 'or', which imports another alternative?

So far, then, as the interests and honour of Great Britain are concerned, those interests and that honour have been scrupulously maintained. Great Britain has come out of the negotiations, claiming all the respect that is due to her; and, in a tone not to be mistaken, enforcing all her rights. It is true that her policy has not been violent or precipitate. She has not sprung forth armed, from the impulse of a sudden indignation; she has looked before and after; she has reflected on all the circumstances which beset, and on all the consequences which may follow, so awful a decision as war; and instead of descending into the arena as party in a quarrel not her own, she has assumed the attitude and the attributes of justice, holding high the balance, and grasping but not unsheathing the sword.

Sir, I will now trouble the House no further than to call its attention to the precise nature of the motion which it has to dispose of this night. Sir, the result of the negotiations, as I have before stated, rendered it unnecessary and irregular for the Government to call for the expression of a parliamentary opinion upon them. It was, however, competent for any honourable member to suggest to the House the expression of such opinion; which, if expressed at all, it will readily be admitted ought to be expressed intelligibly. Now, what is the Address which, after a fortnight's notice, and after the menaces with which it has been announced and ushered in, the House has been desired to adopt? The honourable gentleman's Address first proposes to 'represent to His

Majesty, that the disappointment of His Majesty's benevolent solicitude to preserve general peace appears to this House to have, in a great measure, arisen from the failure of his Ministers to make the most earnest, vigorous, and solemn protest against the pretended right of the Sovereigns assembled *at Verona*, to make war on Spain in order to compel alterations in her political institutions'. I must take the liberty to say that this is not a true description. The war I have shown to be a *French* war, not arising from anything done, or omitted to be done, *at Verona*. But to finish the sentence :—' as well as against the subsequent pretension of the French Government, that nations cannot lawfully enjoy any civil privileges but from the spontaneous grant of their kings.' I must here again take the liberty to say that the averment is not correct. Whatever the misconduct of Government in these negotiations may have been, it is plain matter-of-fact, that they protested in the strongest manner against the pretension put forward in the speech of the King of France, that the liberties and franchises of a nation should be derived exclusively from the throne. It is on record, in this very Address, that the honourable gentlemen themselves could not have protested more strongly than the Government; since, in the next sentence to that which I have just read, in order to deliver themselves with the utmost force, they have condescended to borrow my words. For the Address goes on : ' . . . principles destructive of the rights of all independent States, which *strike at the root of the British Constitution*, and are subversive of His Majesty's legitimate title to the throne.' Now by far the strongest expres-

sion in this sentence—the metaphor (such as it is) about 'striking at the root of the British Constitution'—is mine. It is in my dispatch to Sir Charles Stuart of the 4th of February. I claim it with the pride and fondness of an author; when I see it plagiarized by those who condemn *me* for not using sufficiently forcible language, and who yet, in the very breath in which they pronounce that condemnation, are driven to borrow my very words to exemplify the omission which they impute.

So much for the justice of the Address; now for its usefulness and efficacy.

What is the full and sufficient declaration of the sense of the House on this most momentous crisis, which is contained in this monitory expostulation to the throne? It proceeds: 'Further to declare to His Majesty the surprise and sorrow with which this House has observed that His Majesty's Ministers should have advised the Spanish Government, while *so* unwarrantably menaced'—(this 'so' must refer to something out of doors, for there is not a word in the previous part of this precious composition to which it can be grammatically applied)—'to alter their constitution, in the hope of averting invasion; a concession which alone would have involved the total sacrifice of national independence, and which was not even palliated by an assurance from France, that on receiving so dishonourable a submission, she would desist from her unprovoked aggression.' (I deny this statement, by the way; it is a complete misrepresentation.) 'Finally to represent to His Majesty that, in the judgement of this House, a tone of more dignified remonstrance

would have been better calculated to preserve the peace of the Continent, and thereby to secure this nation more effectually from the hazard of being involved in the calamities of war.' And there it ends!—with a mere conjecture of what '*would have been*'!

Is this an Address for a British Parliament, carrying up a complaint that the nation is on the eve of war, but conveying not a word of advice as to the course to be followed at such a moment? I, for my own part, beg the House not to agree to such an Address—for this reason, amongst others, that as it will be my duty to tender my humble advice to His Majesty as to the answer to be given to it, I am sure I shall not know what to advise His Majesty to say: the only answer which occurs to me as suitable to the occasion is, 'Indeed! I am very sorry for it.'

This, then, is the upshot of a motion which was to show that the present Ministers are unfit to carry on war or to maintain peace; and, by implication, that there are those who know better how such matters should be managed. This is the upshot of the motion, which was to dislodge us from our seats, and to supply our places with the honourable gentlemen opposite. It is affirmed that we are now on the eve of war, the peace which we have maintained being insecure. If we *are* on the eve of war, will not this be the first time that a British House of Parliament has approached the throne, on such an occasion, without even a conditional pledge of support? If war is a matter even of possible contemplation, it surely becomes this House either to concur in an Address for the removal of the Ministers, who have need-

lessly incurred that danger; or, as the amendment moved by the honourable member for Yorkshire proposes, to tender to His Majesty a cordial assurance that this House will stand by His Majesty in sustaining the dignity of his crown, and the rights and interests of his people. I trust, therefore, Sir, that by rejecting this most incorrect and inadequate Address—as unworthy of the House as it is of the occasion; an Address contradictory in some parts to itself; in more, to the established facts of the case; and in all to the ascertained sense of the country; and by adopting, in its room, the amendment moved by the honourable member for Yorkshire, and seconded by the member for London, the House will stamp the policy which the King's Ministers have pursued—feebly perhaps, perhaps erroneously, but at all events from pure motives, in the sincerity of their hearts, and as conducive, in their judgement, to the tranquillity, welfare, and happiness, not of this country only, but of the world—with that highest of all sanctions, the deliberate approbation of the House of Commons.

SIR ROBERT PEEL

JUNE 1, 1829

PORTUGAL—DON MIGUEL

ON the motion of Sir J. Mackintosh, the passages in His Majesty's speech at the commencement and termination of the last and at the commencement of the present session were read. Sir J. Mackintosh then delivered a long and powerful speech, relating to the affairs of Portugal, concluding, amidst loud cheers, with moving for copies and extracts of communications concerning the relations between this country and the Queen of Portugal, illustrative of the several topics alluded to in his speech.

Mr. Secretary Peel said, that the right hon. gentleman who had just made an able and eloquent speech to the House had reserved for the closing part an affecting address to their feelings. The right hon. gentleman had detailed the extreme severities alleged to have been committed upon certain residents in the city of Oporto. He was confident, however, that no sympathy towards the sufferings of individuals, and no indignation against injustice, would withdraw the House from the calm and dispassionate consideration of those principles on which the public policy of this country had been founded with regard to the

kingdom of Portugal. He could not but express his cordial concurrence in the hope that this country, through the forbearance, wisdom, and virtue of its constitutional counsellors, would continue to enjoy the tranquillity and harmony which, for the last fifteen years, it had happily experienced. He trusted that efforts would be made to advance general instruction and civilization, and increased commercial intercourse between the nations, until the character of merely military conquerors was reduced to its proper dimensions, and until society was impressed with just notions of moral obligations and the blessings of peace. He hoped he should not be misconstrued, as a Minister of this country, in using this language. It proceeded from no unwillingness to enter upon war, if the cause were just and necessary—from no diffidence in the resources of the country—from no fear of the ability of bringing such a contest to a successful issue; but no man interested in the general improvement and happiness of mankind, and charged with the superintendence of the concerns of a great nation, could be accounted as acting an unworthy part in wishing for the continuance of peace. He indulged the hope of being able to satisfy the House that the course pursued with respect to Portugal had not only been in conformity to the strict principle of engagements—not only in conformity to the moral responsibility which England had incurred—but that it was better calculated to provide for the continuance of tranquillity than that which, judging by his arguments and observations, the right hon. gentleman would have been disposed to recommend with regard to the kingdom of Portugal. He

admitted with the right hon. gentleman the antiquity of the relations subsisting between this country and Portugal. He admitted that they had continued almost without interruption for four hundred and fifty years: and although the right hon. gentleman said, that on three occasions Portugal was subjected to invasion in consequence of its adherence to England, yet he begged to remind the House that England had not been backward in advancing to the succour of Portugal; and that the history of no country exhibited more proofs of the part taken by a powerful state to protect any kingdom in its interests and independence. The Portuguese were well entitled to the name of ancient allies: the inhabitants of the respective countries had united their arms in many fields, and almost always in fields of victory. The question now to be considered was, whether treaties existed imposing on Great Britain any obligation which of late had not been fulfilled; or whether any obligation imposed on her a duty to be fulfilled when called on by an appeal for further interference.

If the House would permit him, he would notice in detail the several observations of the right hon. gentleman; and, in the first place, those made rather with a view of provoking explanation than of criminating or accusing the advisers of the Crown. The right hon. gentleman had stated that, by a series of treaties, England was bound to protect the integrity and independence of the Portuguese territories. That statement was correct; but he denied that, either in the letter or in the spirit of those treaties, or in any engagement or obligation entered into by Great Britain, there

was conveyed a guarantee of the succession of any particular individual, or a guarantee of the existence of any political institution in Portugal. No request for such a guarantee had ever been preferred before the year 1820. In consequence of the unfortunate dissensions since that time, frequent applications had been made to England by different parties, either for the guarantee of certain institutions, or the security of existing forms of government; but the uniform answer was, that the guarantee to Portugal was against foreign invasion, and not on behalf of particular institutions, and that the general rule of England was not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. In 1822, his right hon. friend, Mr. Canning, being reappointed to the office of Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was appealed to by the democratic Government of Portugal for a guarantee of its political institutions. His right hon. friend referred the deputation to the declaration made by Lord Castlereagh at the Congress of Laybach, as the Minister of England, that her rule was not to interfere in the affairs of other countries, and distinctly notified to the Secretary of State of Portugal that the general principles of Lord Castlereagh's declaration applied to the institutions of Portugal. He held in his hand an extract from the note written by Mr. Ward under the direction of Mr. Canning. It stated that, in reply to the doubts of Mr. Oliveira, he referred to the declaration of 1821, laying it down as His Britannic Majesty's principles, with respect to foreign states, to abstain from interference in their domestic affairs; a principle which applied to all independent states, and was the more binding as

depending on the law of nations. He referred, he said, to this note to show that the present policy was not a line of conduct adopted for one occasion, but a principle expressly laid down both by Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning, and which, notwithstanding our peculiar relations with Portugal, in consequence of treaties existing for four hundred years, was yet not considered applicable to Portugal more than to any other state. In 1822, when Brazil and England were engaged in negotiations consequent upon the declaration of the independence of the Crown of Portugal, the principle was also considered applicable, and was observed throughout; and, in acknowledging the independence of Brazil, it was understood that it should not preclude an amicable arrangement between the two countries. The course adopted by Mr. Canning not only was sanctioned by sound policy and justice, but was the principle that had always guided England when called on to interfere in the civil concerns of Portugal. It was quite true that, in 1826, England sent an army to Portugal, and he thought then, and thought now, that in doing so she not only acted in conformity with the spirit of ancient treaties, but of wisdom and sound policy. Nothing could be more express than the disclaimer by Mr. Canning, that the army was not sent out for the purpose of supporting political institutions, but at the express instance of the *de facto* Government of Portugal, craving the assistance of England as a protection from foreign invasion. The principle of non-interference was distinctly recognized in sending out that army, and every instruction to the officer in command was to forbear mingling in

civil dissensions, but to protect the kingdom from foreign invasion.

He brought forward these statements to show that England had throughout declined giving a guarantee for any political institutions, or interfering in civil dissensions. That being the general rule, was there any peculiarity in the usurpation of Don Miguel, or in the claims of Donna Maria, to impose upon England the necessity of departing from her usual course? He was prepared to contend, in opposition to the inferences that might be drawn from the arguments of the right hon. gentleman, that there was no special case calling for a departure from our general system of policy. The first proof given by the right hon. gentleman of the duty of a qualified interference was drawn from the fact, that Don Miguel's accession or usurpation was in 1825, at the time when the treaty of separation between Brazil and Portugal had been entered into, and when the constitution had been sent from Brazil, through the agency of Sir Charles Stuart, a British subject. The right hon. gentleman had stated that this circumstance must have led the people of Portugal to believe that England was a party to the grant of the constitution, and as such bound to aid and support it. The answer to that point was quite conclusive. The affairs of Portugal would be so familiar to the House that they would recollect that Don John, its late monarch, died in 1826, and that Don Pedro, his son, having effected the separation of Brazil and Portugal by treaty, was styled Emperor of Brazil. Don John died, and the treaty was ratified; but no provision had been made for the

succession to the crown of Portugal. Don Pedro claimed the crown as king by succession, and determined on transferring it to his daughter, with the grant of a constitution. Now the fact was that England was not in any way responsible for that constitution. Don John died in 1826, and Sir Charles Stuart brought the constitution to Portugal on May 11 in the same year; and, by the dates of the different events, it was physically impossible that England should have organized the charter. Sir Charles Stuart was not only the plenipotentiary of England to Brazil, but was also employed in a similar capacity in adjusting certain differences between Brazil and Portugal; and, having discharged his duties as a British subject, he had remained at Rio de Janeiro in the latter character. Sir Charles did not act by the advice of the British Government, but was the mere bearer of the charter; and Mr. Canning, fearing that his residence at Lisbon might create an impression that this country was responsible for the charter, sent a circular to every court in Europe, disclaiming on the part of the British Government, any part in, or even knowledge of, the transaction; and he moreover ordered Sir Charles Stuart forthwith to leave Lisbon, lest his presence should be misconstrued into a countenancing of Don Pedro's constitution. The right hon. gentleman had inferred that England had contracted to support the constitutional charter. Now it so happened that all delusion upon that point had been effectually prevented by the language of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who declared in Parliament that he had declined advising the King to interfere

in the affairs of Portugal. Nothing could be more explicit than the declaration of Mr. Canning. As the subject was important, he trusted the House would allow him to refer to the words of Mr. Canning. On December 12, 1826, in the celebrated speech which he delivered on bringing down the King's message respecting the affairs of Portugal, Mr. Canning expressed himself as follows: 'It has been surmised that this measure (the grant of a constitutional charter to Portugal), as well as the abdication with which it was accompanied, was the offspring of our advice. No such thing. Great Britain did not suggest this measure. It is not her duty, nor her practice, to offer suggestions for the internal regulation of foreign states. She neither approved nor disapproved of the grant of a constitutional charter to Portugal; her opinion upon that grant was never required. True it is that the instrument of the constitutional charter was brought to Europe by a gentleman of high trust in the service of the British Government. Sir Charles Stuart had gone to Brazil to negotiate the separation between that country and Portugal. In addition to his character of plenipotentiary of Great Britain as the mediating Power, he had also been invested by the King of Portugal with the character of His Most Faithful Majesty's plenipotentiary for the negotiation with Brazil. That negotiation had been brought to a happy conclusion; and therewith the British part of Sir C. Stuart's commission had terminated. But Sir C. Stuart was still resident at Rio de Janeiro as the plenipotentiary of the King of Portugal, for negotiating commercial arrangements between Portugal and Brazil. In this latter character it

was that Sir C. Stuart, on his return to Europe, was requested by the Emperor of Brazil to be the bearer to Portugal of the new constitutional charter. His Majesty's Government found no fault with Sir C. Stuart for executing this commission; but it was immediately felt that, if Sir C. Stuart were allowed to remain at Lisbon, it might appear in the eyes of Europe that England was the contriver and imposer of the Portuguese constitution. Sir C. Stuart was therefore directed to return home forthwith, in order that the constitution, if carried into effect there, might plainly appear to be adopted by the Portuguese nation itself—not forced upon them by English interference.' On the part of the Government of England, it was evident, therefore, that no advice had been given on the subject of this charter, and that England was in no way responsible for it. Mr. Canning publicly avowed this fact; therefore there could have been no deception practised upon Portugal, nor could she have placed any reliance upon the participation of England in the transaction.

The right hon. gentleman, in the second part of his speech, had adverted to the discussions at London and Vienna, respecting the acceptance of the regency by Don Miguel, as involving a necessity to support the claims of the young queen. But surely it was too much to contend that, if England and Austria had taken certain measures respecting the appointment of Don Miguel to the regency, with the sanction of Don Pedro, they thereby became the guarantees of the Queen's rights. It was true that the King of Great Britain and the Emperor of Austria took certain measures to induce Don Miguel to comply with the engage-

ments; and it was true that the engagements he contracted with Don Pedro were not fulfilled. That circumstance might impair the individual character and conduct of Don Miguel, in any discussion regarding his private crimes and vices; but he would remind the right hon. gentleman that the vices and the crimes of this individual were matter of consideration for the inhabitants of Portugal; and if ever we undertook to govern our public policy by considerations arising from the private acts of individuals, he feared that that influence, which he rejoiced to hear we were admitted to possess, would not long continue. These were considerations which ought not to influence the public policy of other nations. Then the question came to this—Was England to undertake the conquest of Portugal for Donna Maria or not? That was the whole question. The right hon. gentleman said that England and Austria ought to have compelled Don Miguel to have executed his office of Regent of Portugal. By what means? There was only one of two courses of action—either complete neutrality, or the conquest of Portugal for the Queen. To give advice to Don Miguel, without intending to follow up that advice by force, if necessary, would be very likely to disappoint its effect: to threaten, without executing the threat, would be very inconsistent with the dignity of the Crown of England. To enter into any alliance with Brazil, with regard to the succession of the young Queen, would for various reasons, besides our proximity to Portugal, make England the principal in the war, and Brazil an inadequate sharer. It would be difficult to contend that there was anything in

ancient treaties, or any part of our stipulations, which strengthened the claim on England to advance the interests of Donna Maria by arms, or to force upon a reluctant people a Sovereign they were not willing to accept. The right hon. gentleman had said that at Vienna it had been intimated to Don Miguel, by the Courts of Austria and England, that if he did not accept the regency on the conditions upon which it was offered to him, he should be detained at Vienna until instructions could be received from Don Pedro. He (Mr. Peel) did not recollect that any such intimation had been conveyed to Don Miguel. He had no recollection as to any intention of forcibly detaining him; and he could assert that England was no party to any such forcible detention. England was merely present by her ambassador. It was, no doubt, an indignity to England that Don Miguel did not fulfil his stipulations, which had been entered into in the presence of her ambassador. But the question was, whether it was just or politic to make this a ground of war? He deplored, as much as the right hon. gentleman, Don Miguel's non-observance of those stipulations, and his want of faith; but he only contended that there was no ground for the interference of England by force, still less for adopting a principle of interference which might lead to serious consequences.

Another subject to which the right hon. gentleman had referred was the blockade of Terceira; and, without entering into all the particulars of that blockade, he should be able to justify the course pursued by Government. The right hon. gentleman had lamented that England had respected a blockade established by a *de facto*

Government. He would merely adduce—as a proof that there was no partiality to Portugal in recognizing the blockade—the fact that when Don Pedro disunited the Portuguese Empire, and declared Brazil independent, in defiance of his father, he established a blockade. England, upon that occasion, pursued the same course as she had now done. Without pronouncing upon the legality of the Government, she respected this act. So, in the present case, without pronouncing on the legality of Don Miguel's government, finding a blockade established, we had respected it, as we had done in Greece and in South America when a blockade was established by a competent force. Then the right hon. gentleman had contended that there was a want of courtesy in not admitting the claims of the respective Ministers of Portugal and Brazil. Now, there were three individuals in this country who had taken part in some diplomatic relations—the Marquis Palmella, the Marquis Barbacena, and Count Itabayana. But when the Marquis Palmella was applied to respecting the affairs of Portugal, he declared his functions to be at an end. Surely England could not be expected to recognize a Minister who, when he was addressed upon public matters, declared that his functions as a Minister were at an end! With regard to the Marquis Barbacena, he arrived here in charge of the Queen of Portugal, quite unexpectedly. The Queen had been sent from the Brazils to Vienna, in order to be placed under her relation the Emperor of Austria. No notification had been transmitted to this country of his intention to send her here. Letters were actually received from Mr. Gordon, our Minister

at the Brazils, dated three weeks after the Queen of Portugal had sailed, which mentioned no intention of the Queen coming to England. It was not until the arrival of the Marquis Barbacena at Gibraltar, that he determined to convey her hither; and it was not too much for the Government to ask the marquis, 'In what character do you appear?' Still it was intimated to him that, notwithstanding the want of courtesy displayed in not notifying the intention of Her Majesty, this would not affect the conduct of the Government, or cause the disrespectful reception of the Queen. But this showed the absolute necessity of ascertaining the character and powers of the marquis. Therefore, he could not think that his noble friend at the head of the Foreign Department, having to do with three Ministers of one state, was in fault if he desired to know their powers before he treated with them.

He would again remind the hon. gentleman that, if Don Miguel did sway the destinies of Portugal, this was not owing to foreign influence; it was owing to the Portuguese themselves. He had been proclaimed King by the Cortes of the kingdom. An insurrection had indeed sprung up, but it had failed. The right hon. gentleman said that it failed through some mistake, and that if the insurgents had pressed forward to Lisbon, Don Miguel and his mother would have been forced to emigrate. But he (Mr. Peel) held it to be quite unnecessary to discuss these points, or to inquire into the popularity of the King, or the consequences which might have happened if the insurgent general had advanced. Don Miguel was the person administering, *de facto*, the govern-

ment of Portugal, and he could not think it prudent on the part of England to undertake to displace him, and to dictate to the Portuguese who should be their ruler.

The only other transaction to which the right hon. gentleman had referred in the second part of his speech was that of Terceira. He would attempt to explain, with as much clearness as possible, the course which the Government had pursued in this affair. It was the determination of the English Government to maintain a strict and undeviating neutrality in regard to the dissensions of Portugal; and they resolved not to be induced, by any appeal to their feelings, to depart from it. They considered that there had been no sufficient case made out for forcible interference, and they resolved not to interfere. When the insurgents in the north of Portugal were driven to take refuge in Spain, Spain objected to receive them, and England did interfere to procure them a milder treatment. They, however, determined to repair to England, and applied for leave, which was granted: and a body of from three thousand to four thousand men were received at Plymouth, and continued there for a considerable time. The right hon. gentleman said that a notification was conveyed to them in November that the officers were to be separated from the men; that, in consequence, the Marquis Palmella informed the Duke of Wellington of their wish to retire to Brazil, and that on December 23 they applied to go to Terceira. The right hon. gentleman's version of this transaction was somewhat different from his. On December 23, an intimation had been given to Marquis Palmella that England

would not permit them to go on a hostile expedition to any part of the Portuguese dominions. But the right hon. gentleman had not stated that, on October 15, two months before the period before mentioned, the Marquis Barbacena had written to the Duke of Wellington to inform him that the Government of the Azores had made preparations for the reception of the Portuguese refugees, and that the marquis applied for a conveyance of the troops to Terceira, the largest island of the Azores. The other islands had acknowledged Don Miguel; in Terceira the garrison was in favour of Don Miguel, but there was a strong party in the island in favour of the Queen. The answer of the Duke of Wellington, on October 18, was that England was determined to maintain a neutrality in the civil dissensions of Portugal, and that the King, with that determination, could not permit the ports and arsenals of England to be made places of equipment for hostile armaments. It was intimated to the Marquis Palmella that, although the Government were willing to give shelter to the troops, it was improper that they should continue to occupy Plymouth as a military body, and that they should distribute themselves in the adjoining villages. The answer to this intimation was that their separation as a military body would relieve the Portuguese Government of its apprehensions. Was it to be tolerated that a Power not at war with us should see a force collected in England sufficient to excite apprehensions? The Marquis Palmella was told that the troops must give up their military character and become individuals. The answer was that, rather than

separate, and destroy their military character, they would prefer going to Brazil. The reply to this was, that we did not wish them to go to Brazil, but we would not obstruct them; and in order to protect them from Portuguese cruisers, a British convoy was offered and declined. The right hon. gentleman said that application was made for permission for a body of unarmed men to go to Terceira. But it was necessary that the House should know certain facts relating to the export of arms in that island which, if permitted, every object they had in view would have been attained. He was sorry to be obliged to state these facts; but it was necessary to the vindication of the Government, and those who were implicated in those transactions must suffer. At an earlier period than that mentioned by the right hon. gentleman—namely, August 15, 1828—Count Itabayana had applied to Lord Aberdeen for permission to export one hundred and fifty barrels of gunpowder and a quantity of muskets to Brazil. Lord Aberdeen replied that he would grant that permission provided the arms and powder were not intended to be employed in the civil dissensions of Portugal; that if the Emperor of Brazil had determined to attempt to conquer Portugal, England would not interfere; and he therefore required a bona fide declaration as to the manner in which the arms and powder were to be employed. Count Itabayana's answer was, that he did not hesitate to give a clear and precise reply, and that there was no intention of so employing them. In consequence of this answer, Lord Aberdeen gave the permission desired; but the

arms and powder were, notwithstanding this declaration, instantly transported to Terceira. Therefore when application was made to the Government for permission for the troops to leave this country for Terceira, they said, 'We have been already deceived; you profess to sail as unarmed men, but you will find arms on your arrival at Terceira.' They did, however, sail, and the right hon. gentleman had asked what right we had to stop them on the high seas? He would tell the House that they sailed with false clearances, which were obtained at the Custom-house as for Gibraltar, for Virginia, and other places; but the vessels really went to Terceira. Now, he begged the House to consider, and to decide on this statement of the case, and he would ask, whether it were consistent with the character of England to permit a military body thus to wage war from our ports with a Power with which we were not at war? We did not recognize Don Miguel, it was true; but we were not at war with Portugal. We still maintained commercial relations with that country, and had a consul there. It was too much for Brazil to desire to place us in a different situation with Portugal from that in which she was herself placed with that country; for she also had a consul there. We had no reason to believe that Don Pedro meditated a conquest of any part of the Portuguese dominions, and the question was, whether private individuals were to be permitted to carry on hostilities with Portugal from Plymouth. The duty of neutrality was as strong in respect to a *de facto* government as to one *de jure*. It was inconsistent with neutrality to permit an armed force to remain in

this country. In addition to the Portuguese troops at Plymouth, three hundred Germans were enlisted in the north of Europe to reinforce them. Was this to be tolerated ? When the Portuguese refugees went to Spain, we required that the officers should be separated from the men, and because Spain refused we prepared to go to war, and actually sent five thousand men to enforce our demand. Was it the policy of England to prevent the dismemberment of the Portuguese Empire ? In 1825 we stipulated that Portugal should be separated from Brazil ; so that motives of policy as well as neutrality called upon us to discourage these attempts, and above all to prevent this country from being made the arena for the designs of other Powers. What was to prevent Russia and France from making a similar use of our ports ?

He would now leave the House to decide whether the Government of England was not right in preventing its manifest intention being defeated by false clearances and false assurances. These were the facts of the case, and he was satisfied that the character of England had been vindicated by not allowing its ports to be made subservient to such designs. These were the principles upon which the Government had acted. The officer who had been entrusted with the naval expedition to Terceira, had acted with the utmost forbearance. He gave ample warning ; and it was not until a passage was attempted to be forced that he reluctantly fired a shot, which killed one man and wounded another. Having now given the explanations which the right hon. gentleman required, he came to his motion. It was impossible not to

acknowledge the forbearance of the House with regard to the discussion of foreign affairs—a forbearance dictated by a sense of the delicacy of interfering with pending negotiations, and prejudging measures; yet he had no hesitation in saying, that he was perfectly prepared to acquiesce in the motion of the right hon. gentleman, and probably the right hon. gentleman, instead of confining it to a call for certain papers, would allow his motion to stand as it appeared in the notice paper—'for copies or extracts of communications concerning the relations between this country and Her Most Faithful Majesty the Queen of Portugal'; and he assured him that every paper connected with the Queen of Portugal, which it was consistent with the duty of Ministers to produce, should be most readily given.

At a subsequent period of the debate,

Mr. Peel said that the British Government had not recently made any proposition for the completion of the marriage between Don Miguel and Donna Maria, nor had it ever made any such proposition at any time except with the cordial concurrence of the Emperor of Brazil. The moment the Emperor intimated an objection to the marriage, all communication on the subject on the part of the British Government ceased. No proposition for the renewal of the proceedings would be made unless with the entire concurrence of the Emperor of Brazil.

SIR ROBERT PEEL

JULY 16, 1832

BELGIUM

THE noble lord said that the payment to Russia was made for services done and performed by Russia, which were notorious, and which required no explanation. But did the House remember the pathetic appeal of the Solicitor-General? 'Oh!' said the Solicitor-General, 'if you had seen what I have seen, if you had had access to the pile of documents I have waded through, you would have no hesitation in granting the money.' When the House asked for a sight of these convincing documents, the noble lord got up and quoted to them *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* and the Reports of Lord Castlereagh's and Lord Liverpool's speeches. He never could believe that the documents so pathetically alluded to by the Solicitor-General were two speeches of Lord Liverpool and Lord Londonderry to which every human being had access in that most excellent work. If the noble lords wished to convince the House that they had acted correctly in this transaction, let them produce the official document on which their judgement professed to be founded. It was vain for them to rely upon a majority of forty-six, vain for them

to call a motion for information factious. The only sufficient answer would be the production of the documents. But the noble lord said it was extremely clear that the money was to be paid to Russia for past services performed; why, then, did the noble lord require a new convention? The preamble of the second convention certainly referred to the first, and it expressly recited it, but nothing whatever could be found in it about the past services of Russia. It stated the consideration to be the adhesion of Russia to the general arrangements of the Congress of Vienna. If it were true that the original payment to Russia was made on account of services rendered to the general cause of Europe and sacrifices made by Russia, why did the second convention allege that the equivalent which England was to receive from Russia in return for the continued payments was this, that Russia would not contract any new engagement respecting Belgium, without a previous agreement with His Britannic Majesty, and his formal assent? Where, then, was the justification of the assertion that the two treaties were founded upon the same consideration? The Government gave to the House conflicting documents. The one corresponded not with the other. The noble lord contended that the money was due to Russia for old services. Then why the new condition in the second convention? The preamble bound Russia, in consideration of the continuance of the payment, to identify her policy with that of England with respect to Holland. That, he contended, was entirely a new condition, and how could it be maintained that, if the money was fairly due to Russia for former services

performed, it was now just to impose upon Russia, as a condition of payment, that she should change her policy with regard to Holland so often as the policy of this country was changed? The question has been repeatedly asked, was this money to be ultimately paid or not? He would say this: unquestionably it was to be paid, if the country was bound to its payment by good faith. He would not tarnish the fair fame of the country for any sum whatever, upon any occasion, but more especially upon an occasion on which England had received a valuable consideration. When we incurred this responsibility on the behalf of Holland, we received from that country the colonies of the Cape of Good Hope, Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice; we still retained those colonies, they were valuable possessions, and therefore we were the more strictly bound not to shrink from any equitable obligation we had incurred. He agreed with his hon. friends that the money might be due from England; but to whom ought it to be paid? He could by no means admit that the first convention justified the second as a matter of course; but still there might be circumstances, not at present known to the House, which would still call for the continued payment to Russia, and authorize the new convention: but what those circumstances were, the House had a right to know before it was called upon to ratify the convention. The noble lord said, this country was bound to continue the payment to Russia by the good faith that Power had evinced. It appeared that, when the separation was about to take place between Holland and Belgium, Russia

said, 'I am ready to fulfil the treaty; my troops shall march upon Belgium, to continue the incorporation.' 'Oh! no,' said England, 'our policy is altered; we wish the separation to take place.' 'Very well,' was the reply of Russia, 'continue to me the payment, and I am ready to subscribe to your policy with respect to Holland and Belgium.' Such might be the fact; but, if it were, it ought to be established. The documents proving that to be the case ought to be in the possession of the House before it was called upon to ratify the treaty. The King might make a new treaty under a new system of policy, but it was for the House to say, in a case in which the payment of money was concerned, whether it would enable the King to execute such a treaty. If it were proved that this country had induced Russia, by a promise of the continuance of the payment, to act in the manner she had done, that gave rise to a new case, and a new convention was necessary, the policy of which depended upon many mixed considerations. He had said, he was not free from doubts as to whom the money ought to be paid. An hon. member (Mr. Gisborne), who had argued the question ably, had said that Holland was badly used; but the same hon. member contended that England was exonerated from making the payment to Holland on account of the unjust and impolitic conduct of that country to Belgium. That argument appeared to him most unsatisfactory. The hon. member admitted that Holland had a right to refuse to pay her part of the loan to Russia. Let him suppose that the whole of the loan had been payable by Holland, and that that country had

retained possession of the colonies she had given up to this country; how then would the case stand? If Holland was justified in refusing to pay a portion of the loan, surely she would, in the case he was supposing, be equally justified in refusing to pay the whole; and, therefore, if this country had not been put in possession of the Dutch colonies, Holland would have retained her colonies and would have no debt to pay. But England had the colonies, and to what Power then, according to the reasoning of the hon. member, ought England to make the payment of her portion of the loan? Surely to Holland. It might be very convenient, for ensuring Russian acquiescence, to make the payment to Russia, but certainly, according to the reasoning of the hon. member (Mr. Gisborne), it was anything but just. But he never would admit that Holland had behaved with harshness or injustice to Belgium, or that the revolt was justifiable by the conduct of Holland. The revolution in Belgium followed as a consequence from the revolution in France. If the French Revolution had not occurred, they would have heard nothing of the separation of Belgium from Holland; and we had no pretext in the misconduct of Holland for exonerating ourselves from our pecuniary obligations to that country. He wished not to enter upon the question of the policy pursued by His Majesty's Government with respect to Belgium; but he could not help smiling when he heard an hon. member contend that to place Prince Leopold on the throne of Belgium was a matter of great advantage to this country; because, forsooth, that prince had formerly been allied to

a daughter of the King of England. What did the hon. member think of the alliance which the King of Belgium was now about to form? If a matrimonial alliance, that had now ceased fifteen years, was to have so powerful an influence over King Leopold's politics, what did the hon. member think would be the effect of a marriage with one of the daughters of the King of the French? If the former connexion had made Leopold an English prince, would not the new connexion make him a French prince, and would not all the advantages of placing him on the throne, which were expected to belong to England, in reality belong to France? He implored the Government not to drive the House to a premature discussion of those matters. The payment could not rest upon the old convention, but must depend upon the new, mixed up with considerations arising out of the old. The Government had been rescued from a vote of censure, and might, therefore, without difficulty, consent to a postponement of the question. He asked not for an indefinite postponement, but as long a one as the duration of the session would authorize. A premature discussion on Belgian affairs was open to great objection. It was true that the five Powers had agreed to the separation, and had recognized King Leopold, but it was also true that none of the necessary arrangements were yet completed. The last article of the convention clearly proved that the period for decision on the merits of that convention had not yet arrived. It assigned, as the reason of the convention, the preservation of the peace of Europe. How did they know the peace of Europe would be preserved? He hoped

to God it might, but, under the present circumstances, it was utterly impossible to affirm that it would. He wished not to enter upon that question; he wished not to say a word upon the conduct of this country with respect to Belgium. On the contrary, he, and those who acted with him, had carefully, upon all occasions, abstained from provoking debate on the question of Belgium. He had strong feelings upon the subject, but he had been unwilling to enter into a premature discussion. These negotiations were drawing to their close, and whether they would end for good or evil the march of time would soon disclose. Holland had been told that by July 20 she must concur in the treaty, or force would be employed to compel her assent; and with such a declaration was it decent or wise to call upon the Parliament to ratify the convention now before the House? He had no doubt as to what the conduct of Russia would be; he had no doubt that she would keep her engagements to England respecting Belgium; but why should they be called upon to sanction the new convention until the negotiations now pending, as to the future relations between Holland and Belgium, were brought to a close. There were rumours that a French and English fleet were to be united for the purpose of constraining Holland to submit to the treaty. He trusted such was not the case; but, if it were, it was most unfair, in such a state of affairs, to compel a decision by the House of Commons as to the policy of a new pecuniary engagement to Russia. With respect to the alleged conduct of Russia to Poland, he was glad to find that all agreed in thinking that that subject had no

connexion with the present. He had heard some statements in the House respecting the conduct of Russia to the Poles, and he believed many of them to be unfounded in fact. It had been stated that thousands of children had been torn from their parents, and banished into Siberia; he had expressed his disbelief of that assertion, and he had since been informed, on good authority, that those children were orphans—made orphans, he regretted to say, by the calamities of war—and that they had been placed in Russian schools, not for the purpose of separating them from their parents, for they had none, but for the purpose of providing for them in their helplessness, and giving them education. So viewed, that which, under another aspect, appeared an act of gross cruelty, might be a humane proceeding. He was thankful to the House for the attention with which it had heard him, at so late an hour, and concluded by entreating the Government not to drive the House to a division. If it obtained another small majority, that majority would not convince the country that the conduct of Ministers had been justifiable.

SIR ROBERT PEEL

JULY 20, 1832

RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN

THE right hon. gentleman stated that the present Government had found themselves bound hand and foot by the engagements of their predecessors, who consented to guarantee a loan of £800,000 in aid of Prince Leopold, on his election to the throne of Greece. The right hon. gentleman had no right to say that the hands of himself and coadjutors were tied by the last Ministers. They were no parties to the original Treaty of 1827; but when they came into office they found themselves compelled to fulfil the treaties made by their predecessors. The Duke of Wellington, in 1830, three years after the treaty had been made, and not very long after he came into power, was engaged in the consideration of the Greek question. Prince Otho of Bavaria was then proposed as the Sovereign of Greece, and the Duke of Wellington objected to the appointment of that prince on account of his youth, he being then not more than fourteen. After considerable discussion, the Powers parties to the treaty agreed to the nomination of Prince Leopold, and the question of pecuniary aid was proposed. The Duke of Wellington said the Government of England had

never given pecuniary aid in such a case, and refused to accede to the proposition. Prince Leopold then applied to the three sovereigns and declared he would not accept the throne of Greece unless the money were advanced. The Government of the Duke of Wellington, being anxious to establish a sovereign on the throne of Greece, did, at last, reluctantly concur with Russia and France, rather than, by withholding their consent from the proposed arrangement, deprive Greece of the services of Prince Leopold and separate the policy of this country from that of France and Russia. The right hon. Secretary might have contended that the present Government found themselves bound to guarantee a loan to Prince Leopold; but he was not warranted in saying that they were pledged by the acts of a former Government to guarantee a loan to any other prince. To come to the question immediately before the committee, he admitted that it was a case involved in considerable difficulty. He could conceive that circumstances might be established which would compel him to acquiesce in the payment of the money to Russia. He had some doubts as to whom the money was payable, and as to the justice of the arrangements into which this country was about to enter. These doubts might, however, be removed by explanation; and he must say, that while England retained possession of the colonies wrested from Holland she ought not to be very astute in finding reasons for excepting herself from the terms of her contract. With the information at present before the House, he was not prepared to state whether the payments were due to Holland or

to Russia, but to one or other they were, in his opinion, due. If his vote were to imply a decided opinion that the money was not due to Russia, he would not give it. The right hon. gentleman assented—and it was an important admission—to the opinion he had formerly expressed, that the obligation of this country arose out of mixed considerations. His impression was, that there was a doubtful claim on this country, arising out of the convention of 1815; but he had admitted that there might be other considerations, independently of the convention, which would justify Ministers in promising to pay the money to Russia; that if they could show him that the payment of this money would enable them to maintain the peace of Europe, and to bring the pending negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion, he was prepared to give them his support. But why did the Ministers press a vote, when they were unable to give the House satisfaction upon these points? It was clear, from the right hon. gentleman's admission, that this question depended on mixed considerations; but he objected to being called upon to confirm the arrangement until he was satisfied, by the production of documents, of the extent of each of these mixed considerations. The negotiations were not complete, and they were, perhaps, the most important for the honour of England, for the independence of small states, and for the general tranquillity of Europe, in which this country was ever engaged. The right hon. gentleman said that the Government which preceded the present determined on the separation of Belgium from Holland. Here again he was incorrect. The former Ministers were called upon

to interfere as mediators. In compliance with the Treaty of 1815, the King of Holland applied to the great Powers for counsel. England at once told him that she was not prepared to assist him in re-establishing by force his authority over Belgium; but when the late Ministers left office it had never been decided that Belgium must, of necessity, be transferred from the dominion of the House of Nassau. He had even some recollection that the present Prime Minister had been taunted in the Belgic Chamber of Deputies for having expressed a hope which pervaded almost every British mind, that Belgium might be established as a separate kingdom under the authority of a prince of that illustrious family. That alone was sufficient to prove that the complete independence of Belgium of the House of Orange was not decided upon when the present Ministers entered office. But further, at the very time when he and his colleagues resigned office, an hon. gentleman (Sir J. C. Hobhouse) had a notice of a motion in the book, the object of which was to compel the Government to explain their supposed conduct in favouring, not the separation of Belgium from Holland, but the King of Holland against his revolted subjects. But to return to the ground on which he objected to being pledged to the arrangement now proposed—namely, that he was in possession of no information respecting the negotiations which were now being carried on. What course had the Government pursued with respect to Greece? The loan to Prince Otho had been guaranteed for a considerable time, and yet the House had not been called upon to ratify the treaty; and

the reason assigned by the noble lord for this delay was, that Government wished first to lay upon the table of the House every protocol connected with the negotiations. If Ministers pursued this conduct with respect to the Greek loan, why did they call upon the House to sanction the proposed arrangement with respect to Russia, without information? It might be said that the money was now due, but it had been due in July, and was not then paid. No further payment would be due until January, by which time, in all probability, pending negotiations would be brought to a close. Why, then, force the House now to express an opinion? He could not conceive what answer could be made to this question, in a parliamentary point of view. Was there ever an instance in which Parliament had been called upon to vote public money, arising out of negotiations, whilst they were yet pending? During the time these negotiations had been carried on, he and his friends had abstained from expressing any opinion concerning them, and had brought forward no motion calculated to embarrass the Government. And yet, before the negotiations were concluded, the Government called upon the House to vote the money. He made no objection to the amount. He did not deny that his impression was that there might be good and sufficient reason for the payment of this money, although it was not to be found on the face of the treaty; but he contended that it was contrary to all parliamentary custom to call upon the House to pronounce an opinion on the subject before it was put into possession of any information. The object of the arrangement professedly was, to

induce Russia to unite her policy with ours, to preserve the balance of power and the peace of Europe. He asked whether the measures which Ministers were pursuing were likely to preserve the peace of Europe? In the second article of the treaty, now upon the table, Russia engaged, if the arrangements at present agreed upon should be endangered, not to enter into other arrangements without the concurrence of England. The arrangements were in danger at the present moment. Negotiations, it might be said, were yet pending; but, if that were a complete answer against the giving of information, it was also complete against calling upon the House to vote the money. Had the ratifications of the treaties of 1831 been accompanied by any reserve? If so, ought this important point to be concealed? In the whole of Europe the English House of Commons was the only place where no information was to be obtained on these points. Communications had been made to the Chambers of Holland and Belgium; every foreign newspaper had contained authentic copies of documents which were most important in explaining the policy pursued at different periods of the negotiations; the House of Commons, however, possessed not a tittle of information on the subject. This course was according to precedent, because the negotiations were pending; but it was equally in conformity with precedent that, under these circumstances, the House ought not to be called upon to pledge itself to the payment of the money. It had been stated in an official newspaper, published in Holland, that Russia accompanied the ratification with an important reserve. The

treaty before the House contained twenty-four articles, the execution of which was guaranteed by the contracting parties; but those articles, as far as the distribution of territory was concerned, could not be acted upon until Holland and Belgium should sign and ratify another treaty. The first question, then, was, Had Belgium and Holland signed the treaty on which the execution of the other depends? The answer was, No; they had not. Under these circumstances it was practising a delusion on Parliament to talk of the treaty being ratified. It was well known that Holland insisted on the modification of three articles contained in this treaty. She insisted on not being compelled to abandon Luxembourg—on not being compelled to permit the free access of Belgic navigation to artificial canals—and on not being compelled to permit the Belgians to make the military roads through the new territories assigned to them. It was premature to enter into the question whether Holland was right or wrong in insisting on these points; but it was a notorious fact that Russia had accompanied her ratification of the treaty with this reserve—that Holland shall not be compelled to consent to the articles which she objected to. This, he might remark, was a proof that the policy of Russia was not concurrent with ours. It was evident that, if this reservation of Russia were insisted upon, it would be fatal to the treaty, and therefore it was not treating the House fairly to make the dry statement that Russia had ratified the treaty, without informing it whether her ratification was accompanied with such a reservation. The House ought, also, to be made

acquainted with the reasons why the treaty was not ratified at the appointed time. It was stipulated that the ratifications should be exchanged within six weeks after the signing of the convention. The signatures were affixed to the convention on November 16; but, from a paper signed by Mr. Pemberton, by order of the Lords of the Treasury, it appeared that the ratifications were not received on June 4. That was an additional proof that the policy of Russia was not concurrent with our own. Was it so, when Russia ratified with a reservation? Did that reservation still exist? If so, was it consistent with our policy? It was a mere mockery of the functions of the House of Commons to require it to fulfil the conditions of this convention whilst Ministers were unable to explain the state in which the negotiations stood at the present moment. It had been justly observed by his hon. friend the member for the University of Oxford, that it was a critical day. July 20 was the day by which it had been intimated to Holland by France and England that the treaty must be signed. This, at least, was understood to be the case. Documents had been published which contained a threat that force would be applied to compel Holland to give her consent to the treaty. Holland said that she would ratify the treaty provided the articles to which she objected were altered. The conference replied, 'You shall ratify first, and try to get the articles altered afterwards.' Holland very naturally objected to this arrangement, because she thought that, when she applied to Belgium to alter the objectionable articles, Belgium would reply that the treaty had

been ratified, and Holland must be bound by it. This was the state of the case; and the House of Commons ought to have been consulted before any naval armament was undertaken, or any demonstration of a warlike nature made. The House of Commons had a right to know the causes of war, if war were intended: and he considered a hostile attack upon Holland, by whatever name qualified, substantially the same as war. The right hon. Secretary for Ireland had taken a rather sanguine view of our domestic affairs, and plumed himself particularly on the improved conditions of Ireland at present, as compared with that of 1830. He should not envy him the merit of any success which might have attended his efforts to ameliorate the condition of that country, if he could bring himself to believe that it had taken place; but, from all the information which he had the means of procuring with regard to the state of Ireland, he was induced to think, that that country was never in a situation calculated to excite greater alarm than at the present moment. But with respect to foreign affairs, with respect to those countries which were the immediate subject of consideration, we could not long be kept in suspense. Peace or war had arrived, which must, within a very short time, terminate either in peace or in an interruption of peace. Again, then, he said, let them consider well the ground of war; if war they were about to have with Holland—war to compel her, against her will, to do something inconsistent with her honour, or with her independence. Beware of that; England had before been in alliance with France against

Holland. Remember the relation in which she had stood towards that country—remember the period—that disgraceful period—in the reign of Charles II, from the year 1670 to the Peace of Nimeguen in 1678; look to the alliance between England and France at that disgraceful period, remember the terms of that alliance, and the relations in which we had stood towards France, and towards the House of Nassau. He remembered the indignant terms in which Mr. Fox spoke of the disgraceful and unnatural alliances which this country entered into with France at that period. He said that his blood boiled at the contemplation of the disgraceful policy which was pursued by this country. He conjured the Ministers to satisfy the House, if they were about to enter into alliance with any Power to coerce a third, of the justice of that alliance. Let them bear in mind what could be done by a gallant people attached to freedom, who now seemed to rally round their Sovereign with the unanimous determination to encounter every extremity rather than submit to injustice or disgrace. Remember the siege of Haarlem—remember the exploits that had been achieved on that and numberless other occasions by the same gallant nation. Before Ministers asked the House to sanction a new crusade against Holland, implying approbation of their policy, let them accede at least to this reasonable request, that they would either afford the House information respecting the nature of our foreign relations, or postpone this vote. These were the grounds upon which he protested against being made a judge in the question at present before the House. He had

not the necessary information to enable him to give a vote upon it. The present agony and crisis of Holland was not the time for calling upon the House for a ratification of this treaty. Let it be remembered, that this vote was for the postponement of the question, and not for its rejection. The course which he, for one, should pursue, should the House determine to ratify this treaty, would be to vote a negative, and leave the responsibility of the transaction upon those who proposed it; but with a solemn protest, on his part, against the unfairness and injustice of the proceeding.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL

March 4, 1847

THE ANNEXATION OF CRACOW

The hon. member for Montrose (Mr. Joseph Hume) having made his motion, I shall, without entering on the general argument which has been stated by him and by my noble friend opposite, shortly state to the House the view which I take of the motion which he has made. With respect to the argument which has been stated, that the three Powers were not justified by the Treaty of Vienna in concluding for themselves the consideration, whether the free state of Cracow should be maintained or extinguished—with respect to that argument I cannot but concur with my hon. friend who made the motion, and my noble friend who seconded it. I think it is clear from the words of the Treaty of Vienna, and from the prominence which the arrangement respecting Poland took, both in the conferences which preceded that treaty and in the articles of the treaty itself, that these articles were not immaterial parts of the treaty, but did form one of the principal stipulations upon which the great Powers of Europe agreed at the termination of a bloody and destructive war. Nor can I think that, while the arrangement which placed the Duchy of Warsaw

under the dominion of the Emperor of Russia formed the subject of many discussions and a long correspondence, not only between the Ministers of the different Courts, but also of a singular correspondence between the Minister for Foreign Affairs in this country and the Emperor of Russia himself—I say I cannot think that, while that arrangement formed a principal part of the treaty, the arrangement which left one small portion, 'a mere atom,' as the allied Powers called it, free and independent, was an immaterial, or an insignificant part of it. It cannot but appear, I think, however small the territory—however small the population of that state—that yet the treaty formed, first between the three Powers and then by all the Powers who were the concurring parties in the Treaty of Vienna, meant that freedom and independence should leave to Poland—should leave to some part of the Polish nation—a separate existence; and that, giving up much, admitting much, to the Emperor of Russia, it was still consecrated, as a principle, that some part of the Polish nation should retain an independent and separate existence. For this reason, therefore, I consider the existence of Cracow as a state, having been thus secured by general treaty—whatever the complaints the three Powers had made that Cracow was the focus of disturbances; that revolutionary intrigues there found a centre and a means of organization; that there arose from that small state insurrection against the three surrounding Powers; that it was impossible to preserve those Powers from this insurrection: that if these reasons were good and valid—if they were felt to be strong—they

should have been stated to England and to France; that England and France should have been invited to a congress, or some species of conference, in which their consent should have been asked to put an end to a state of things which those Powers declared to be intolerable, and which they could no longer permit with safety to themselves. So much, I think, is clear from the papers which record the general transaction of the Treaty of Vienna; and so much also, I think, is clear from the passage which my noble friend opposite (Lord Sandon) has read from the statement of the Prussian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which he, in words, admits that if the arrangement of the Treaty of Vienna were to be altered and set aside, agreement and concurrence with England and France would previously have been necessary. In the next place, with regard to the reasons which are given by the three Great Powers, and which are stated more especially by Prince Metternich, on the part of the Court of Austria, those reasons appear to me insufficient for the violent proceeding which has taken place. I cannot myself imagine that there could not have been precautions taken, which, however they limited the action of the free and independent state of Cracow, would yet have been a security that its name and its independence would have been maintained; while all danger from refugees, from its being made a place where strangers from all parts of the Continent came and planned conspiracy, might have been encountered and prevented. It does seem to me most extraordinary that, with this little state—this mere atom, surrounded by Russia, by Austria, and by

Prussia—these three great and mighty monarchies, with such vast military forces, with such unbounded means, having command of all the roads which lead to Cracow, having the power of marching their troops at any moment into the city of Cracow, having certain rights which were constituted and assigned to them in the Treaty of Vienna—should have found themselves so powerless as to be unable to prevent Cracow becoming dangerous to their peace and welfare. I cannot, indeed, but suspect, especially looking at the latter part of this transaction, when government was dissolved in Cracow—when disorganization took place—that it was not unwelcome, or altogether unpalatable to those three Powers, to be enabled to say, 'All means of government are gone; Cracow is a scene of anarchy and disorder, and no remedy remains but the total abolition of the existence of that republic.' Therefore, Sir, both on the grounds of the Treaty of Vienna, the distinctness of the stipulations referring to Cracow, and with regard to the reasons which were urged for its extinction, I think, in the first place, there was a manifest violation of the Treaty of Vienna; and I believe, in the second, that, if the question had been discussed in a congress or conference among the Powers, there is no sufficient proof, so far as we have hitherto seen, that the three Powers would have been in a position to show good cause for the course they have adopted. Neither, Sir, am I convinced by the instances that are furnished by the Minister of Austria, as to various stipulations of the Treaty of Vienna, which have been altered by uncontested agreement between Powers who were concerned, and whose territories were

affected, such as small parts of principalities given by the Duke of Coburg, or others, transferred in consideration of some equivalents to other princes, for the mutual convenience of their respective territories, for the purpose of giving a fair equivalent to each, and of sometimes making a more satisfactory arrangement for all. These are, naturally and obviously, alterations of the Treaty of Vienna, which might take place without any general appeal to all the Powers who have signed that treaty. Such alterations bear, in my mind, no resemblance to an infraction of one of those great and leading and master stipulations in which all the Powers of Europe are deeply interested. Supposing that some arrangement were made between Austria and Prussia for the extinction of Saxony, and that the Great Powers were to ask how they, only two of the parties to the Treaty of Vienna, could agree to extinguish Saxony, what answer would it be—that some little bit of territory had before been exchanged between some of the minor princes, and that then we made no protest? And, as I consider it, the extinction of this free state is an alteration of one of the main and leading provisions of the treaty. But my hon. friend, Sir, not satisfied with the protest which my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has directed to be delivered at the Courts of the three Powers principally concerned, wishes this House to agree to certain resolutions. With respect to the first of these resolutions, my noble friend opposite (Lord Sandon), who seconds the motion, is in complete accordance. With regard to the last he is not so far agreed, and he doubts whether the

House ought to affirm it. As to the first of these resolutions, 'That this House views with alarm and indignation the incorporation of the free state of Cracow into the dominions of the Emperor of Austria, in manifest violation of the Treaty of Vienna,' I should beg the House to consider that there is a very great difference between that which has been done by my noble friend (Lord Palmerston) in obedience to Her Majesty's commands, and that which it is proposed to this House to do. It is the prerogative of the Crown to make treaties, to carry on the correspondence and relations of this country with foreign Powers. Every public and every personal communication is agreed on in the name of the Sovereign, and by the command of the Sovereign. If a treaty has been signed and ratified, as this Treaty of Vienna was signed and ratified, by the Minister of England in the name of George III, and of the Prince Regent of England; and if any violation or contravention of that treaty takes place, the person to whom it devolves to make any representation, is obviously, again, the Minister of the Sovereign—the Minister of the Sovereign of England, who has made the original treaty. But with regard to the functions of this House, they are of a very different nature. When there is a treaty made, or a correspondence takes place, upon which it is thought necessary that the opinion and concurrence of this House should be taken, it is usual then for the Ministers of the Crown to ask for that general concurrence. If a treaty of commerce or a treaty of subsidy is signed, that requires the intervention of Parliament, it is usual for the Minister of the Crown to ask for the sanction or concurrence of Parliament

to that treaty. But to affirm a resolution which is not thus brought by necessity before the House of Commons—to affirm a resolution merely declaratory of an opinion, that is not the correct nor the regular course of proceeding in this House. For my own part it appears to me, that while it is obviously incumbent on the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and on the advisers of Her Majesty, to declare their sense of any violation of treaty, or of any matter which concerns the foreign relations of this country with other countries, it is not advisable that the House of Commons should affirm resolutions with respect to the conduct of those foreign Powers, unless it be intended to follow up those resolutions by some measures or actions on the part of the Executive Government. For my part I have never admired —and I have always declared in this House that I never admired in this respect—the conduct of the French Chambers with regard to Poland. It has been the custom of the Chamber of Deputies in France annually to protest at the commencement of the Session against the acts of the Emperor Nicholas, and to make a declaration in favour of the nationality of Poland. I think that such annual declarations are illusive; for while they have been made in this manner, they have been followed up by no measures; they are made by a representative assembly, without any action following on that declaration. Be it observed how great is the difference between that and a protest on the part of a Sovereign. The Sovereign, by prerogative, entrusted with this power of making treaties, is forced of necessity to some opinion or other—of tacit acquiescence, of favour-

able and applauding concurrence, or one involving remonstrance and reproach—some course or other is forced upon the Executive Government of the country. But with regard to the House of Commons, it is not necessary, in the ordinary course of foreign affairs, that this House should at all interfere or declare its opinion on these subjects. I can see no advantage in altering that usual course. I do not think there would be any advantage in bringing these subjects frequently or constantly before the House, with a view to a declaration of opinion—I think the House would gain no respect by a deviation from its usual custom. That is my reason, therefore, while I could have no objections to urge in opinion against this resolution—for I have already declared what is my opinion with regard to the extinction of the free state of Cracow—why I object to its being made a resolution of the House of Commons; and on that point I should be disposed to move the previous question. With regard to the other resolution, I should act in like manner. That resolution says that—

'Russia, having withdrawn that adhesion (to the Treaty of Vienna), and those arrangements being through her act no longer in force, the payments from this country on account of the loan should be henceforth suspended.'

Now, that is entirely a different question. The arrangements at the time of the Treaty of Vienna involved an union of Belgium with Holland; and there being a debt in Holland which was payable, and the interest of which was payable by Russia, Great Britain took upon herself the payment of the interest of that debt, in consideration of

Russia being a party to that arrangement. When, after that, these two countries were separated, Russia no longer attempted to maintain that arrangement; and, therefore, by the letter of the treaty, England might then have said, 'You no longer maintain the union of Belgium with Holland; and therefore as you do not comply with the letter of that treaty, we are free from the discharge of the interest of that debt.' But although this would have been in perfect and entire conformity with the letter of the treaty, it would have been most inconsistent with the justice of the case; because the Power that had favoured the separation, and which, from the moment the insurrection in Belgium was successful, favoured, recognized, and aided that separation, was especially England; and for England to come forward and say, 'You did not maintain the union between Holland and Belgium, an union which we did not wish, which we wanted to see dissolved, we declare ourselves free from the payment of that debt'—to have said so would have been such an evasion of an engagement, that I certainly could not have taken any part in adopting it. But it was not evaded. England being free from the letter of the engagement, made a new engagement with Russia; and in that engagement she agreed to continue the payment of the interest of that debt. The actual ground for continuing the payment of that interest was, that Russia did abide by the general arrangement of the Treaty of Vienna; and that it was only in consequence of the acts of England herself that she did not maintain the union between Holland and Belgium. But undoubtedly the words were introduced into

that convention which were a security to Russia for payment of

'her old Dutch debt, in consideration of the general arrangements of the Congress of Vienna, to which she had given her adhesion—arrangements which remain in full force.'

Now, these words were certainly used. They were introduced at the request of the representatives of Russia in this country. They were put in, in order to show that, whilst Russia had departed in one principal respect from this arrangement, yet she was not to be accused of any violation of the general treaty, of any bad faith in the matter, because she had only done so at the request of England. But still, as I think, the original arrangement and the general reason of the arrangement remain in full force; and what was that original arrangement? It was, that Russia had agreed with England with respect to the territorial disposition of Holland and Belgium. There was no question at that time of any other arrangement, or of the Treaty of Vienna being violated or disturbed. Russia desired these words to be inserted in the treaty. So far as England was concerned, she did not wish those words to be inserted. It was not the expression of any desire of hers that they were so; but it seemed to be a matter of good faith, that as Russia still maintained the original arrangement, therefore it was right to continue to pay the interest of the debt. Now, I say with respect to the spirit of the agreement, that I do not think it would be just to take advantage of the insertion of these words, and that Russia having, so far as Belgium and Holland are concerned, faithfully preserved those stipulations,

having never attempted either to disturb this arrangement, and still less refused her aid to England with regard to any question respecting them, I do not think, in point of fair dealing, we should be justified in refusing to pay the interest of the debt. I do think, however, that according to these words, we might now, as we formerly might have done, refuse to pay this interest. We might say to Russia: 'You have permitted these words to be inserted—they were inserted with your sanction; and, as they were inserted with your sanction, we will take advantage of these words, and we will refuse any longer to pay the sum.' That would be conformable to one interpretation of the treaty. Those whom we consulted, who were the highest authorities that we could consult with regard to the interpretation of Acts of Parliament bearing upon treaties—the legal authorities who are usually consulted on those subjects—have told us, that they think, according to the spirit of the arrangement, according to the spirit of the convention, the money ought still to be paid. It is at most, state it as favourably as you can for the hon. gentleman's motion, a doubtful point, upon which, if you wish to take advantage, you might claim that advantage from words inserted in the convention. According to my opinion, you would be acting against the spirit of the treaty in order to take advantage of a plea which, I think, in a court of law, might perhaps be urged in order to get rid of a contract, but which as between nations, ought not to be used. I think, in so considering this question, we should lower our position. I think we should deprive ourselves of that advantage which we

now have if we were to reduce this to a transaction of pounds, shillings, and pence. I consider that in late transactions in Europe, although, on more than one occasion, and by different Powers, our wishes have not been complied with, our desires have not been listened to, our protests may have been disregarded, yet there does remain with us a moral strength nothing can take away. There is no treaty the stipulations of which it can be imputed to England that she has violated, evaded, or set at naught. We are ready, in the face of Europe, however inconvenient some of those stipulations may be, to hold ourselves bound, by all our engagements, to keep the fame, and the name, and the honour of the Crown of England unsullied, and to guard that unsullied honour as a jewel which we will not have tarnished. With that sentiment, Sir, if I should ask my noble friend to go to the Court of Russia, and say, 'To be sure you have violated a treaty—to be sure you have extinguished an independent state. We have allowed this to be done. You shall hear no threat of war. We will not arm for the purpose. We will admit that the state of Cracow is extinguished. We will admit that her inhabitants are reduced to subjection. The names of freedom and of independence to them are lost for ever. But this we will do. There is a claim of some thousand pounds which we can make against you, which we now pay, and which we will now throw upon your shoulders; and in that way we will revenge ourselves for your violation of treaties'—we should be taking a part, we should be using language which is not becoming the position England has hitherto held; which is not becoming

the position I wish her in future to hold against the world. Having thus stated as shortly as I could the views I entertain upon the subject, I ask you not to come in this House of Commons, which does not usually interfere with the foreign relations of this country, to any idle resolution upon which you don't intend to act; and I ask you, in the next place, not to lower this question to a mere question of money value, not to go and demand how much this Russian-Dutch stock may be worth in the market, but to preserve that which, as I think, is of inestimable value; I wish you to allow, as this House has hitherto allowed, by its silent acquiescence, the protest which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has delivered, to remain in full force, as a declaration upon our part—a declaration which will have its value, depend upon it, in regard to future transactions—that we do not abstain from the observance of treaties which we believe to have been violated; and let us be able to say that we have sought no interest of England in this matter. We have not looked to any interest, either large or petty, in regard to ourselves; we have regarded the great interests of Europe; we have desired that the settlement which put an end to a century of bloodshed should remain in full force and vigour. We have declared that sentiment to the world, and we trust that the reprobation with which this transaction has been met, will, in future, lead all Powers, whoever they may be, who may be induced to violate treaties, to consider that they will meet with the disinterested protest of England, so that her character shall stand before the world untarnished by any act of her own.

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON

MARCH 1, 1848

THE POLISH QUESTION

LET us take the whole Polish question at once, for that is really what the hon. member means by this part of the motion. I am not aware of any commercial rights enjoyed by Great Britain which have been much affected in Poland by any changes that have taken place. Nor do I recollect any commercial rights which have been affected, except those of individuals, which might in some degree have been so by changes in the tariff. The charge made by the hon. member is in effect this—that when the Polish revolution broke out in 1835, England, in conjunction with France, should have taken up arms in favour of the Poles, but she did not do so; that she abandoned France in her attempt, and thus deprived the Poles of their independence; and finally—and here the hon. member made an assertion I was astonished to hear—that we prevented Austria uniting with France and England for the same object. [Mr. Anstey: I said, Austria was ready to have joined with us if we had acted differently.] Well, then, the hon. member says we balked the readiness of Austria to interpose in favour of the Poles, when we had many reasons to adopt a different course. This question has been so often discussed that I can only repeat

what I have said in former Parliaments. It is well known that when we came into office in 1830, Europe was in a state which, in the opinion of any impartial man, and of the best political judges, threatened to break out into a general war. I remember being told by a right hon. gentleman, in the course of a private conversation in the House, that 'if an angel came down from heaven to write my dispatches, I could not prevent Europe from a war in six months'. Well, Sir, not months, but years, rolled by, and no war took place. It was the anxious desire of the Government of Earl Grey to prevent war; and the maintenance of peace was one of the objects at which they expressly aimed, and succeeded. What were the dangers which threatened the peace of Europe? There had just been a great revolution in France, there had been another in Belgium, and these had been followed by a great rising of the Poles against the sway of Russia. In these struggles there was a conflict of principle as well as one of political relations. There was the popular principle in France, in Belgium, and in Poland, to be resisted by the monarchical principle of Austria, of Russia, and of Prussia. The danger apprehended in 1831 was, that these three Powers should attempt by a hostile attack to control France in the exercise of her judgement with respect to who should be her sovereign, or what should be her constitution. The British Government, under the Duke of Wellington, with the most laudable regard for the public interests, not only of England but of Europe, hastened to acknowledge the new Sovereign of France, and to withdraw their country from the ranks of any confederacy against her; and this

conduct laid the foundation of that peace which it was our duty to maintain and cultivate. The great anxiety of England was that peace should be maintained. There was no doubt great sympathy with the Poles in their contest against Russia; and it was thought there was a chance of their succeeding in their attempt. The result, however, was different; but then it was said by the hon. member, 'Oh, it is the fault of England that she did not establish the independence of Poland. If she had joined with France and Austria (which now for the first time I am told was anxious to favour the cause of Poland), the Poles would have been in full enjoyment of their constitutional freedom.' The hon. gentleman actually said that Austria, in 1831, was in favour of the Poles, who were closely pressed by the Russians and Prussians, who had already got possession of Militsch, and felt, if the kingdom of Poland were independent, the chances were that she (Militsch) would rise also to assert her liberties. This statement is excessively extraordinary. I am quite surprised even that the hon. member for Youghal should have made it. I will tell him what was passing in his mind when he said so, and what led him to make this statement; for I am at least desirous of giving a rational solution to it, as far as I can, under his correction. The fact of which he was probably thinking was this: In 1814, when the issue of the war between Napoleon and the other Powers of Europe was doubtful, a treaty, of which part has been made public, was signed at Reichenbach between Austria, Russia, and Prussia, for the entire partition of Poland between them, in the event of their success against France. The

effect of this treaty would have been to extinguish the name of Poland as a separate and independent element of European geography. In 1813, after Napoleon had been repulsed from Russia, and the war had retired to the westward of Germany and of Europe, where shortly after it was brought to a close, discussions took place at Vienna as to what should be done with Poland. Austria called for the execution of the compact, and, with England, demanded that either the Treaty of Reichenbach should be completely carried out, and Poland divided equally into three parts for each of the contracting parties, or that she should be reconstructed and made anew into a substantive state between the three Powers. Russia was of a different opinion, and contended not for the execution of the Treaty of Reichenbach, but for the arrangement which was subsequently carried into effect, namely, that the greater part of Poland was to be made into a kingdom and annexed to her Crown, and that the remaining parts should be divided between the two other states. After a great deal of discussion the Treaty of Reichenbach was set aside, and the arrangements of the Treaty of Vienna were made. I suppose this is what led the hon. member to his statement that Austria would join with us, because in 1814 she was favourable to the re-establishment of Poland as a separate kingdom, as one alternative in contradiction to her partition; for any other ground than this I cannot conceive for his assertion. If Austria were favourable to the Polish insurrection subsequently, I can only say that it is a fact as unknown to me as was the existence of the four days of danger, and I am inclined to place both assertions on the same

foundation. The interest of Austria was in fact quite different; and it was owing to her feeling respecting Poland, that the Russians ultimately succeeded in crushing the insurrection. But then, says the hon. and learned member, you should have accepted the offers of France. I have often argued the question before, and what I said before I say again. If France had gone to the extent of proposing to England to join with her against Russia, this would have been nothing more nor less than the offer of a war in Europe, which, as our great object was to keep down such a war, we should never have thought of accepting. It would have been a war without the chance of anything but a war, for let us look to the position of the kingdom of Poland—let us consider that it was surrounded by Austria, by Russia, and by Prussia, that there was a large Russian army actually in Poland, and that there was a Prussian army on her frontiers—and we shall at once see that at the very first intimation that England was about to take up arms with France for the independence of Poland, the three armies would have fallen on the Poles, the insurrection would have been crushed, the spark of Polish independence extinguished; and all this having been done, the three Powers would have marched their armies to the Rhine, and said: 'We shall now make France and England answer for their conduct.' This course would have been sure to involve the country in a Continental war, for a purpose which would be defeated before the war could be terminated. But, says the hon. member, you have very powerful allies, who would have assisted you. France is a large military power, capable of great efforts.

Then you have Sweden, too, burning with desire to break a lance with Russia, on the question of Polish independence. What man in his sober senses, even if Sweden made such a proposition, and were ready to join us against Russia, would not have said, 'For God's sake, remain quiet and do nothing?' [Mr. Anstey: I said, that Sweden was arming her fleet, with the intention of making a demonstration against the Russian provinces in the Baltic; but the noble Lord remonstrated with Sweden for doing so, and induced her to disarm.] Well, there is not much difference between us. I do not think a demonstration by a Swedish fleet on the shores of the Baltic would have been long maintained without a corresponding demonstration of the Russian fleet in Cronstadt, and it is pretty clear which of them would go to the wall; and then we should have had to defend Sweden against Russian attack; and unless we had been prepared to send a large army to her aid, we should have sacrificed her to no purpose. I say, Sir, the man with the interests of Russia most dearly at his heart, could have done nothing better for Russia than stimulate Sweden into a dispute with Russia, by inducing her to make an armed demonstration on her shores, and thus to draw down upon her the vengeance and overwhelming power of that empire. If Sweden had been ready to make such a demonstration with her gunboats on the coast of Russia, and had asked us for our advice, the best thing we could have said would have been, 'Don't do anything half so foolish; we are not prepared to send an army and a fleet to defend you, and don't give Russia a cause to attack you.' But there was another empire burning with desire

to join us against Russia. Turkey, we were told by the hon. and learned member, with 200,000 cavalry, was ready to carry demonstration to the very walls of St. Petersburg—perhaps to carry off the Emperor himself from his throne. What was the state of Turkey then? In 1831 she had engaged in a war with Russia, in which, after two campaigns, her arms were repulsed and driven back into their own empire, so that she was compelled at Adrianople to accept conditions of peace, hard in their nature, and demanding a sacrifice of an important part of her territory, but to which she was advised in friendly counsel by the British Ambassador to submit, for fear of having to endure still worse. We are told that, two or three years after this great disaster, Turkey was of such amazing enterprise and courage, and was furnished with such a wonderful quantity of cavalry, that she was prepared to send 200,000 horse (which she never had in all her life) over the frontiers of Russia, and sweep her territory. Now this is, of all the wild dreams that ever crossed the mind of man, one of the most unlikely and extraordinary. But supposing all this had been true, and that Turkey really was prepared to do all the hon. and learned gentleman said she was, I should have given her just the same advice that I should have offered Sweden under the same circumstances, and should have said, 'Have you not been beaten enough? Are you mad? Do you want the Russians to get Constantinople instead of Adrianople? Will nothing satisfy you? We cannot come and defend you against your powerful neighbour. She is on your frontiers, and do not give her any just cause for attacking you.' Then the hon. and learned

gentleman told us of the Shah of Persia, how the gunboats of Sweden, the troops of Austria, the fine cavalry of Turkey, the magnificent legions of Persia, were ready all to pour in upon Russia in revenge for the injuries which the inhabitants of the Baltic coasts inflicted upon Europe in former centuries, and would have stripped Russia of her finest provinces. Now, what had happened to Persia? In 1827, she had very foolishly and thoughtlessly, against advice, rushed into a conflict with Russia, and had seen herself reduced to make a treaty, not only surrendering important provinces, but giving Russia the advantage of hoisting her flag in the Caspian. She had gone to war with a powerful antagonist, and been compelled to submit to humiliating concessions. Can you suppose that Persia, in that state of things, would have been ready to march against Russia for the sake of assisting Poland? In the disastrous struggle which ensued, Poland was overthrown; the suspension of its constitution followed, and the substitution of what was called the 'organic statute'. The Russian Government pronounced that civil war had abrogated it, and they re-entered Poland as conquerors. I am not asserting the justice of that, but the contrary; we always maintained a different view. I need not remind the House how deep a sympathy the sufferings of Poland excited in this country. Many things have passed in Poland since that time which the British Government greatly regrets, and in respect to which the rights laid down by treaty have been violated. But when we are asked why the British Government have not enforced treaty rights in every case, my answer is, that the only method of

enforcing them would have been by methods of hostility; and that I do not think those questions were questions of sufficient magnitude in their bearing on the interests of England, to justify any Government in calling on the people of this country to encounter the burdens and hazards of war for the purpose of maintaining those opinions. Then comes the question of Cracow. I deny the justice of the reproach which the hon. member has directed against me on that head, of an infraction of the just requirements of good faith. It is perfectly true, that in a discussion in this House we stated our intention of sending a Consul to Cracow; but we were not at that time aware of all the objections entertained to that step by other Powers who had an interest in the question, and who possessed great influence in Cracow. Communications and correspondence took place, not only with them, but with the Cracovian authorities, and we were plainly told, that if our Consul went to Cracow he would not be received. What were we to do under those circumstances? The Government of Cracow, though nominally independent, was practically under the control and protection of the three protecting Powers; and whatever they ordered that Government to do, it was plain they would do. It therefore became the Government to consider whether there really was any cause for the presence of a British Consul at Cracow, which was of sufficient importance to make it worth while to insist on his presence, at the risk of not obtaining the end. We should then have been exposed to an affront from the miserable little Government at Cracow, not acting on its own responsibility, towards whom nothing could have been directed in vindication of

the honour of the British Crown; and our only course would have been a rupture with the three Powers, after we had been warned of the rejection of our Consul. Well, then, considering the importance attached in this country, not merely to peace, but to a really good understanding with foreign Powers, wherever there are great interests and powerful motives to amity which would be violated by hostilities, I thought the best course would be to abandon the intention we had entertained, and which we had announced in the discussion in this House. It does not follow, when a Minister announces in Parliament an intention to perform a public act, that it is to be considered like a promise made to an individual, or by one private man to another, and that it is to be made a reproach to him if the intention be not carried out. We are here responsible to the country for the advice we give the Crown. We are responsible for all the consequences which that advice may bring on the country. We are not dealing with our own affairs; it is not a question of what we may do with our private property; but when a Minister finds he cannot do a particular act without compromising the interests of the country, and that these will suffer from his executing his intention, it is his duty to give up that intention, and to consult the interests of the country in preference to every other consideration. That is the history of the Consul who was to have been at Cracow. We have been asked to produce the correspondence relating to the transaction; and I do not know that there would be any particular objection to doing so. It consists of angry notes on one side and the other, and I cannot think we should be promoting a good

understanding with the three Powers by producing it; but as far as concerns its being a record of anything I have done, or have not done, I have no objection. The hon. member asks for all the correspondence which may have passed from the year 1835 downwards on the subject of the Russian fleet in commission in the Baltic. I do not recollect that any particular communications took place on this subject between the British Government on the one hand, and those of Russia or France on the other. Of course, it is utterly impossible for a Power which, like England, depends mainly for its security on its naval defence, not to watch with attentive anxiety the armaments or the state of naval preparation which from time to time may exist in other great countries. Therefore our attention may, no doubt, have been more or less directed, especially when questions of great difficulty and delicacy have been pending between Russia and England, and a state of mutual distrust to some extent existed, towards the naval footing of Russia both in the Baltic and Black Sea. Of course, also, though I do not particularly recollect the circumstance as having happened in 1835 or 1836, the immense amount of naval preparation in France must always form an element in the consideration of the Government of this country, in taking into account the means which England must possess to maintain its station amongst the empires of the world. I have now gone through, as far as memory and time permitted, the principal topics on which he touched. It was only last night I was able to put together the observations I have ventured to offer to the House. I have taken them in the order he stated them in the motion of which he gave notice. Upon

the general character of my public conduct I can only repeat what I said when last I had the honour to address this House. I can only say, if any one in this House should think fit to make an inquiry into the whole of my political conduct, both as recorded in official documents, or in private letters and correspondence, there is nothing which I would not most willingly submit to the inspection of any reasonable man in this House. I will add, that I am conscious of some of those offences which have been charged against me by the hon. and learned member. I am conscious that, during the time for which I have had the honour to direct the foreign relations of this country I have devoted to them all the energies which I possess. Other men might have acted, no doubt, with more ability—none could have acted with a more entire devotion both of their time and faculties. The principle on which I have thought the foreign affairs of this country ought to be conducted is, the principle of maintaining peace and friendly understanding with all nations, so long as it was possible to do so consistently with a due regard to the interests, the honour, and the dignity of this country. My endeavours have been to preserve peace. All the Governments of which I have had the honour to be a member have succeeded in accomplishing that object. The main charges brought against me are, that I did not involve this country in perpetual quarrels from one end of the globe to the other. There is no country that has been named, from the United States to the empire of China, with respect to which part of the hon. member's charge has not been, that we have refrained from taking steps that might have plunged us into conflict with one or

more of these Powers. On these occasions we have been supported by the opinion and approbation of Parliament and the public. We have endeavoured to extend the commercial relations of the country, or to place them where extension was not required, on a firmer basis, and upon a footing of greater security. Surely in that respect we have not judged amiss, nor deserved the censure of the country; on the contrary, I think we have done good service. I hold with respect to alliances, that England is a Power sufficiently strong, sufficiently powerful, to steer her own course, and not to tie herself as an unnecessary appendage to the policy of any other Government. I hold that the real policy of England—apart from questions which involve her own particular interests, political or commercial—is to be the champion of justice and right, pursuing that course with moderation and prudence, not becoming the Quixote of the world, but giving the weight of her moral sanction and support wherever she thinks that justice is, and wherever she thinks that wrong has been done. Sir, in pursuing that course, and in pursuing the more limited direction of our own particular interests, my conviction is, that as long as England keeps herself in the right, as long as she wishes to permit no injustice, as long as she wishes to countenance no wrong, as long as she labours at legislative interests of her own, and as long as she sympathizes with right and justice, she never will find herself altogether alone. She is sure to find some other state, of sufficient power, influence, and weight, to support and aid her in the course she may think fit to pursue. Therefore I say that it is a narrow policy to suppose that this country or that

is to be marked out as the eternal ally or the perpetual enemy of England. We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow. When we find other countries marching in the same course, and pursuing the same objects as ourselves, we consider them as our friends, and we think for the moment that we are on the most cordial footing; when we find other countries that take a different view, and thwart us in the object we pursue, it is our duty to make allowance for the different manner in which they may follow out the same objects. It is our duty not to pass too harsh a judgement upon others, because they do not exactly see things in the same light as we see; and it is our duty not lightly to engage this country in the frightful responsibilities of war, because from time to time we may find this or that Power disinclined to concur with us in matters where their opinion and ours may fairly differ. That has been, so far as my faculties have allowed me to act upon it, the guiding principle of my conduct. And if I might be allowed to express in one sentence the principle which I think ought to guide an English Minister, I would adopt the expression of Canning, and say that with every British Minister the interests of England ought to be the shibboleth of his policy.

HENRY, LORD BROUGHAM

JULY 20, 1849

ITALIAN AFFAIRS

WHOEVER, my Lords, would undertake the discussion of any difficult and delicate question touching the foreign policy of the country, ought, above all things, to free himself from every feeling of hatred or of anger, and from all personal and from all national prejudices, which might tend to disturb the equanimity of his judgement. For, when the mind labours under any such feelings, expressions are apt to be used which, whether they are well understood or ill understood, give umbrage elsewhere, and endanger the peace as well as the policy, in a word, all the highest interests of the country. I present myself to your Lordships to handle the important subject of which I have given notice, under the deep impression of sentiments such as these; and it will be no fault of mine if I am betrayed into any discussion, or even into any passing remark, which shall give offence in any quarter, at home or abroad, and shall thus endanger what is most essential to the interests of the country, a good understanding with, and a friendly feeling towards, foreign nations. It gives me great satisfaction, seeing that I have to express a difference of opinion from my noble friends opposite, and to blame the measures which they have

adopted,—it gives me great satisfaction, I say, to commence what I am about to state, by declaring my entire approval of such sentiments as I am about to cite, in language far better than my own, used by them when they instructed our envoy at the Court of the Two Sicilies to give the 'strongest assurance of the earnest desire of the British Government to draw, if possible, still closer the bonds of friendship which had so long united the crowns of Great Britain and the Two Sicilies'. It is therefore grateful, most grateful to me—whilst I join in their sentiments, which are better expressed than I could have expressed them, but not more warmly expressed than I would have expressed them—that, in the remarks which I am about to make, and which are wrung from me by the accusations brought against the Ministers, the authorities, and the troops of Naples, I shall, in the true sense of the passage I have just quoted, have to defend those Ministers, those authorities, and those troops from attacks which have been made upon them by the authors of that passage injuriously, inconsiderately, and unjustly.

The dispatch to which I have just alluded, is dated December 16, 1847. But, somehow or other, events happened soon after which make it hardly possible to suppose that the same hand which wrote that dispatch, could have written the subsequent instructions, or that the same agents who had to obey the former instructions, and to represent the feelings of old attachment, of which it was impossible to draw the bonds closer, could have been instructed so soon afterwards as January 18, 1848, to take a course entirely and diametrically opposite.

It would give me great satisfaction if, having thus accidentally touched upon the transactions of Southern Italy, I could proceed at once thither in the progress on which I am now asking your Lordships to accompany me. But I find, my Lords, from what has been taking place within the last few weeks, how reluctant soever I may be to discuss the events of the northern divisions of Italy, and recur to questions often agitated here, and by none of your Lordships more ably than by the noble Earl near me (Lord Aberdeen), that I must allude to the conduct of his late Sardinian Majesty, to the still unfinished negotiations between Sardinia and Austria, to the still unremoved fleets of Sardinia in the Adriatic, to the beleaguering of Austria in her Venetian dominions, and to the prevention of her employing her undivided resources in crushing the rebellion in the eastern parts of her empire; and that I cannot examine the whole foreign policy of this country without adverting to the events which have happened in Northern Italy. It was at the beginning of the present session of Parliament that I had occasion to foretell before your Lordships the speedy discomfiture of the then monarch of Sardinia by the victorious troops of Marshal Radetzky. After a temporary success the year before, his Sardinian Majesty had been repulsed, had been compelled to repass the Ticino, had been driven to seek protection within the walls of his own capital, and had only not been pursued within those walls because his opponents had mercifully abstained from urging their victory to the utmost, and had preferred the redemption of their pledge of maintaining the Treaties of Vienna and the settlement of territory made under them,

to the enlargement of their dominions and to the exaction of security against any repetition of the offence which they had so signally chastised. The firmest friend of Sardinia,—the stoutest champion of that distribution of territory to which I have referred,—my noble friend himself near the woolsack (the Duke of Wellington), who completed by his skill in negotiation the still more glorious triumph of his arms in the field, not one of these parties could have objected to the Austrians crossing the Ticino, exacting vengeance from Sardinia, and taking from its monarch, according to all the laws of war, according to the strict law of nations, ample security against the repetition of a similar transgression. Marshal Radetzky, however, acted a merciful part, and was wiser in so doing than if he had justifiably acted with greater severity. He and his imperial master showed that they were above all sordid, all selfish feeling.' I only lament that the marshal stopped so short of that which he had a right to do. An acre of land I would not have taken to increase the dominions of one sovereign, or to diminish the territory of the other; but I would have shown the monarch of Sardinia, I would have shown the world, that it was not from fear, but from magnanimity, that I had resolved to stop short of the full rights of victory. Then it was said, 'Oh, but now we shall have peace.' Mediation was talked of, and mediation was offered—the mediation of Great Britain, of the success of which I never entertained any hopes. That any great benefit would arise from such a proceeding, I thought just as unlikely as that in private life, when two individuals have quarrelled about a disputed right, had gone to law

to ascertain which had the better title, and one of them had gained a verdict and had entered up judgement, this winning party would accept an offer to refer all the matters in dispute to arbitration, just before execution issued. In such a case the matter in dispute is at an end, and though the party who has lost the cause may have no objection to such a reference, it will never be so with the party who has gained it. I therefore told my friend, Sir H. Ellis, who was appointed to superintend the proceedings of our mediation, that as the matter in dispute between Austria and Sardinia was at an end, I did not anticipate that with all his skill he would have any success as a negotiator in this strange arbitration. 'Oh,' I was told, 'Austria will abide by it.' Yes, I know that Austria certainly would, if she submitted to the mediation and perhaps Sardinia also; but little did I know Sardinian counsels when I said so.

I stated, however, that very same night, to your Lordships in this House, that it was my deliberate belief, that before the end of a few weeks there would be an end of the Sardinian monarchy. On that occasion I was, indeed, a true prophet. Almost while I was speaking, the King of Sardinia broke the armistice, again attacked the Austrians, was again defeated, and then abdicated his crown. That monarch was much to be blamed for the former part of his conduct, but was much to be pitied for its close; he was driven on by the fear of a mob—the most paltry and the most perilous of all fears. He was urged on to his ruin by the worst of all advisers, those fears. He threw himself into the hands of the Red Republican party of Paris and of Turin, and, worse than all, of Genoa;

and he has paid, in consequence, the penalty of giving ear to evil counsellors. Then there was more of negotiation, although one would have thought that, when Radetzky stopped in the full career of victory, there would have been an end of all resistance on the part of Sardinia. The negotiation which then began has been continued from day to day up to the present hour, and, if common fame can be trusted, there is less chance now of that negotiation leading to the pacification of Northern Italy than there was three or four months ago. I deeply lament this, my Lords. Every friend of the true policy of England, and every friend of the peace of Europe, must lament it. I hear it said, our Foreign Office lends its aid to the delay of peaceful measures in Turin; and I hear it with wonder, considering what has passed within the last two years. But I am afraid that there are some natures far too sanguine—some whom no failure can cure of the most extravagant hopes—who, while they are sinking, cling to the feeblest straw, and derive hope from the slightest change, and who, because things are not just as they were twenty-four hours before, expect that better times are coming, and hope even against hope itself. I think that what has recently taken place in Hungary, in Croatia, and in Transylvania, has been the foundation of the hopes recently entertained by the friends of Sardinia, and that some parties in England, but still more in Turin, have conceived expectations that Austria, if these negotiations are allowed to drag their slow length along, will be frustrated in her designs of—what? Aggrandizement? Oh, no. If that were all, the difficulty might easily be removed. For look, my

Lords, how the matter stands. Here is craving ambition on the one side, against a steady adherence to a pacific policy on the other; here is a desire to enlarge dominion against the solemn faith of treaties on the one part, and a resolution not to swerve a hair's breadth from that faith on the other, even when tempted by aggression the most unjust, and crowned by success the most absolute and complete. Here is good faith unsurpassed, almost unexampled moderation in victory, met by incurable thirst of aggrandizement, and reckless love of change under the most grievous disaster.

Thus stand the rival powers of Sardinia and Austria opposed to each other. I hope that I view these matters more gloomily than the real state of things warrants; but I certainly feel not a little uneasy when I reflect on the great length to which these negotiations have been sedulously spun out. And here, my Lords, I must observe, that this brings me, among many of the views which I now, anticipating somewhat, have taken of the present state of the Powers, to the conviction that the various matters now in dispute can only be settled by some general congress. This would at once close the Turin Conference. I have before mentioned to your Lordships that the favour which the Government of England has shown to Sardinia, and the prejudice against Austria, has exhibited itself—indeed, I may say, has broken out very conspicuously, in two portions of these transactions. First, it was displayed in the general difference of the language used to Austria and to Sardinia. To Austria we have held out everything short of threat—we have addressed her in language gentle indeed in outward appearance, but amount-

ing in substance to downright menace. 'You had better not go', we said, 'into Italy—you had better not invade any ally of ours—you had better not think of going to Turin or to Rome, for if you do, we shall consider it a matter deserving of grave consideration.' That was not the language in which we addressed the other party. To Austria we were *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*. But Sardinia was gently and amicably told, 'If you do so act, it will be very much against your true interests. It will be wiser not to do anything of the kind. Pray don't for your own sake.' But no threat, nor anything like a threat. Sardinia was not told, as Austria was, that it would be matter of great importance if she budged a foot out of her own dominions. And all this diversity of treatment, all this reprimand of Austria, was designed to be made known, and to gain credit and popularity with the republican rabble. For then came that proceeding—so ludicrous at once, and so mean, that I have never read anything like it in the whole course of history. While we were anxiously advertising to all Europe, and more especially to the rebels at Milan, and to the red republicans in Paris, that we had held out to Austria this menace, we had at the very time in our pockets an answer from Prince Metternich to our menacing dispatch, saying, 'What is the matter with you? It is not yet the month of November, when the malady of your gloomy climate prevails, but it is the cheerful month of September. What ails you? Are you distracted in your brain to talk of our going to Turin? We have no more thought of going to Turin or Naples than we have of going to the moon. On the contrary, if

any one presumes to disturb the security of any country, above all to threaten Sardinia, we will stand by you to defend Sardinia, and to maintain inviolate with all our forces and all our resources all the arrangements of the Treaties of Vienna.' Not one word of this answer from Austria did we suffer to be known while bragging of our threats to her, threats which assumed her having the design of attacking Sardinia. Then, when the impropriety of keeping such a document in your pockets was mooted in this House, my noble friend opposite (Lord Lansdowne) said, 'Oh, we were ready to give you that dispatch as soon as you asked for it.' Yes, when I did ask for it I got it; for, on the 18th of last September, my noble friend (Lord Aberdeen) was not at that time in the House, but in Scotland. I said, 'I have that dispatch in my hand, and I will read it, every word, if you do not consent to give it to the public.' *Non constat* that it would have been given if I had omitted to give that direct challenge to Her Majesty's Government. I don't blame my noble friend opposite for all this; he, good easy man, knew nothing at all about it; he was not instructed; the Foreign Office let him remain innocent and ignorant; but the sum and substance of all this is, that every indulgence was extended to Sardinia, whilst threats, downright threats, were held out to Austria. Now, for one moment stop to recollect the language which we used in the dispatch addressed to the Court of Austria on the 11th of September, 1847. It was as follows:

Any aggression on the rights of independent States will not be viewed with indifference by Great Britain. The independence of the Roman States is an essential element

in the political independence of Italy; and no invasion of that territory can be attempted without leading to consequences of great gravity and importance.

The answer which we received to that note from Austria was, 'We never dreamt of any such thing, but are ready at all times to stand by the integrity of all Italy.' That declaration brings me, my Lords, from considering the affairs of Northern Italy to the subject of Central Italy, and more particularly of Rome itself; and I naturally ask, in the words of my first resolution, whether that full and satisfactory explanation which we have a right to receive has been given of 'those recent movements in the Italian States which tend to unsettle the existing distribution of territory, and to endanger the general peace of Europe'? First there is the occupation of Ancona by an Austrian army, then there is the occupation of Bologna by the main force of another Austrian army. I say nothing of the occupation of Tuscany. I put Tuscany out of the question, as it is a sort of family estate of the House of Austria, in which she has a right by treaty to interfere. But that is not all. There is also in the heart of Italy, in its very centre, in its capital, an army, not Roman, not Austrian, not Italian, not composed of its native soldiery, but a French army, consisting of 40,000 or 50,000 men, and with a park of artillery consisting of 120,000 guns. I crave your pardon, 120 guns. [*Laughter attended this mistake.*] This army did not fall from the clouds. The troops advanced on the surface of the earth. The Eternal City was invaded with all the usual pomp and circumstance of war. Some thousand men with a few guns were in the first instance sent from Marseilles

to Civita Vecchia, and some explanation was given why they were sent, more or less satisfactory. But if any man has seen that explanation, stating that a force of 16,000 men and a strong fleet had been sent to Civita Vecchia by France, and has been told that the army was to stop there and to do nothing further, and that their sole object was to rearrange the balance of power—such was the Government explanation—to adjust the balance of Europe at that port; if any man, having seen that explanation, can take it as satisfactory, all I have to say is, that he is a man very easily satisfied. It does not satisfy me—indeed it seems very like treating us with contempt to give such explanations. Be that, however, as it may, the other events which followed, plainly demanded full explanation. That army, sent in the first instance to Civita Vecchia, afterwards marched onwards, and in three days arrived at Rome. What was it doing there? To an unskilled observer, to a non-military man like myself, who could not tell the difference between 120,000 and 120 guns, it did look as if it were going to make an attack upon the Eternal City.

Well, then, there is another question, still more apposite, and in answer to which I think that we should have had some explanation, and it is, 'What shall be done, supposing that this army should attack Rome, and, as is most probable, carry it?' Up to this hour I, for my part, do not know whether such a question has been put, or, if put, whether it has received an answer. 'What are the French doing before Rome, and what will they be doing after they have gained possession of it?' is the question that should have been put.

To say that they are there for the cause of humanity, or for the sake of maintaining the balance of power, these are words of which I cannot understand the connexion with the undenied facts, and with the march of 40,000 or 50,000 troops with 120 guns, which does require satisfactory explanation, because such proceedings are not an adjustment, but a subversion, a destruction of the European balance. I must forget all that I have ever read of the rights of nations before I consent to admit that circumstances like these can be allowed to pass over unnoticed. Here, my Lords, I should be doing injustice to my own feelings if I did not express my entire admiration of the conduct of the French army before the walls of Rome. What the French army had to do there—whether the French Government were entitled to send it thither—is another matter, and on this men may have different opinions. Whether or not it was in perfect consistency with the professions of the new half-fledged French Republic to send an army to put down another nascent, a newly-hatched republic, whether that step was in harmony with the views of the statesmen who had ruled France ever since the unhappy 24th of February—a day which I must ever consider deplorable for the peace of Europe, for the institutions and thrones of Europe, and, above all, most unhappy for the improvement and tranquillity of France itself—whether that step was in strict keeping with all the professions of all the parties who had been in power since that event had changed the face of France, and arrested the progress, the rapid, the uninterrupted progress, to comfort and happiness which France was making under the constitutional monarchy, by the develop-

ment of her prodigious resources—whether it was in harmony with their professions of peace to send an army to overthrow the infant Republic of Rome —I will not stop now to inquire. Suffice it to say, that the assistance of France was invited by the Pope, as he says in his allocution from Gaeta, but not severally or distinctly—it was invited in conjunction with that of Austria, Spain, and Naples; and it is one of the very few criticisms which I am disposed to make upon the French Government, that the second difficulty in this question is the manner in which the French army went alone to Rome when the Pope asked them to come conjointly with the forces of the other Powers; for it seemed as if they meant to anticipate others, and to gain a footing in Rome before the Austrians could take the field.

But all my unfavourable remarks touching France are now at an end, for no Government, no army, could have acted more blamelessly—I should rather say, more admirably—than that French army and its commanders. In the first place, can any man doubt that they could have taken Rome long ago if they had not been averse to the effusion of blood? Little do they know the gallantry of French troops who entertain a contrary notion. Then they were strongly impressed with the idea that it was not right the innocent should suffer with the guilty. Again, they felt that they were not going against the Romans, but against those who had usurped and exercised an intolerable tyranny over the Romans, properly so called. They were marching against Mazzini and Garibaldi, that Garibaldi for whom a noble friend of mine (Lord Howden), whose eulogy is really praise, bespoke your sympathy

so strongly a few evenings ago. But my noble friend, perhaps, is not aware that this person —a clever man, undoubtedly, of great military talents—was, like Mazzini, a professional conspirator; that the object of his first plot was, like that of a great conspirator in our own country (Guy Fawkes), who was not, however, quite so popular, to blow up the Royal Family of Sardinia in the theatre of Genoa; and that the discovery of that gunpowder plot drove him out in exile, first to Brazil, and afterwards to the Rio Plata, where he began to act as a partisan, and afterwards acquired considerable influence. On the breaking out of the last revolution in France he returned to Europe, and shortly afterwards agitated the provinces of Italy, repeating in their northern districts, and in Rome itself, those valorous feats of arms which gained him reputation in the New World. Mazzini is a man of less courage, though of great ability, for few men are so bold as Garibaldi; but Mazzini, in conjunction with Garibaldi, got possession of Rome, the one eminent for his civil, the other from his military qualifications. There they established a dictatorship under the name of a Triumvirate, and disciplined several thousand soldiers, of whom scarcely one was a native Roman. Among them were Frenchmen, Monte Videans, Poles, Italians of the north, but Romans few or none. Therefore it was, I said, that General Oudinot was cautious how he bombarded Rome, as he could not direct his hostility against one class of men, and yet entirely spare all. Lastly, my Lords, I cannot shut my eyes to the merits of the French army, of which all ages must testify their sense as long as any regard remains among men

for the precious remains of antiquity and for those more inestimable treasures of modern art which form the pride and glory of the Eternal City. General Oudinot had carried on the siege of Rome as if he would avoid the effusion of a single drop of human blood, and as if he were anxious not to expose the great monuments of art to the injuries of shot and shell. In this state of things, the delay of the capture took place, while many at Paris were impatient at the suspension of their triumph, but whilst many more were anxious that in future ages the French should not be ranked with the Goths and Vandals of past times; and I feel that the greatest gratitude is due to the French general and to the French army for the humane and generous spirit that tempered the valour which they displayed before Rome. What they are to do now there is a very different question. I believe that their difficulties are not yet over. I believe they are only now begun, and that is one reason why I urge to my noble friend opposite, the propriety of calling a general congress for the settlement of the disturbed affairs of Europe. The difficulties of the French army and the French Government at Rome are so great that an acute people, like that of France, cannot shut its eyes to them. They must see how little they have gained even of that for which the Red Republicans of France are so eager—military glory. If that was the aim of the Paris multitude, which I more than suspect, of their rulers it could not be the purpose, unless they yielded up their better judgement to the influence of the rabble, for assuredly, while exposing them to every embarrassment in their foreign relations, and augmenting their financial

difficulties, they must have seen that it was an enterprise in which success could give their country little glory, while failure must cover it with disgrace. But what signifies to France the loss of such renown as victory bestows? What to her is the forgoing of one sprig of laurel more in addition to the accumulated honours of her victorious career? The multitude of Paris rather than France, the statesmen of the club and coffee-house, the politicians of the salons, the reasoners of the Boulevards, may retain their thirst for such additions, such superfluous additions, to the national fame. The sounder reasoners, the true statesmen, have, I trust, learnt a better lesson, and will teach her gallant people to prefer the more virtuous and more lasting glories of peace.

But whatever the Paris mob, in the drawing-rooms or in the streets, may have desired, I am confident the Government, if left to itself, had one object only in view, the rescue of Rome from the usurpation of a foreign rabble, and restoring the authority of the Pope, whom that rabble's violence had driven from his States. And here let me say a word which may not be popular in some quarters, and among some of my noble friends, upon the separation of the temporal and spiritual authority of the Pope. My opinion is that it will not do to say the Pope is all very well as a spiritual prince, but we ought not to restore his temporal power. That is a short-sighted and I think a somewhat superficial view of the case. I do not believe it possible that the Pope could exercise beneficially his spiritual functions if he had no temporal power. For what would be the consequence? He would be stripped of all his authority. We are

not now in the eighth century, when the Pope contrived to exist without much secular authority, or when as Bishop of Rome he exercised very extensive spiritual authority without corresponding temporal power. The progress of the one, however, went along with that of the other; and just as the Pope had extended his temporal dominions by encroachments of his own, and by gifts like those of Pepin and Charlemagne, the Exarchate and Pentapolis, uniting the patrimony of St. Peter, and adding to it little by little until he got a good large slice in Italy, just in proportion as his temporal authority increased did he attain so overwhelming influence over the councils of Europe. His temporal force increased his spiritual authority, because it made him more independent. Stript of that secular dominion, he would become the slave now of one Power—then of another—one day the slave of Spain, another of Austria, another of France, or, worst of all, as the Pope has recently been, the slave of his own factious and rebellious subjects. His temporal power is an European question, not a local or a religious one; and the Pope's authority should be maintained for the sake of the peace and the interests of Europe. We ourselves have 7,000,000 of Roman Catholic subjects, Austria has 30,000,000, Prussia has 7,000,000 or 8,000,000. France is a Catholic country, so is Belgium, so are the peninsulas of Italy and Spain; and how is it possible to suppose that, unless the Pope has enough temporal authority to keep him independent of the other European Courts, jealousies and intrigues will not arise which must reduce him to a state of dependency, and so enable any one country wielding the enormous influence of his spiritual authority

to foster intrigues, faction, even rebellion, in the dominions of her rivals? Probably, as General Oudinot has sent the keys of Rome to the Pope at Gaeta, it is his intention to restore the temporal authority of the Pope. There are difficulties in the way of the French General remaining at Rome, the inhabitants of which naturally do not like to see an army of some thousands encamped in their town, and there are difficulties in the way of his leaving Rome; but there is no way so easy of overcoming those difficulties as a general congress to settle the affairs of Europe; and I do not consider that a clearer course can lie before France than to propose it, or that she can find a safer and a more creditable way out of her present embarrassments in Italy.

I now come to a part of the subject which I have only originally glanced at, the state of our relations with the southern part of the Italian peninsula. On the 16th of December, 1847, the noble Lord at the head of Foreign Affairs (Lord Palmerston) wrote to Lord Minto, directing him to request an audience

for the purpose of conveying to his Sicilian Majesty the strongest assurances of the earnest desire of Her Majesty's Government to maintain, and if possible draw still closer, the bonds of friendship which have so long united the Crowns of Great Britain and of the Two Sicilies.

Here, then, the Government were vowing eternal friendship with the Neapolitan. But, on the 10th of January, there broke out a rebellion in Sicily, and then 'a change came over the spirit of their dream', for there appeared no longer the same ardent desire for amity with Naples, or lamentations that it was not possible to 'draw still closer the bonds of friend-

ship between the two Governments'. Now came a scene which I have read in the mass of papers before me with feelings of very sincere regret. I cannot easily imagine a more imbecile judgement than presides, or a more mischievous spirit than pervades, the whole of the diplomatic correspondence, the whole correspondence, not only of our professional politicians, our Ministers, our Secretaries, our Consuls, our Deputy-Consuls, but also a new class of political agents, who appear on the scene, the vice-admirals and captains of ships of the line, who all seem, in the waters of Sicily, to have been suddenly transformed, as if by the potent spells of the ancient enchantress who once presided over that coast, stripped of their natural military form, if not into the same sort of creatures, whose form she made men assume, yet into monsters, hideous to behold, mongrel animals, political sailors, diplomatic vice-admirals, speculative captains of ships, nautical statesmen, observers, not of the winds and the stars, but of revolts; leaning towards rebels, instead of hugging the shore; instead of buffeting the gale, scudding away before the popular tempest; nay, suggesters of expeditions against the established Governments of the Allies, with whom their Government lamented it could not draw the bonds of friendship more closely—a new species, half naval and half political, whose nature is portentous, in whose existence I could never have believed. Mr. Temple, a prudent and experienced Minister, is absent, unfortunately, from his post, and his place is filled by Lord Napier, a worthy man, and an active, above all, an active penman, a glib writer if not a great; writing, not quite, but very nearly as well as the captains and

admirals themselves. We find this gentleman, like them, ardently hoping that revolt may prosper, and doing his endeavour to realize his desire; dealing out every sort of suggestion and recommendation, lecturing as if he sat in the Foreign Office, administering rebukes like a Foreign Secretary, telling the Neapolitan Government they had better do so and so; if they did not, it would be the worse for them, and it would be viewed with 'great gravity'; and yet supposing that no one but himself was sensitive, for he takes care not to show respect by salutes, and addresses, and those matters about which monarchs are supposed to care a great deal; making very free in his, I will not say rude and unmannerly, but certainly his rough treatment of others, yet all the while excessively annoyed at the 'tone', as he calls it, of some of the communications addressed to him. But after carefully studying the papers, to catch what this offensive tone of the Neapolitan Minister was, I have found it so evanescent that I really cannot discern it, and suppose there must be something in the manner, or in Lord Napier's state of mind at the time, which overset him.

On the 18th of January, 1848, Sir W. Parker, than whom a more able and gallant officer could not adorn the service, but who cannot be everything—for there are very few who, like my illustrious friend at the table (the Duke of Wellington), or my renowned master, under whom I first served in a diplomatic situation, the late Earl St. Vincent, are equally great as captains and statesmen—Sir W. Parker wrote to say that, the rebellion having broke out again, he had given general orders to the captains of British vessels to afford protection to individuals

of either side who were flying for their political conduct. It is easily to be seen which of the two sides these instructions are intended to protect. Sir W. Parker concludes by saying, 'I shall await with anxiety the result of the outbreak in Sicily, and the effect it may produce at Naples.' Why, what had Sir W. Parker to do with that? The truth is, he was in the hope and the expectation that the rebellion in Sicily would extend across the Faro, and lead to a rising of the Calabrese upon the neighbouring continent. In page 352 we have Captain Codrington, a most able officer, no doubt, giving a long political disquisition, and many speculations, respecting the rebellion and its effects elsewhere, in which he predicts a rising in Calabria, and foresees the danger which would subsequently accrue to the Neapolitan Government. The gallant captain writes as if he were a soothsayer, sent out to foretell the effect of the Sicilian force landing in Calabria, in shaking the Neapolitan throne. Nay, not content with being Minister and Ambassador, as well as naval officer, the gallant captain must needs act, at least speculate, as a Secretary of the Treasury, or whipper-in for the Sicilian Commons; so he proceeds to discuss the returns for the new elections:

'Should the small Sicilian force', says he, 'recently landed in Calabria—probably under 1,000 men—succeed in raising the inhabitants of that part of the country against the present Government, they may be able to beat the 12,000 Neapolitan troops at present in Calabria, and then by getting possession of Scylla and Reggio, the Sicilians will gain the control of the Straits, and ultimately so distress the citadel of Messina, by cutting off its communication, as well as by other military operations, as to bring on its surrender. In the meantime, the character

of the return of members to serve in the coming Parliament, to meet in the early part of the next month, is adverse to the present Ministry. In some places, the electors on meeting have merely made a *procès-verbal* affirming the validity of their previous election, and reasserting the candidates then chosen as their actual representatives; in others they have proceeded to a new election; but in almost every case the very same individuals as before have been returned as members for the Parliament. This gives a considerable check to the Government, and shows the state of public opinion in the provinces. If on the meeting of Parliament the discussions are free, we may expect strong differences, if not collisions, between the King's Government and the Parliament, from recent events, from present difficulties, and above all from the want of experience of all parties in carrying on public business. If the Government control the discussions by force or prevent the meeting of Parliament, or suddenly get rid of it, and govern the country by means of the army, the provinces will then be almost sure of rising generally, particularly Calabria, excited by the Sicilian landing, and then not only will Messina be gone, but Naples and the throne of Ferdinand will be in the greatest danger. But if the King's Government were at present to act with great prudence and moderation, and if they believe them sincere in it, there would be no such general rising in the provinces as to render the Sicilian landing of importance, and then that small body of men would be crushed by the large Neapolitan force at present in Calabria. This would put the King's Government in a far more commanding position for terms in any future negotiations with Sicily, and probably put off a final settlement by inducing claims too exorbitant to be agreed to by Sicily.'

What had Captain Codrington to do with the going out or coming in of the Ministry? What, in the name of Neptune and Mars, and all deities having charge of ships of war, had a naval officer to do with the returns to Parliament, the results of votes in that foreign House of Commons? Observe, my Lords, the papers are selected out of the mass of documents at the Foreign Office, and

I will venture to assert very confidently that, besides those which have been produced, there are half a dozen times as many which the Foreign Office has not produced ; so that if we find anything in these papers showing faults to have been committed by those who produced them or by their agents, we may assume that, if the whole of the papers were given, not a few more faults of the same kind would be found to have been committed.

The noble Lord opposite (Lord Minto) went from Rome to Naples, and if he had been alone there I should have had greater confidence in the proceedings of the Government, for I have had long experience of his good sense and sound judgement. But the noble Earl had a very active and zealous man under him ; and while wading through this volume I have often had occasion to reflect upon the wise opinion of Prince Talleyrand, who used to reckon in diplomacy that zeal in young men is the next thing to treachery, and that sometimes it is just as bad as treachery, for the zealous are clothed with the garb of merit, and you have little hold over them. Well, the zeal, the honest zeal, no doubt, of Lord Napier, moved my noble kinsman from Rome to Naples. The noble Earl (Earl Minto) on the 2nd of February, 1848, wrote to the Foreign Office, that he had been so urged by Lord Napier to go to Naples that he had resolved to set off. But Lord Napier also tells us that on the 3rd of February he had an interview with the King of the Two Sicilies, and that he got the King, out of his zeal and his address working with it, to ask Lord Minto to go to Naples. Well, my noble friend and Lord Napier, representing the British Government, were decidedly for the Sicilians and

against the Neapolitans. There was no attempt to hold the balance even between the two parties, but every expression was used, every proposal made, every captious objection taken in favour of the Sicilians under pretence of holding even the balance. In that country my noble kinsman and Lord Napier are what we term in the language of this country 'Repealers'. They are all for what they call a native and independent parliament in Sicily, just as the Repealers are for a native and independent Parliament in College Green. The noble Lord (Lord Minto) says, in a very vehement manner, that the sufferings of the people of Sicily under their thirty years' tyranny were so intolerable that the Sicilians had a much better ground for their rebellion than we had against James II in 1688. A consul, writing on the 24th of April, having given most flourishing accounts of the universal insurrection of the Sicilians (accounts which differ entirely from those I received from travellers in that country, as well as from public functionaries), informed Lord Napier that the Sicilians were going to choose the Grand Duke of Genoa as King of Sicily. This intelligence was received in London about the 4th or 5th of May. There was not a moment's delay in acting upon the notification, though it was only a prediction. If we were so very fond of our Neapolitan allies, if we lamented that we could not draw more closely the bonds of friendship between the two countries, protesting all the while our desire to keep the two crowns on the head of Ferdinand, it is very odd that our Minister should, on the very instant it was known that the Grand Duke of Genoa was likely to be chosen, and that the Sicilians intended to dethrone King Ferdinand,

namely, on the 8th of May, proceed to give these instructions to my friend, Mr. Abercrombie:

'Her Majesty's Consul at Palermo having reported that it is understood that the crown of Sicily is to be offered to the Duke of Genoa, I have to instruct you that if it should come to your knowledge that such an offer has been made, you will state to the Sardinian Government that it is of course for the Duke of Genoa to determine whether it will or will not suit him to accept this flattering offer, but that it might be satisfactory to him to know that if he should do so he would at the proper time, and when he was in possession of the Sicilian throne, be acknowledged by Her Majesty.'

Let it be known, said the noble Lord at the head of Foreign Affairs, that if the Duke of Genoa accepts the offer of the Sicilians, we shall lose no time in recognizing him, the Grand Duke of Genoa, under the Treaty of Vienna, as the King of Sicily, and in accepting the dethronement of our own ancient ally with whom we lament there is no possibility of 'drawing closer the bonds of our ancient friendship'. Oh, how easily snapped are the bonds that knit prince to prince, and State to State! Oh, how feeble the most ancient ties of the firmest political friendship! When the ink was hardly dry with which the profession was made of this earnest desire to draw more closely, if it were but possible, the bonds which united us to the King of the Two Sicilies, that Her Majesty's Government should, behind his back, and without a word of notice, avow their intention deliberately, but instantly, to acknowledge the usurper upon whose head his insurgent subjects were about to place the crown they had wrested from the brow of their lawful King! But my noble friend (Lord Minto) is

strongly impressed with the advantages of a free constitution—not, however, more strongly than I am. Above all the free constitutions of the world, it is natural that the Sicilians should admire that admirable form of the purest of all governments, which, uniting the stability of order with the freedom of a popular constitution, which we happily enjoy, and upon the possession of which we have reason to pride ourselves beyond all the other bounties which a gracious Providence has showered down upon this favoured isle. No wonder the Sicilians should be prepared to admire and regard with reverence a constitution which unites in itself the advantages of all other forms of government, the freedom of democracy, the vigour of monarchy, and the stability with the peacefulness of aristocracy. If I were to say that I am niggardly enough to keep this blessing at all hazards to ourselves, not to desire the extension to others of this happy form of government, I should do injustice to my own feelings ; but if I were to say I am slow to believe that the British Constitution is of a nature to be easily exported, and transplanted in other countries, I should only give vent to the opinions which the wisest have held, and which every day's experience of foreign affairs tends more deeply to root in all reflecting minds. The British Constitution is the work of ages, the slow growth of many centuries, and if it could be transplanted to countries so totally unprepared for its reception, and there made to take root, it would be as great a miracle as if we were to take a mature plant and set it to grow on a stone pavement, or a great wooden stick, and plant it in a fertile soil, there to bear fruit. The plant and the soil must

be of congenial natures; the constitution must fit the nation it is to govern. The people must be prepared by their previous experience, their habits, their second nature, their political nature, to receive such institutions. I know not that I can ever sufficiently express the affection I bore to my late noble friend (Lord W. Bentinck), who, in 1812, instituted in Sicily the experiment of transplanting thither the British Constitution. But your Lordships now know from his experience what was the consequence of attempting to establish our own constitution in another country. A traveller happened to be in Sicily at the time, and I will read the account he gave of the solemnity which he witnessed. He is speaking of the most important of all proceedings under that transplanted system; he is describing the conduct of the people's chosen representatives; he is painting the scene of their legislative labours, in the temple of freedom; he is admitting us to the grand, the noble spectacle of the most dignified of human assemblies, the popular body making laws for the nation in the sanctuary of its rights. See, then, this august picture of a transplanted Parliament. Mr. Hughes says:

'As soon as the President had proposed the subject for debate, and restored some degree of order from that confusion of tongues which followed the announcement of the question, a system of crimination and recrimination was invariably commenced by the several speakers, accompanied with such hideous contortions, such bitter taunts, and such personal invectives, that blows generally followed, until the Assembly was in an uproar. The President's voice was unheeded and unheard; the whole House arose; patriots and antagonists mingled in the fray, and the ground was covered with the combatants, kicking, biting, striking, and scratching each other in a true Pancratic fsay.'

It is to restore this grand political blessing of the 1812 Parliament that all our late efforts have been pointed. The great object of our negotiations has been the establishment of such a precious representative assembly; but the result is, that those efforts have been all thrown away. The King of Naples was said at that time to have agreed to certain concessions; he offered the people such terms as our negotiators thought they ought to have accepted; and, up to that time, indeed up to this hour, Ferdinand has behaved most fairly. He did not scruple to make such proposals for conciliation as our own negotiators thought the insurgents ought to have accepted. But all ended in their refusal. War broke out. Neapolitan troops were sent over. Messina was attacked, bombarded, and, after some four or five days, was taken.

Now, to show your Lordships the tendency there was in these negotiations to take advantage of every circumstance, accidental or otherwise, for the purpose of blackening the conduct of the Neapolitan Court, I will only state one particular, and that is with respect to the continuance of the bombardment. A most indignant denial has been given to this charge by the general officers and others engaged; and it turned out that our consuls and vice-consuls, all animated by the same spirit, all in favour of rebellion and against the lawful sovereignty, all agreed in one fact as the ground of the charge,—they all said that eight hours after the resistance had ceased the bombardment was continued. It might naturally be supposed that, with this continued bombardment, much blood would be spilt; and when all our agents are dwelling on this continuance as a cruelty, every reader must

conclude that needless carnage was perpetrated, and much blood shed. But no such thing; not one drop could be spilt, and why? Because every creature had left the town before the eight hours had commenced to run! But the bombardment was continued for two reasons. In the first place, every house, as in Paris, was a fort; and, secondly, the Neapolitan commander could not possibly trust the white flag immediately after he had lost a whole battalion by a false flag being hoisted to decoy them into ambush, where the ground was mined. But no single fact of needless cruelty has been proved against the King of Naples, though I know, from a person attached to our Navy, and in those seas at that time, whose account I have read, as also from that of a traveller accidentally on board of one of the Queen's ships at the time, that there were cruelties of the most disgusting and revolting description committed by the Sicilians, and not one word of reference to which can be found in all the curiously selected papers that load your table. In the mass things are to be found, indeed, much against the wishes of the selectors, and also of their agents in Sicily and Naples. This is owing to their clumsy design of telling what they think will exalt the rebel and damage the loyal party, without always perceiving that these statements cut more ways than one. Thus, a number of consuls sign a statement that all the inhabitants had left Messina. This is contrived to show that resistance had ceased; but it also proves that no cruelty could be committed by the bombardment. Again, we are told that 1,500, by one zealous agent's account, had been slain of the King's troops; but Lord Napier's hotter zeal is

not satisfied with this number, and he makes it 3,000. The object of putting forward this statement is to exalt the rebel valour, and give a more formidable aspect to the revolt. But the zeal in one direction forgets that the same parade of numbers also shows how necessary severe measures had become on the King's part, and how little blame could attach to the gallant troops who, thus assailed, had imposed on them, by the duty of self-defence, the necessity of quelling so bloody an insurrection.

I have given one sample of the not very even-handed justice which pervaded the correspondence. But I will proceed further. After the battle of Messina 700 or 800 rebels escaped towards the Ionian Islands. They were taken, and it was said by a stratagem: that by hoisting the English flag a Neapolitan cruiser was enabled to near them and take them. It was further alleged—and much of the correspondence is addressed to this point—that they were taken, contrary to the law of nations, within three miles or cannon-shot of the Ionian Islands, and therefore within the British waters. Very elaborate arguments are given in the correspondence to prove that position, and a great deal of indignation is expressed; and satisfaction was also demanded on account of the abuse of the English flag. An elaborate argument is prepared and sent by the Foreign Secretary to show that because the ships were first seen twenty miles off, and in half an hour more they were more clearly perceived, therefore at some unknown and unspecified time after the half hour, they must have been close in with the shore. I suppose on the principle that a sailing vessel going without

steam, moves at the rate of twenty or thirty miles in the hour. However, such is this zealous argument to prove the favourite point that the rebels are always right and the Government always wrong. Alas! that so much good information and subtlety of argument should be thrown away. This able and argumentative paper crossed on its way out another from our own Admiral on its way homeward, in which he said he had inquired from the Governor of the Ionian Islands, and had ascertained that the ship was at least eight miles from the shore —so there was an end of the argument upon distance; and that of the insult to our flag was as shortly disposed of by a letter from our own Admiralty, stating that it was only a stratagem which our own Navy constantly employed, freely using the flags of other nations for its own purposes.

I rejoice to say, and your Lordships must be rejoiced to hear it, that I am approaching the end of this subject, but I cannot abstain from observing, to show how completely we took part with the one side against the other, that we treated the Sicilian prisoners as if they had been our allies, our own subjects. They were taken in rebellion, with arms in their hands, against their lawful Sovereign. But Lord Napier complains to Prince Cariati of his treatment of the prisoners, and says it would be observed upon in England, would raise a strong feeling on its exposure and publication, and that the feeling would be such that Her Majesty's Government could scarcely fail to take notice of it. But how? For those prisoners were guilty of municipal offence against the municipal law of their own country. Suppose, contrary to all probability and possibility, hostilities had ensued upon the late attempt at rebellion

in Ireland, and some of the prisoners having been taken and sent to Bermuda or Australia, that the Ministers of France, Holland, Belgium, or any other country had taken it into their heads to object to our treatment of those prisoners and to say, 'Don't treat them in that way. Give them their native Parliament on College Green—you are acting cruelly in sending them to Bermuda or Australia. I shall write home to France, I shall write home to Holland, I shall write home to Belgium; and depend upon it your conduct will raise such a ferment of execration and hatred against you, that the President of the Republic, the King of Holland, and the King of Belgium will be absolutely obliged to take notice of it.' How should we have received that intimation? I think with a horse-laugh, and there was no reason why the Neapolitan King should not receive that dispatch of Lord Napier's in the same way, except that he, no doubt, gave it good-naturedly a more polite and courteous reception. Now we thus presume to interfere with the domestic affairs of Naples as neither France nor Holland would dare interfere with ours, and as we never durst interfere with theirs. True, we never should dream of urging the great Republic to treat its rebellious subjects, when charged with treason, otherwise than as its Government pleased! True, Naples is a feebler Power than France! But is that all the ground for the proceeding? Is that all the warrant for reading lectures such as those we have read, for doing the things we have done, threatening the things we have threatened, claiming the right we have asserted of protecting criminals imprisoned for rebellion from the justice of their lawful

Sovereign? I say that to a generous nation, to a manly feeling heart, to a person of true British honour and true British gallantry, it is the very reverse of a reason, and makes our conduct the less excusable as it ought to be the more hateful.

But far from words being all we used, far from interfering by requisition and remonstrance being all we did, the British diplomacy and the British Navy were actually compelled to force an armistice upon the Neapolitan Government on behalf of its revolted subjects, and when their revolt was nearly quelled! After Messina had been completely subdued, its forces routed, its walls crumbled, its strongest place captured, our Admiral, having a fleet in those waters, was resolved it should not be there for nothing. Hitherto he and his captains had only expressed sympathy with the insurgents, and hatred or contempt of their lawful Sovereign. Now that the rebellion was on the point of being put down, by the capture of Catania and Palermo, which, but for us, must both have immediately fallen, now that the last hope of subverting the Throne of Sicily and installing a usurper on its ruins was about to vanish from the eyes of the British seamen, our Admiral, acting in concert no doubt with the British envoy, and inspired with the feelings of our Foreign Office, required a respite to be allowed the insurgents, and determined to back his requisition with his ships. But he was not, we must admit, the principal in this offence against the rights of an independent and friendly State. He has not the blame to bear, or, if you will, he has not the praise to receive, of having decided upon this intervention between the King and his insurgent subjects. The French Admiral was the

contriver of the scheme. Admiral Baudin formed his own determination, doubtless in order to gratify the mob of Paris, as well as the rebels of Palermo; and our commander, afraid of being outstripped in his favourite course, at once yielded to the Frenchman's request, the one looking to the Boulevards of Paris for approval, the other to the Foreign Office of London. Orders were issued to all our fleet, that they should use every means to prevent the Neapolitans from following up their victory at Messina; and sealed instructions were sent to direct their proceedings should these peaceable efforts fail. Why not make the instructions public? Why not give notice openly of our intentions? It might have prevented the necessity of using force. However, the orders were sealed, and they directed that first the guns should be fired without shot; next, that they should be shotted, but not fired so as to injure the crews of our ally's ships; and, finally, that they should be used as hostilely and destructively as was necessary to accomplish the purpose of forcing Naples to let the Sicilian rebels alone. But then it is said, and it is the pitiful pretext of equal treatment to both parties, that the orders were alike to prevent action of the King's troops and the revolters. Was ever there a more wretched shift, a more hollow pretence, than this? Keep the Sicilians from breaking an armistice enforced to save them from utter and final destruction! Keep the beaten Sicilian rebel from overpowering his victorious masters! Keep the felon convicted from rushing to the gallows in spite of the respite granted him! Can human wit imagine a more ridiculous pretext than this, of affecting to hold the balance even,

when you are preventing the conqueror from improving his victory, and only preventing the vanquished from attempting what without a miracle he cannot do, cannot, even with all your assistance, venture to try? But such was our just conduct in an interference which we had not the shadow of a right to take upon ourselves. We showed our friendly feelings towards an ancient ally by forcibly screening his revolted subjects, and compelling him to delay for nearly seven months the total defeat of those rebels and the complete restoration of tranquillity. From the 10th of September, when Messina fell, to the 30th of March, when we were kindly pleased to let the armistice expire, the English fleet persevered in reducing the King to inaction, and saving his rebellious subjects from the operation of his armies. But for our own fleet, there is not a doubt that Catania and Palermo must have fallen in a fortnight; but we nursed, and fostered, and prolonged the insurrection for above half a year. Talk of your humanity! Boast of your Admiral and his French associate interposing to save bloodshed! Whose fault was it that Catania, having profited by the respite you forced the King to grant, still held out, instead of opening her gates as soon as Messina had fallen, when the insurrection must have been crushed in its cradle? Who but your commanders and envoys are to blame for the necessity under which they placed the King's troops of fighting a battle on the 6th of April? That engagement no doubt put down the insurrection; but many lives were lost in it. Five-and-twenty officers were killed and wounded on the King's side, and some hundreds of men must likewise have expiated their loyalty with their lives, to say

nothing of the insurgent loss. Palermo fell without a struggle, after all the boastings of your envoys and captains, and consuls and vice-consuls. Would she have resisted more fiercely in September? The insurgent chiefs fled, and got on board the *Vectis*, one of the two vessels of war which you suffered the Sicilian rebels to fit out in your ports, when you refused all help to your ancient friend's ambassador in checking this outrage on the law of nations, and when by a celebrated 'inadvertence' you suffered those rebels to obtain from the Tower a supply of arms, wherewith to fight your ally's armies.

My Lords, I cannot trust myself with the expression of the feelings which are roused by the whole of the papers, to which I have only referred occasionally; they are the feelings with which all men of sound principles and calm judgement will read them all over Europe. I will refer to them no further than to read the indignant denial which the veteran General Filangieri, Prince of Satriano, gives to the charge of cruelty brought against his gallant and loyal army by our envoys and our consuls, and, I grieve to add, our naval commanders. (Lord Brougham here read the vehement, and even impassioned, terms in which the General refutes these foul calumnies, charging him, an officer of above half a century's service, with suffering his troops to commit enormities which no military man, of however little experience in his profession, could have permitted.)

Rely upon it, my Lords, that if anything can make more offensive the conduct of our agents in fostering revolt, and injuring the lawful government of our allies, it is the adding foul slander to

gross indiscretion, revenging themselves on those whose valour and conduct has frustrated their designs, by blackening their characters, and committing that last act of cruel injustice, calumniating those you have injured, through your hatred of those to whom you have given good cause to hate you.

There is, my Lords, but one course for this country to pursue in its dealings with other States; she must abstain from all interference, all mischievous meddling with their domestic concerns, and leave them to support, or to destroy, or to amend their own institutions in their own way. Let us cherish our own Government, keeping our own institutions for our own use, but never attempt to force them upon the rest of the world. We have no such vocation, we have no such duty, no such right. Above all, we have no right to interfere between sovereigns and subjects, encouraging them to revolt, and urging them to revolution, in the vain hope that we may thus better their condition. Then, in negotiation, let us avoid the same meddling policy—shall I falsely call it?—the same restless disposition to serve one State at another's expense; showing favour and dislike capriciously and alternately, guided by mere individual and personal feelings, whether towards States or statesmen, displaying groundless likings for some and groundless hatred for others; one day supporting this Power in its aggression upon that, and when defeated, justly and signally defeated, like Sardinia, clinging to the wish that it should obtain from the victorious party an indemnity for its own foul but failing aggression. Most of all let us abide by the established policy of the country towards our old and

faithful friends, not Naples merely, but Austria, whose friendship has been, in all the best times of our most eminent statesmen, deemed the very corner-stone of our foreign policy, ever since the era of 1688; above all, since King William and the Ministers and Government of his successor laid the foundations of that system. But now I can see in every act done, almost in every little matter, a rooted prejudice against Austria, and the interspersing of a few set phrases does little to prevent any reader from arriving at the same conclusion. 'Our feelings are friendly towards Austria,' and 'God forbid they should be otherwise!' I say Amen to that prayer, but when I read the dispatches with the light shed on them by the acts of our Government, and of all their agents and Ministers, when by these acts I interpret the fair words used, I perceive the latter to mean exactly nothing, and that those expressions which perpetually recur of an opposite kind speak the true sense of our rulers. But this policy is opposed to the uniform authority of our greatest statesmen. Even Mr. Fox, who was sometimes believed to have a leaning towards Russia, from the accidental transactions of 1791, when charged with undervaluing the Austrian alliance in comparison, took immediate opportunity earnestly to disavow any such opinion, and declared that our friendship with Austria was the grand element of our European system.

My Lords, I have detained you longer than I could have desired; but I felt it absolutely necessary to give your Lordships an opportunity of fully considering this momentous subject. That such things as have been done by the Government in Italy and elsewhere during the last twelve

months, should pass without awakening your attention, and that your examination of the details should not call down a censure, if for no other purpose than to warn the Ministers against persisting in fatal errors, appears to me hardly within the bounds of possibility. I have, therefore, deemed it my duty to give you an opportunity of expressing the opinion which I believe a majority of this House holds, and which I know is that of all well-informed and impartial persons in every part of the world.

EARL RUSSELL

JUNE 27, 1864

DENMARK AND GERMANY

MY LORDS, I have to lay upon your table, by command of Her Majesty, the Protocols of the proceedings of the Conference upon the affairs of Denmark and Germany, which has just been brought to a close. In laying these papers upon your Lordships' table I propose to follow the course which was pursued by the Earl of Liverpool in 1823, and I am confident that in following that example I am pursuing a course which is perfectly fair to this House and to the country. In that case the English Government had been carrying on negotiations first at Verona, the Conference at which place was attended by the Duke of Wellington, and afterwards at Paris, on the subject of the invasion of Spain. The Government of that day declared that the invasion of Spain was contrary to all the principles of English policy, and that it was an interference which was entirely opposed not only to the sentiments of this country, but to the settlement of Europe which had been come to some years before. They, therefore, protested against it, while at the same time they thought it advisable to preserve peace and declare a neutrality between this country and France. Upon the present occasion I have to discuss a question which is of

a very intricate nature, and which for a long time was considered to be one that might go on for many many years without raising any exciting interest, and which was almost too complicated and too wearisome to engage much of the public attention. For the last year, however, that question has been in a very different condition.

My Lords, before I refer to the proceedings of the Conference it is necessary to take some notice of those engagements which have been the origin of these disputes, though they were intended to put an end to all differences between Germany and Denmark. Your Lordships are well aware that in these times it is necessary that a treaty should not only have the signatures of envoys and the ratifications of Sovereigns, but that in its working it should be made to accord with the sentiments and wishes of the people who are to be governed under it. A remarkable instance of difference in this respect has occurred with regard to the operation of the Treaty of Vienna of 1815 with respect to Lombardy, and the operation of the same treaty with reference to Genoa. Your Lordships are aware that for many years great discontent prevailed in Lombardy, which was only removed by the separation of that province from Austria. On the other hand, in Genoa, by the wise and patriotic conduct of the Kings of Sardinia, all the objections, all the repugnance, which originally existed in Genoa against their rule have been finally overcome and removed, and Piedmont and Genoa are now in perfect harmony. Unfortunately the Treaty of 1852 in regard to Denmark, and the engagements which were entered into in the previous year, 1851, with respect to an arrangement between Germany

and Denmark, were in their operation exceedingly unsatisfactory. It was declared, and has lately been repeated in the Conference, that an attempt was made by the King of Denmark, contrary to the engagements of 1852, and contrary also to all sound policy, to make the people of Schleswig change their national character, and so to interfere with their churches and schools as to keep up a perpetual irritation, thereby violating the spirit of the engagements between Denmark and Germany. How far those accusations were true as regards the exact letter of those engagements I will not stop to inquire; but it is quite certain that there was prevailing in Schleswig great dissatisfaction at the manner in which the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein were governed, and that great complaints were made on that account against the Danish Government. It was for a long time the public opinion in this country that Germany had no reason to complain of Denmark as violating her engagements; but I am afraid that, by an impolitic course at all events, the Danish Government produced the feeling in Germany that the subjects of the King of Denmark of the German race were not fairly governed. Oppression there could not be said to be. The Government was a free Government, and, generally speaking, the people living under it were prosperous; but there was in the two Duchies much of that irritation which prevailed in Belgium previous to its separation from Holland. On the other side, it must be said that the German Governments, instead of asking that which might fairly have been demanded—instead of asking that the engagements should be kept in their spirit, and that arrangements should be made (which could

easily have been devised) to give satisfaction to the people of the Duchies—made proposals inconsistent, as it appeared to me, with their engagements, pushing beyond their legitimate sense the words of those engagements, and suggested arrangements which, if they had come into operation, would have made Denmark completely subject to Germany. Among other proposals—indeed, one of the chief—was that the 900,000 people who were said to be of German race, and even the 50,000 of the Duchy of Lauenburg, should have a representation equal to that of the 1,600,000 inhabitants of the kingdom of Denmark. This was evidently so unfair and calculated to be so destructive of Danish independence and nationality, that Denmark refused to accede to it. It was, in fact such a proposal as if Scotland and Ireland were to demand each an equal number of representatives with England in the Imperial Parliament. The consequence of these disputes, unfortunately, was, that instead of the treaty taking root and fully satisfying the wishes of the people of the Duchies, there was a kind of never-ceasing irritation which burst forth as occasion arose; and, as Germany was greatly more powerful than Denmark, it was but too probable that the latter would have to suffer one day on account of the complaints which were made by the Germans. It was impossible not to foresee that such would probably be the consequence, and that the irritation to which I allude would not go on for ever without exciting great dissension and perhaps war. Therefore in September, 1862, when I was at Brussels in attendance on Her Majesty, I explained to Sir Augustus Paget, who was shortly about to return

to Denmark, a plan of pacification which it appeared to me would keep the Duchies under the rule of the King of Denmark; which would be satisfactory to themselves; which would give them a Minister for Schleswig and a body of representatives; a Minister for Holstein and a body of representatives, and would thus put an end for ever to the demand that at Copenhagen there should sit a majority of representatives for the Duchies. The Danish Government—as I think unfortunately—utterly rejected that proposal, and matters went on in the same unsatisfactory state. The diplomatic correspondence which the British Government proposed should take place did take place between Germany and Denmark, but it only produced increased bitterness and further irritation. At length in October, 1863, the German Governments at Frankfort declared that they must proceed to Federal Execution. If, my Lords, that Federal Execution had been founded on any infringement of the rights of Holstein—if it had been founded solely upon the misgovernment of Holstein, or on any violation of the rights of the Confederation, no Power would, I think, be entitled to complain of it. It embraced, however, a point which had nothing to do with Federal rule—the point of an equal representation at Copenhagen. It was then that the British Government declared that that could not be a matter of indifference, because it aimed, in fact, not only at the integrity, but at the independence, of Denmark. Things remained in this state until the death of the King of Denmark, which produced an entire alteration in the state of affairs. It was then contended on behalf of Germany that, after looking closely into some very

intricate questions of representative and hereditary succession, they were bound to declare that the King of Denmark had no right to succeed to the Duchies, but that by the law of the Confederation the Prince of Augustenburg was the proper heir to the throne. This declaration, adopted almost throughout the whole of Germany, was received with applause not only by the popular, but by the Conservative party; by persons of the highest rank as well as by the general mass of the community; and every Government that pretended to adhere to the Treaty of 1852 was denounced as recreant to the cause of Germany. In this state of affairs the Governments of Austria and of Prussia took a somewhat singular and not very defensible course. In the beginning they declared in the Diet that, having a majority in favour of this declaration, they would proceed to Federal Execution—thereby, to all appearance, making the present King of Denmark responsible for that which was done by the late King, and to all intents and purposes, as it would seem, acknowledging his sovereignty over Holstein. They, at the same time, however, somewhat privately and without the general knowledge of Europe, declared that they reserved the question of the succession. It did not appear to the Danish Government, nor did it appear to Her Majesty's Government, that Federal Execution could be resisted without increasing the complications of the position. But, immediately after that took place, Austria and Prussia declared that they must occupy the Duchy of Schleswig in order to obtain the fulfilment of the engagements of 1852. Your Lordships are well aware that shortly before that declaration the

Government of Denmark announced that they were ready to repeal the Constitution of November, 1863, which was the apparent ground of the proposed Federal Execution. Unfortunately, they had not acceded to that proposal when Lord Wodehouse went to Copenhagen, and when the concession might have been effectual. The German Governments, in their hurry to go to war, and being evidently determined on going to war—in the first place in order to gratify the German sentiment on the subject—took no heed of the proposal which was made by the British Government, and which was supported by France and Russia, that a protocol should be signed by the different Governments, binding Denmark to a repeal of the Constitution of November, and the German troops of Austria and Prussia entered Schleswig. I think it was impossible for the British Government to give any advice on this occasion. It was evidently the invasion of a territory which did not in any way belong to Germany, and a territory to which according to our view the King of Denmark had the fullest right. It was said that it was to be occupied as 'a material guarantee'; but no country is, I conceive, obliged to submit to an occupation of its territory which it believes it has the power and right to resist. Your Lordships are fully aware of the events of the war which subsequently took place. It resulted, as must naturally be expected, in the defeat of the Danes and the occupation of the Duchies by an overwhelming force of Austrian and Prussian troops. That being so, and the Austrian Government having always said that they were ready to agree to a Conference, and Prussia assenting to that proposal,

Her Majesty's Government proposed that a Conference should be held. The Danish Government refused an armistice, but declared themselves ready to enter into a Conference. The Austrian and Prussian as well as the French Government expressed a wish that it should be attended by a Plenipotentiary of the German Confederation, and after some delay one was sent. The Conference was not assembled regularly until the 25th of April, and some delay then took place with a view of obtaining, if not an armistice, at least a suspension of arms for a considerable period. The Danish Government would not agree to an armistice ; but a suspension of arms they did agree to, which was only to last for the period of four weeks. My Lords, it was difficult in matters so intricate, and on which passions had been so much roused, to come to any agreement beforehand ; but Her Majesty's Government thought it their duty to proceed to the Conference, in the interests of peace, even without any such agreement. On the 12th of May, after the suspension of arms had been agreed to, I asked the Austrian and Prussian Governments to declare what it was they asked for in the interests of peace. Now, be it observed that although the Prussian Government, and the Austrian Government likewise, had continually declared that they had certain engagements to insist upon which had not been fulfilled, they never yet had agreed to specify what these engagements were which would secure peace, and by which they would be bound. When Lord Wodehouse went to Berlin on his way to Copenhagen he endeavoured, according to the instructions he had received, to obtain some explanations from the

Prussian Government on this point. The Prussian Government replied, ' Let the Danish Government first repeal the Constitution of November, and we will afterwards see what arrangement they propose to put in the place of that ; we will judge of that proposal and give our opinion upon it.' Nothing, I must say, could be less explicit, or a less justification for the course they were pursuing ; because at the same time they were ready to carry on war to the extremity, to use all their means to invade Schleswig with all the dreadful consequences, without making a distinct declaration of their terms. When, however, the Powers were assembled in Conference, and the Plenipotentiaries of Austria and Prussia were obliged to meet the Plenipotentiaries of Russia, France, and Sweden as well as of Great Britain, they found themselves compelled to make some statement of the terms which they would require. Be it observed that throughout—even up to the 31st of January—the two German Governments had declared that they adhered to the Treaty of London, and the execution and occupation were proofs that they still adhered to the integrity of the Danish Monarchy. Her Majesty's Government, therefore, had no reason to suppose that their proposal would be of a different character. We were told, however, upon authority so high as to be almost official, that there was an intention on their part to propose what was called a personal union ; and that personal union was to be of this nature—that the whole Duchy of Holstein and the whole Duchy of Schleswig were to be united ; they were to have a separate army and navy from those of Denmark ; that they were to have complete self-government ; and, in

fact, that the King of Denmark was to have scarcely any influence over the two Duchies. In one of the last meetings of the Conference, M. Quaade, one of the Danish Plenipotentiaries, declared that if that personal union had ever been proposed, it would have been impossible for the Danes to agree to it. Indeed, it was likely that, with the disposition which prevailed in Germany, German agitation would have produced a declaration of separation on the part of the two Duchies, and German arms would then have supported the Duchies in that wish for separation. Therefore, though nominally maintaining the integrity of Denmark, and though nominally adhering to the Treaty of 1852, the proposition of a personal union would have been, in fact, a separation of the Duchies from Denmark under a very thin transparent disguise. That, however, was not the exact proposal of the German Plenipotentiaries. In the meeting of the 17th of May the first Plenipotentiary of Prussia declared that—

> What the Austrian and Prussian Governments wished was a pacification which would assure to the Duchies absolute guarantees against the recurrence of any foreign oppression, and which, by thus excluding for the future any subject of dispute, of revolution, and of war, would guarantee to Germany that security in the North which she requires in order not to fall again periodically into the state of affairs which brought on the present war. These guarantees can only be found in the complete political independence of the Duchies and their close connexion by means of common institutions.—*Protocol*, No. 5.

Now, this declaration on the part of the two Powers is not a little remarkable. Your Lordships will observe the phrase, ‘ guarantee against foreign oppression.’ That oppression meant the oppres-

sion of the Government of the King of Denmark. But he was Duke of Holstein *de facto* and *de jure*, his title had never been disputed, and his government, if it was oppressive, could only be a domestic oppression. The two Powers, therefore, of Austria and Prussia, to whom Europe had a right to look for respect for the faith of treaties, declared at once that the government of the Danish Duchies was of the nature of a foreign oppression. At the same time, the declaration 'for a security against any subject of dispute, war, and revolution', was so ambiguous that none of the Plenipotentiaries could tell what its meaning was. The Russian Plenipotentiary said he was quite at a loss to know what it meant. The French Plenipotentiary followed in the same tone; and for a long period we were quite unable in the Conference to say what was really the intention of the two Powers. We asked who was to be the Sovereign of these two Duchies which were to be thus governed? The answer of the German Plenipotentiary was that that was a question to be decided by the Diet. Austria and Prussia, but more especially Austria, had declared hitherto that the Treaty of 1852 was a question that was decided—that the late King of Denmark had a right to settle the succession, and that his decision in favour of Prince Christian, the present King of Denmark, would be respected by those Powers. It was equally notorious that the Diet, if it met, would, by a considerable majority, declare against the title of the King of Denmark. Count Bernstorff did not deny that, and the Plenipotentiary of the German Diet declared at once that the majority of the Diet would never consent to an arrangement which, even in an

eventual or conditional form, would sanction a union between the Duchies and Denmark. Thus, while the two Powers, Austria and Prussia, were in appearance consenting to the maintenance of the Treaty of 1852, telling us that the Diet might ultimately decide in favour of the King of Denmark as the legitimate heir, the German Plenipotentiary, who, in fact, had greater power than either the Plenipotentiaries of Austria or Prussia, because they never at any time ventured to oppose that which he declared to be the will of Germany, declared that Germany would never consent to the restoration of the Duchies to Denmark.

My Lords, at the next meeting of the Conference, which took place on the 17th of May, there was a more positive declaration. Austria and Prussia then declared that they could no longer acknowledge the King of Denmark as Sovereign of the Duchies ; that the whole of the two Duchies ought to be separated from Denmark and placed under the sovereignty of the Prince of Augustenburg ; that he should be declared the rightful possessor of the throne of these Duchies, and that that was a declaration which would be hailed throughout Germany and would meet the wishes of the German people. Before this declaration was made, in preparation for such an event, the Plenipotentiaries of the neutral Powers had met to consider the situation. The Government of France had had some communication with the Government of this country. The French Government had declared that they thought the personal union could not be the foundation of a lasting peace, and that the only mode of obtaining such a peace would be to separate the Danish nationalities in the Duchies

from the German nationalities. After these communications I consulted the other neutral Plenipotentiaries, who met at my private house for the purpose of considering the matter. We came to the conclusion that it was useless to propose that the two Duchies should remain under the King of Denmark. It was quite obvious that unless we had been prepared—I should say all of us prepared —to carry on a great war for the purpose, after the hostilities which had taken place, after the declarations which had been made by the German Powers, if anything like a personal union had been established there would at once have been a declaration on the part of the Duchies and on the part of the German Confederation, supported by Austria and Prussia, that the Prince of Augustenburg was entitled to hold the Duchies, and that he was the rightful Sovereign ; and that if the Danish troops entered to dispute possession of the Duchies, they would be opposed by Austria, Prussia, and the whole Confederation. We had therefore to consider what we could propose which would be most favourable to Denmark under the circumstances which I have stated to your Lordships. Of course we could only propose something of a diplomatic nature, which we thought likely to be accepted. We accordingly prepared a proposition, which I as President of the Conference was to submit, and which I was assured would be supported by the Plenipotentiaries of France and Sweden, and as far as possible by the Russian Plenipotentiary, though he had not then received definite instructions. What we proposed was that the King of Denmark should yield to Germany the Duchy of Holstein and the Southern portion of the Duchy of Schleswig—

that the boundary should be drawn as far as the Schlei, and should go along by the Dannewerke; that there should be no menacing fortresses on the boundary; that the German Powers should not interfere any further or any more in the internal affairs of Denmark; and that a general guarantee should be given by the European Powers for the rest of the Danish possessions. With regard to this proposal, the Danish Plenipotentiaries made a declaration which I think did that Government the highest honour. They declared that the King of Denmark had accepted the Crown of that country according to the Treaty of 1852, thinking that his doing so would tend to the peace of Europe and to preserve the balance of power; but, as the surrender of a great part of his territory was now demanded, he was ready to make that concession, provided that entire independence and self-government were left to the remainder of his dominions. The King of Denmark declared he was ready to accept the line of the Schlei as proposed; and without defining it he declared it was necessary there should be a military and commercial line drawn for the sake of the independence of Denmark; and he declared moreover that there should be an European guarantee for the possession of the remainder of his territory. The German Governments, while they accepted the proposal for the partition of Schleswig—while they no longer demanded the whole of that Duchy—declared that, according to their views, the line of demarcation must go much further north. They said that the line must be from Apenrade to Tondern; and that they could not assent to the line proposed on the part of the neutral Plenipotentiaries. They

declared, at the same time, they were perfectly ready to agree that, with regard to the territory to be left to the King of Denmark, there should be no right of interference and no interference whatever with the independence of Denmark. I confess, my Lords, it appeared to me that the proposal we submitted was the best arrangement that could be made. It was not to be expected that those Duchies could be retained under the nominal sovereignty of the King of Denmark without giving rise to fresh disputes and fresh complications. It was obvious, also, that if that sovereignty had been admitted to be vested in the King of Denmark, there would be constant interference on the part of Germany, and that interference, which has gone on for the last twelve years, giving rise to continual disputes, would cause constant contentions in future. It would be far better that Denmark should have a restricted territory, with the understanding that in her restricted territory her own Government should have absolute control, than that she should be subject to perpetual interference and control on the part of the German Powers. The French Government more especially took that view. The French Plenipotentiary declared it had always been the opinion of his Government that the division of the nationalities was the cause of all the complications which had taken place, and that nothing could be settled satisfactorily until there had been a separation of the nationalities; but he declared in the name of the Emperor, at the same time, that it was necessary great forbearance should be shown towards Denmark as the weaker Power; that the part evidently and confessedly German should be given to the Duchy

of Holstein ; and with regard to the mixed districts, as well as the Danish part, they should be left to Denmark as a means of preserving her independence, and giving her a mercantile and military line. Unhappily, my Lords, upon this occasion, as throughout those questions, the German Powers, instead of taking those views of generosity and forbearance which were urged so well by the Emperor of the French, determined to insist on what, undoubtedly, was their right if the right of conquest was the only one to be considered. They stood on the right of conquest ; they stood on the victory they had gained on the disputed territory ; but with respect to generosity and forbearance towards a Power so disproportionate to themselves —with respect to a due consideration for the peace of Europe—with respect to the absence of a desire to rush again into war in order to retain that which by right of conquest they might say they had acquired—I should not be treating your Lordships with sincerity if I said there was any such forbearance, any such generosity, any such regard for the peace of Europe, manifested on the part of Austria, Prussia, and the German Confederation. I must say likewise, my Lords, that there was an assumption which was not justifiable on the part of Denmark, and in reference to which my noble friend Lord Clarendon made a clear and pointed statement at a subsequent meeting of the Conference. The Danish Government considered that the line which we had proposed in the name of the neutral Powers, and after consulting the neutral Powers, as a basis of pacification, was an English proposal—an English proposal by which England was bound to abide, and which she was

bound to maintain at all hazards. Nothing of the kind, however, was ever stated by the British Plenipotentiaries; nothing of the kind had Denmark a right to expect. I did inform the Danish Plenipotentiary, when there was a question of continuing the Armistice, that I should not propose nor support any division but the line of the Schlei without the consent of Denmark; but I never gave him to understand that England would support that line otherwise than by urging its adoption in conjunction with the other neutral Powers at the meetings of the Conference. The last suspension of arms was only for a fortnight, and it remained for us to consider what should be done—the two parties being obstinately bent on the maintenance of their different rights—the Germans insisting on the line from Apenrade to Tondern, and the Danes insisting first upon a line extending more to the south than that which the British Plenipotentiary had proposed in the Conference, and afterwards agreeing to that line, but declaring that they would make no further concessions. What could be done to bring about an amicable understanding? In this situation of affairs, knowing that Denmark would not consent to any other line—indeed, not knowing whether the German Powers would concede any other line—the Prussian Plenipotentiary said that he was ready to recommend to his Government a line which should proceed from the north of Flensburg to Tondern, but that he was not authorized to propose that line in the name of his Government. The Austrian Plenipotentiary did not accede at first, but afterwards said that he would recommend it to the consideration of his Government. But the Danes at once refused it,

and the proposal fell to the ground. It then remained to be considered whether, without proposing any other line, some means could not be found by which peace might still be preserved. We considered that question very anxiously, and it came to be a subject of reflection whether we could not, even at the last moment, propose something which might bring the two Powers to an agreement. It was obvious that many and great difficulties had to be removed. The King of Denmark was ready to yield a part of his dominions of which he had been deprived by war. The German Plenipotentiaries were ready to say that a part of the Duchy of Schleswig should remain under the rule of the King of Denmark. Both Powers were ready to accept the proposal that there should be no interference in future in the internal government of Denmark; and all the Powers, I think, would have been ready, if there had been an agreement on other points, to give a guarantee—a European guarantee—to Denmark, which would have left that Power, indeed, without any sovereignty over the German population, but still posesssed of an independent territory, and still possessed of a free and happy Government, not subject to foreign interference. Well, the question was, whether, there remaining only this line of frontier to be decided, it could not be arranged in some way to which both Powers would agree. We thought it possible that in that case the spirit of the Protocol of Paris might be adopted. The Protocol of Paris said, that when serious differences arose between any Powers, and there was danger of those differences being carried to hostilities, the good offices of a friendly Power might be resorted to, and it

appeared to us that if this principle could be brought into action, the continuance of the war might be obviated. It was stated at the same time by the French Plenipotentiary at Paris, and by others, that where the honour or the essential interests of a country were mainly concerned, it could not be expected that such differences should be submitted to a friendly Power. But, in our opinion, this was not such a case. It appeared to us that sooner than rush into war—sooner, above all, than expose Denmark again to such an unequal contest—it was possible to propose the good offices of a friendly Power, with this condition—that both Powers should submit to the decision respecting the line of frontier offered by the arbitrator to whom the matter might be referred. In fact it was to be an arbitration rather than good offices. Now, I cannot but believe that any impartial arbitrator would have fixed upon a line far more favourable to Denmark than that which the German Powers had proposed. A Power which was impartial and without passion would probably have given, not the line as far as the north of Flensburg, but a line to the south of Flensburg, whereby that important town might have been preserved to Denmark, and that Power would have had a port in the Northern Sea by which her independence might have been maintained. It was, however, entirely a question for the two Powers to accept or to refuse that arbitration. I may say further that my noble friend (the Earl of Clarendon) and myself, who were the British Plenipotentiaries at the Conference, thought that after the fairness and the impartiality which the Emperor of the French had shown throughout this question, his

friendliness, and at the same time his wish for the maintenance of peace, the two Powers might well have accepted his good offices. The opinion was, however, expressed by one of the Plenipotentiaries —an opinion afterwards confirmed by an official declaration—that no Power represented at the Conference, and therefore committed to a certain degree as to the questions before the Conference, could properly be accepted as the arbitrating Power. It then appeared to us, and we so informed the Plenipotentiaries, that in our opinion the King of the Belgians, whose impartiality is likewise well known, and whose long experience of European affairs makes him most desirous to preserve the peace of Europe, might perform these functions to the satisfaction of the Powers concerned. But the question of who should be the arbitrator never arose. Austria and Prussia said that they could accept the good offices of a friendly Power in accordance with the Treaty of Paris, but that they could not accept the decision of that friendly Power as final ; and in the meantime they asked for a long armistice. Now, my Lords, it appeared to us that if that proposal were accepted, then, after a period of two or three months of armistice, during which the naval operations of Denmark would be suspended, a decision would have been announced which, if it in any way displeased the German Powers—if it did not go to the full extent of all their demands—would have been refused by them. The Plenipotentiary of the German Confederation completely confirmed our view of this question by declaring that in his opinion this territory of Schleswig belonged altogether to the Prince of Augustenburg, or rather belonged to the

competency of the German Confederation; that they could therefore accept no arbitration, and could not be bound by anything that was decided. They evidently meant that every foot of territory in Schleswig might, if they chose it, be demanded at the end of the good offices by the German Confederation. Thus, according to what I am sorry to say has been the usual manner of the German Powers, their refusal was not a direct and straightforward one. It is somewhat like their declaration at the beginning, that they went into Holstein for the purpose of Federal Execution, that they went into Schleswig for the purpose of material occupation, and that they wished the question of the sovereignty of Holstein and Schleswig to be decided in the German Confederation, knowing perfectly well how that decision would be made; and then, lastly, they wished to have the appearance of accepting the good offices of an arbitrator without really intending to accept them. The Danish Plenipotentiaries, most unfortunately in my opinion—most imprudently in my opinion—gave a decided refusal to the proposal. Of course, it was for them to judge as to the security of their own country and the prospects of war; but I certainly regret deeply that they should have rejected the arbitration. The proposal that I made certainly did not exactly agree with the line of the Schlei, but it was a proposal which we, the British Plenipotentiaries, thought was for the benefit of Denmark, and was most likely to obtain for the Danes a peace which would have been satisfactory to them. And now, my Lords, all other means having failed, one other proposal was made on the part of France by the French Plenipotentiary, who

was directed to make this proposal—that, leaving the Danish part of Schleswig to the Danes, and the German part to the Germans, the line to be drawn in the disputed district should be decided by a vote of the population, to be taken in some fair manner, the details of which might be considered afterwards. [The Earl of Clarendon: The votes were to be taken in each commune.] Yes, and these votes were to decide the line to be drawn and the district which was to belong to Germany and to Denmark respectively.

The Earl of Derby: May I ask the noble Earl if that decision was to be taken during the occupation of the province by the German troops?

Earl Russell: No; the French proposition was clearly that the Prussian troops should evacuate the district before the vote was taken by means of Commissioners. At the same time, it was the opinion of the Danes—and I believe that opinion to have been well founded—that although the people of Schleswig generally were perfectly satisfied to remain united to Denmark, such had been the effects of the occupation, such had been the agitation on the part of Germany, the political societies in Germany having sent persons to agitate all over the country, that the decisions would through that influence have become corrupted, and the plan of the Emperor, which otherwise might have been successful, would have been rendered unjust. The proposition was accordingly refused. My Lords, it was with great regret that the Plenipotentiaries of the neutral Powers received this decision.

My Lords, I must say that my noble friend (the Earl of Clarendon) and I have received from France

and from the other neutral Powers the firmest support during the continuance of the Conference. We held frequent private meetings with the neutral Powers, in which we discussed the proposals to be made. There was nothing exhibited in those meetings but the most earnest desire to provide for the safety and independence of Denmark, and I must say that the utmost harmony prevailed on all sides; and the French, Russian, and Swedish Plenipotentiaries alike did all in their power to contribute towards the success of the proposals we made. We shall, therefore, leave the Conference with a strong sense of our obligations for the support which we received from them. After this decision there remained nothing more for the Conference but to accept the declaration which was made at the last meeting—and which has been repeated to me to-day by the Austrian Ambassador—it is simply that the two Powers, Austria and Prussia, have no intention of carrying on hostilities with the view of obtaining possession of any territory beyond the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, and that they have no intention of making any conquest of any portion of the Danish territory on the continent or of the Danish islands. That declaration is purely voluntary, and is not in any way extorted as to the manner in which these Powers propose to act. At the same time it comes rather late—though they make the declaration I suppose they cannot intend us to accept it—and we certainly cannot accept it as one upon which we can implicitly rely. After that which has happened with respect to the Treaty of 1852, and after that which has happened with respect to the treatment of the Danes after the pledges given, but more as

I am afraid owing to German popular opinion, which Austria is desirous to conciliate, which Prussia is desirous to conciliate, which the German Confederation, above all, is anxious to conciliate, I am sorry to say that, greatly as I have respected Austria, greatly as I have respected Prussia, we can no longer rely, as we have done, upon their declarations.

Well, my Lords, but the question comes as to what, at the end of the Conference, is our position, and what will be our course ? And without intending, or being able to pledge, the Government in case of contingencies which have not arisen, I think it is due to Parliament and to the country—especially at this period of the Session—to declare what is the view which the Government take of the position, the duty, the interests, and the future policy of England. My Lords, with regard to our honour, I conceive that in honour we are in no way engaged to take part in the present war. Although it has been stated to the contrary on the part of Denmark more than once, there has been at no time any pledge given on the part of this country or Her Majesty's Government promising material assistance to Denmark in this contest. Three times Her Majesty's Government during the period I have held the seals of the Foreign Office have endeavoured to induce Denmark to accept propositions which we regarded as favourable to her interests. In 1862 I made propositions to her, but those propositions were rejected. When Lord Wodehouse went to Denmark, he and the Russian Plenipotentiary proposed that Denmark should repeal the Constitution which she had concurred in but a few days before ;

but she would not at that time receive the proposal. We believe that, if she had consented to the arbitration which we proposed in the Conference, the result would have been as favourable to her as, under the circumstances in which she was placed, she could have expected. My Lords, I do not blame Denmark for the course she has thought fit to pursue. She has a right—I should be sorry to reproach her in any way in her present state of weakness—she has an undoubted right to refuse our propositions, but we on our side have also a right to take into consideration the duty, honour, and interests of this country, and not to make that duty, that honour, and those interests subordinate to the interests of any foreign Power whatever. My Lords, our honour not being engaged, we have to consider what we might be led to do for the interests of other Powers, and for the sake of that balance of power which in 1852 was declared by general consent to be connected with the integrity of Denmark. My Lords, I cannot but believe that the Treaty of 1852 having been entered into, if there had been at an early period—say in December or January last—if France, Great Britain, and Russia, supported by the assistance which they might have counted upon receiving from Sweden, had declared for the maintenance of the Treaty of 1852—the succession of the King of Denmark might have been established without difficulty, and might have been peaceably maintained, and that the King and his Government would have remedied all the grievances of which his German subjects complained. I believe the King of Denmark would have found it to his advantage to grant to his German subjects

that freedom, those privileges, and that self-government in their internal and domestic matters which they had demanded, and that they would thus have become quite contented as subjects to the King of Denmark. That desirable result, however, could not be brought about. In reference to the Treaty of 1852, I have to repeat what I stated on a previous occasion—that it was not a treaty of guarantee, that the Governments of France and Russia were competent to acknowledge the treaty, but that they had not pledged themselves to maintain the connexion of Schleswig and Denmark, that not being a question of the general balance of power in Europe. Well, the French Government have frequently declared and have repeated to us only within the last twenty-four hours, that the Emperor does not consider it essential to the interest of France to support the line of the Schlei. He declares he does not think that France would be inclined to go to war for such an object. He urges that a war with Germany would be a most serious thing to France, that our armies would not be marshalled to oppose the invasion of Denmark, and that such a war would consequently be attended with great cost and great risk. I think that if that war were successful, France would expect some compensation on account of her participation, and that compensation could hardly be granted without exciting general jealousy among the other nations of Europe, and thus disturbing the balance of power which now exists. I cannot deny that if the Emperor of the French puts forward these considerations—if he declares that for these reasons, though he would give us moral support, he would

afford us no material assistance in such war- I must say I think he is justified in that refusal, and in adopting such a line of conduct. I cannot but admit that if a great war with Germany arose, whatever might be the issue, it might reproduce those great contests which took place in 1814, and which led to such unsatisfactory results. The Emperor of the French is a Sovereign singularly wise and sagacious, and I will say valuing, as he has proved that he values, the peace of Europe, I am not in a position to find fault, nor can Her Majesty's Government find any fault with the decision to which the Emperor has come. But the Emperor of the French having thus declared his policy, and the Emperor of Russia having constantly refused to join with us in affording material support to Denmark, our position, of course, must be greatly influenced by those decisions. In the first place, is it the duty of this country—if we are to undertake the preservation of the balance of power in Europe as it was recognized in 1852—is it a duty incumbent on us alone ? The French Government sees very clearly the dangers to which France might be exposed by interfering, but it says at the same time that it would be an easy operation for England ; that England, with her naval power, might add most materially to the strength of Denmark and assist in bringing the war to a conclusion. My Lords, I must say there are many considerations which induce me to arrive at a different conclusion. I cannot but think, in the first place, that we should suffer perhaps considerably if our commercial marine was exposed to depredations such as might take place in the event of our being at war with

Germany. That is one consideration which ought not to be overlooked. But there are other considerations of still greater moment. One is—Would our interference bring this war to a conclusion? Without giving military aid could you recover Schleswig and Holstein, and even Jutland from the Austrian and Prussian forces? Well, my Lords, we have for a long time in our conduct of foreign affairs shown great forbearance and patience. I think we were right in being forbearing, and think we were justified in being patient. But if our honour or our interests or the great interests of Europe should call upon us to interfere, I think such interference ought to be clearly effectual, as nothing would more tend to diminish the influence of this country than a course of action which would show that while we were predominant at sea, and that no Austrian or Prussian ships of war could venture to leave port, yet at the same time our interference could not ensure, as we hoped it would, the safety of Denmark, nor lead to a speedy termination of the war. But, my Lords, the whole position and influence of this country with regard to foreign countries ought to be fully considered by Parliament and by the country; for we have great interests with multiplied complications arising from various connexions and various treaties with every part of the world. It is no longer a question with reference to the balance of power in Europe. There are other parts of the world in which our interests may be as deeply involved, and in which we may some day or other find it necessary to maintain the honour and interests of this country. The civil war now raging in America, ending how it may—whether by the establishment of an

independent republic in the South, or whether it ends most unexpectedly, as it would be to me, I confess, by restoring the Union—still the United States of America or the Northern States, or whatever they may be called, will then be in a totally different position to that which they were in a few years ago. A great army will then be maintained by the United States. A formidable navy will also be kept up. Our relations with that Power are liable at any moment to interruption. I hope and trust that our friendly relations may continue uninterrupted; still, those relations must be considered and kept in view as well as our interest in the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe. My Lords, let us look at other parts of the world. Look at the great commerce which has grown up in China, where it is necessary for us always to maintain a considerable naval force to protect it. Look at our immense possessions in India and see how necessary it is that they should be considered at all times. In any question, therefore, of peace or war—while it is very probable that this country with allies could carry on a war successfully—yet when it comes to be a war to be carried on by England alone, there are other contingencies to be looked at, and the position of this country is to be considered with reference not to Europe alone, but with reference to our interests in every quarter of the world. My Lords, these are considerations to be borne in mind with respect to this question of Denmark. It may be said that other combinations might be made—that although we could not ourselves attack the German Powers with any great amount of success, yet there are vulnerable points upon which they, and

especially Austria, may be open to attack; that those doctrines and theories which Austria and Prussia have put forward, with regard to foreign nationalities, may be retorted upon them, and especially upon Austria with effect—they may be applied to other parts of Europe than Schleswig and Holstein; that the German nationality is not the only nationality in Europe; that the Italian nationality has as much right to be considered as the Germans; and that if we were to enter upon a course of supporting nationalities, we should be perfectly justified by the doctrines and conduct of Austria. This, no doubt, would be sufficient if the object were merely to show to Austria and Prussia that they are vulnerable on their own ground. But, my Lords, I think it is the duty of England to show a greater attachment to peace than Austria and Prussia have shown, and not, if possible, to light a flame which might extend to every part of Europe, but rather to endeavour to confine the war within the narrowest limits possible. Therefore, my Lords, with regard to this question, it is the opinion of Her Majesty's Government that we should maintain the position which we have occupied, and that we should be neutral in this war. I do not mean to say that contingencies may not arise in which our position might become different, and in which our conduct might be altered. It may be said, 'Will you allow these German Powers to act as they please? If, contrary to their professions and promises, they should decide upon sending a combined Austrian and Prussian force to Copenhagen with the declared object of making Denmark assent to terms which would be destructive of her independence—will you

then remain entirely indifferent to such proceedings ?' My Lords, I can only say in answer to such a question, that every Government in this country must retain to itself a certain liberty—as long as it possesses the confidence of Parliament—a certain liberty of decision upon such points. All I can now say is, that if the Government should think it necessary to come to any fresh decision—if the war should assume a new character—if circumstances should arise which might require us to make another decision, it would be our duty, if Parliament were sitting, immediately to apply to Parliament upon the subject; and if Parliament should not be sitting, then at once to call Parliament together in order that it may judge the conduct which Her Majesty's Government should pursue.

In the meantime, my Lords, I have given you an outline of the course of these negotiations. I have given you an account of the efforts we have made for peace, which, like the efforts made in 1823 by the Governments of Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning, have been unfortunately unsuccessful. I say that our policy at the present time is to maintain peace. If there is any party in Parliament—if there is any individual in Parliament—who thinks as Lord Grey thought in 1823 that we ought to go to war, it will be competent for them to ask Her Majesty to interfere materially in the contest. If they think that in any respect we have failed in our duty, it is competent for them to take any line of conduct they may think proper. But, for ourselves, I say with confidence that we have maintained the honour of the country, that we have done everything in our power to preserve the

peace of Europe, and that, those efforts having failed, we can rest satisfied that nothing has been wanting on our parts which was needed by the honour or the interests of this country—that nothing has been left undone which it was our duty to do.

LORD STANLEY

JULY 20, 1866

AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA

SIR, this debate has lasted for some time, and, as was to be expected, many and various opinions have been expressed by those hon. gentlemen who have taken part in it. I hope it will not be supposed that, on the one hand, I necessarily agree or acquiesce in those opinions which I do not expressly mention for the purpose of saying I differ from them, or, on the other hand, that I differ from those opinions in which I do not go out of my way to express agreement. I think that in the actual state of Europe the House will hold me justified if I do not think it expedient to go into a general detailed discussion of the political situation, and the more so as that situation is changing not merely from week to week, but from day to day, and I may say, from the telegrams received, almost from hour to hour. I shall confine myself, therefore, as closely as I can, to the questions which have been put to me in the course of this discussion. First of all comes the question of the hon. member for Wick (Mr. Laing). He wants some guarantee that no intervention is contemplated on our part. He wants

some assurance that this country will not be dragged into a war as it was in the Crimean case. He admits the policy of the Government is intended to be that of non-intervention; but he fears that it may be possible to drift into a quarrel without intending it. But I suppose when the hon. member speaks of intervention he means either armed intervention or intervention of such a nature as, though not immediately, yet in ultimate result might lead to an appeal to physical force. If that is what he refers to, all I can say is that if the speech which Lord Derby about a week ago delivered in another place—if the opinions which I myself have invariably expressed on that subject, not merely when occupying the position I now hold, but for many years past when these questions were under discussion—if, what is infinitely more important, the unanimous feeling (for I believe it to amount to unanimity both of Parliament and the people out of doors)—the feeling that we ought not to be dragged into these Continental wars—if all these things, taken together, do not constitute a guarantee that ours will be a pacific policy, a policy of observation rather than of action—then I am unable to understand in what language a stronger guarantee can be given. But if what is meant is intervention of a different character—intervention in the shape of friendly advice tendered by a neutral Power, then I think the question whether intervention of that kind is under particular circumstances desirable or not is a question which must necessarily be left to the discretion of the executive Government. I am not personally very fond of the system of giving advice to foreign countries. I entirely agree with what has

been said by the right hon. gentleman opposite upon the subject, when he said that you are never more likely to lessen the influence of England than when you are constantly endeavouring to increase it by giving advice. I think that the right of giving advice has of late years been largely used; and that it has sometimes been not only used, but abused. Still, there is truth in the proverb which says that lookers-on see more of the game than the players; and cases do occur when warning given by a friendly and neutral Power—by a Power which is well known to have no interest of its own to serve, by a Power desiring nothing more than the restoration of peace, and that that peace shall be permanent—may do something to shorten the duration and limit the extent of a war that might otherwise spread over the greater part of Europe. As to the state of affairs at the present moment—for that, I apprehend, is the practical question on which the House wishes an answer from me, I wish distinctly to assure hon. gentlemen and the country that the British Government stand, as regards the European controversy, free, unpledged, and uncommitted to any policy whatever. The sole diplomatic act which the present Government have taken—and it was almost the first act of any kind they had to perform—was that of supporting in general terms at Florence and Berlin the proposition made by the French Government for a temporary cessation of hostilities. It seemed to us that to support that proposition was on our part simply an act of humanity and common sense. The House will recollect what were the circumstances of the case. Venice had been ceded, not indeed

to Italy, but ceded by Austria. A great battle had been fought, a decisive victory had been gained, Austria had invoked the mediation of France. France had accepted the post of mediator. She asked us to support, not the terms of peace—that would have been premature—but merely the general proposition for an armistice in order that the belligerent parties might have time to consider whether, under the totally altered state of circumstances, it would not be possible to substitute negotiations for further bloodshed, and to obtain the results of the war without continuing the war itself. We did not feel it in our power to refuse our assent to that principle. But, while in general terms we have supported the proposition of an armistice, we have pledged ourselves to no terms or conditions of peace whatever. We have pledged ourselves to nothing beyond the general advice that an armistice should take place. The circumstances under which that advice was given have passed. Our mediation and our advice have not been officially asked by the combatants, and we have abstained from giving it. That is the present state of the matter. The right hon. gentleman the member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman) has asked me whether there is any expectation of an armed mediation on the part of the French Government. Well, it is not my duty, nor is it in my power, to answer for other Governments, but only for our own. All I can say is, I have not the slightest reason to believe that any step of that kind is in contemplation, and I have strong reasons to believe that no such step is contemplated. [Mr. Horsman: I did not ask that question. It was another hon. member.]

Then the question was asked by the hon. member for Wick (Mr. Laing). Then these two questions were put to me—first, whether the British Government has been invited by that of France to address joint communications to all or any of the belligerent Powers? The French Government have taken up the matter, and it now rests with that Government. The French Government may or may not ask us to join in that work of mediation; but, should they do so, I do not think it would be the duty of the British Government to join in any such mediation, unless we have a distinct understanding as to the terms the French Government will propose. The second question of the right hon. gentleman is, whether the British Government has expressed its readiness to concur with the Government of France in recommending Austria to terminate the war, by accepting the two conditions proposed by Prussia and Italy as to her surrender of Venetia, and ceasing to be a member of the German Confederation? Now, Sir, as to that, Venetia has been, I understand, ceded by Austria, and whether or not any questions will arise as to that settlement being absolute or conditional, I do not know; still I apprehend that none of us can entertain a doubt that the final result will be that Venetia must pass from Austria. Venetia has been, in effect, conquered not by Italy but for Italy; Venetia has been conquered in Germany. Whatever the manner of the transfer may be—whatever may be the precise nature of the measures adopted by France—I do not think any reasonable man can entertain a doubt that Venetia, at no distant period, will belong to Italy. Then, with regard

to the question as to whether we have recommended Austria to terminate the war by assenting to the proposal of ceasing to be a member of the German Confederation, I must remind the right hon. gentleman that that proposal has never been made, so far as I am aware, as the sole condition of peace, that Austria should cease to be a member of the German Confederation. No doubt various preliminaries have been discussed between the two Governments. If the question were narrowed to the issue whether Austria would conclude peace by ceding Venetia and by consenting to quit the Confederation, that, no doubt, would be a question upon which we should be in a position to give an opinion; but since we have no reason to think that the acceding to those two conditions by Austria would terminate the war, and since we do not know accurately and precisely what are the terms which would be likely to be accepted by one or other of the belligerent parties, it would be clearly premature on our part to express an opinion on the abstract question as to what conditions might or might not be accepted. With regard to the general policy of the Government I have only one remark to make. I think there never was a great European war in which the direct national interests of England were less concerned. We all, I suppose, have our individual sympathies in the matter. The Italian question I look upon as not being very distant from a fair settlement; and with regard to the other possible results of the war, and especially as to the establishment of a strong North German Power—of a strong, compact empire, extending over North Germany—I cannot see that, if the war ends, as it

very possibly may, in the establishment of such an empire—I cannot see that the existence of such a Power would be to us any injury, any menace, or any detriment. It might be conceivable enough that the growth of such a Power might indeed awaken the jealousy of other Continental States, who may fear a rival in such a Power. That is a natural feeling in their position. That position, however, is not ours, and if North Germany is to become a single great Power, I do not see that any English interest is in the least degree affected. I think, Sir, I have now answered as explicitly as I can the various questions which have been put to me. I think, in the first place, I may assure the hon. member for Wick that there is no danger, as far as human foresight can go, of Continental complications involving this country in war. I think, in the next place, that if we do not intend to take an active part in the quarrel, we ought to be exceedingly cautious how we use menacing language or hold out illusory hopes. If our advice is solicited, and if there is any likelihood that that advice will be of practical use, I do not think we ought to hesitate to give the best advice in our power; but while giving it under a deep sense of moral responsibility, as being in our judgement the best, we ought carefully to avoid involving ourselves or the country in any responsibility for the results of following that advice in a matter where no English interest is concerned. I do not think we ought to put ourselves in such a position that any Power could say to us, 'We have acted upon your advice, and we have suffered for it. You have brought us into this difficulty, and therefore you are bound

to get us out of it.' We ought not, I say, to place ourselves in a position of that kind. And now, Sir, I have stated all, I think, that it is possible for me to state at this time, and it remains for me only to assure the House—knowing, as I do, how utterly impossible it is for any member of the Executive to carry on his work effectively without the support of public opinion—it only remains for me to say that, as far as the nature of the case allows, I shall always be anxious that the House shall be conversant with everything that is done.

JOHN BRIGHT

October 29, 1858

PRINCIPLES OF FOREIGN POLICY

The frequent and far too complimentary manner in which my name has been mentioned to-night, and the most kind way in which you have received me, have placed me in a position somewhat humiliating, and really painful; for to receive laudation which one feels one cannot possibly have merited, is much more painful than to be passed by in a distribution of commendation to which possibly one might lay some claim. If one twentieth part of what has been said is true, if I am entitled to any measure of your approbation, I may begin to think that my public career and my opinions are not so un-English and so anti-national as some of those who profess to be the best of our public instructors have sometimes assumed. How, indeed, can I, any more than any of you, be un-English and anti-national? Was I not born upon the same soil? Do I not come of the same English stock? Are not my family committed irrevocably to the fortunes of this country? Is not whatever property I may have depending as much as yours is depending upon the good government of our common fatherland? Then how shall any man dare to say to any one of his countrymen, because he happens to hold a different opinion on questions of great public

policy, that therefore he is un-English, and is to be condemned as anti-national? There are those who would assume that between my countrymen and me, and between my constituents and me, there has been, and there is now, a great gulf fixed, and that if I cannot pass over to them and to you, they and you can by no possibility pass over to me.

Now I take the liberty here, in the presence of an audience as intelligent as can be collected within the limits of this island, and of those who have the strongest claim to know what opinions I do entertain relative to certain great questions of public policy, to assert that I hold no views, that I have never promulgated any views on those controverted questions with respect to which I cannot bring as witnesses in my favour, and as fellow believers with myself, some of the best and most revered names in the history of English statesmanship. About 120 years ago, the Government of this country was directed by Sir Robert Walpole, a great Minister, who for a long period preserved the country in peace, and whose pride it was that during those years he had done so. Unfortunately, towards the close of his career, he was driven by faction into a policy which was the ruin of his political position. Sir Robert Walpole declared, when speaking of the question of war as affecting this country, that nothing could be so foolish, nothing so mad as a policy of war for a trading nation. And he went so far as to say, that any peace was better than the most successful war. I do not give you the precise language made use of by the Minister, for I speak only from memory; but I am satisfied I am not misrepresenting him in what I have now stated.

Come down fifty years nearer to our own time, and you find a statesman, not long in office, but still strong in the affections of all persons of Liberal principles in this country, and in his time representing fully the sentiments of the Liberal party—Charles James Fox. Mr. Fox, referring to the policy of the Government of his time, which was one of constant interference in the affairs of Europe, and by which the country was continually involved in the calamities of war, said that although he would nót assert or maintain the principle, that under no circumstances could England have any cause of interference with the affairs of the continent of Europe, yet he would prefer the policy of positive non-interference and of perfect isolation rather than the constant intermeddling to which our recent policy had subjected us, and which brought so much trouble and suffering upon the country. In this case also I am not prepared to give you his exact words, but I am sure that I fairly describe the sentiments which he expressed.

Come down fifty years later, and to a time within the recollection of most of us, and you find another statesman, once the most popular man in England, and still remembered in this town and elsewhere with respect and affection. I allude to Earl Grey. When Earl Grey came into office for the purpose of carrying the question of Parliamentary Reform, he unfurled the banner of 'Peace, retrenchment, and reform', and that sentiment was received in every part of the United Kingdom, by every man who was or had been in favour of Liberal principles, as predicting the advent of a new era which should save his country from many of the calamities of the past.

Come down still nearer, and to a time that seems

but the other day, and you find another Minister, second to none of those whom I have mentioned—the late Sir Robert Peel. I had the opportunity of observing the conduct of Sir Robert Peel from the time when he took office in 1841. I watched his proceedings particularly from the year 1843, when I entered Parliament, up to the time of his lamented death; and during the whole of that period, I venture to say, his principles, if they were to be discovered from his conduct and his speeches, were precisely those which I have held, and which I have always endeavoured to press upon the attention of my countrymen. If you have any doubt upon that point I would refer you to that last, that beautiful, that most solemn speech which he delivered with an earnestness and a sense of responsibility as if he had known he was leaving a legacy to his country. If you refer to that speech, delivered on the morning of the very day on which occurred the accident which terminated his life, you will find that its whole tenor is in conformity with all the doctrines that I have urged upon my countrymen for years past with respect to our policy in foreign affairs. When Sir Robert Peel went home, just before the dawn of day, upon the last occasion that he passed from the House of Commons, the scene of so many of his triumphs, I have heard, from what I think a good authority, that after he entered his own house, he expressed the exceeding relief which he experienced at having delivered himself of a speech which he had been reluctantly obliged to make against a Ministry which he was anxious to support, and he added, if I am not mistaken, 'I have made a speech of peace.'

Well, if this be so, if I can give you four names like these—if there were time I could make a longer list of still eminent if inferior men—I should like to know why I, as one of a small party, am to be set down as teaching some new doctrine which it is not fit for my countrymen to hear, and why I am to be assailed in every form of language, as if there was one great department of governmental affairs in which I was incompetent to offer any opinion to my countrymen. But leaving the opinions of individuals, I appeal to this audience, to every man who knows anything of the views and policy of the Liberal party in past years, whether it is not the fact that up to 1832 and indeed to a much later period, probably to the year 1850, those sentiments of Sir Robert Walpole, of Mr. Fox, of Earl Grey, and of Sir Robert Peel, the sentiments which I in humbler mode have propounded, were not received unanimously by the Liberal party as their fixed and unchangeable creed? And why should they not? Are they not founded upon reason? Do not all statesmen know, as you know, that upon peace, and peace alone, can be based the successful industry of a nation, and that by successful industry alone can be created that wealth which, permeating all classes of the people, not confined to great proprietors, great merchants, and great speculators, not running in a stream merely down your principal streets, but turning fertilizing rivulets into every by-lane and every alley, tends so powerfully to promote the comfort, happiness, and contentment of a nation? Do you not know that all progress comes from successful and peaceful industry, and that upon it is based your superstructure of education, of morals, of self-respect among your

people, as well as every measure for extending and consolidating freedom in your public institutions ? I am not afraid to acknowledge that I do oppose—that I do utterly condemn and denounce—a great part of the foreign policy which is practised and adhered to by the Government of this country.

You know, of course, that about 170 years ago there happened in this country what we have always been accustomed to call ' a glorious revolution ', a revolution which had this effect : that it put a bit into the mouth of the monarch so that he was not able of his own free-will to do, and he dared no longer attempt to do, the things which his predecessors had done without fear. But if at the Revolution the monarchy of England was bridled and bitted, at the same time the great territorial families of England were enthroned ; and from that period, until the year 1831 or 1832—until the time when Birmingham politically became famous—those territorial families reigned with an almost undisputed sway over the destinies and the industry of the people of these Kingdoms. If you turn to the history of England, from the period of the Revolution to the present, you will find that an entirely new policy was adopted, and that while we had endeavoured in former times to keep ourselves free from European complications, we now began to act upon a system of constant entanglement in the affairs of foreign countries, as if there were neither property nor honours, not anything worth striving for, to be acquired in any other field. The language coined and used then, has continued to our day. Lord Somers, in writing for William III, speaks of the endless and sanguinary

wars of that period as wars 'to maintain the liberties of Europe'. There were wars to 'support the Protestant interest', and there were many wars to preserve our old friend 'the balance of power'.

We have been at war since that time, I believe, with, for, and against every considerable nation in Europe. We fought to put down a pretended French supremacy under Louis XIV. We fought to prevent France and Spain coming under the sceptre of one monarch, although, if we had not fought, it would have been impossible in the course of things that they should have become so united. We fought to maintain the Italian provinces in connexion with the House of Austria. We fought to put down the supremacy of Napoleon Bonaparte, and the Minister who was employed by this country at Vienna, after the Great War, when it was determined that no Bonaparte should ever again sit on the throne of France, was the very man to make an alliance with another Bonaparte for the purpose of carrying on a war to prevent the supremacy of the late Emperor of Russia. So that we have been all round Europe and across it over and over again, and after a policy so distinguished, so pre-eminent, so long-continued, and so costly, I think we have a fair right—I have, at least—to ask those who are in favour of it to show us its visible result. Europe is not at this moment, so far as I know, speaking of it broadly, and making allowance for certain improvements in its general civilization, more free politically than it was before. The balance of power is like perpetual motion, or any of those impossible things which some men are always racking their brains and spending their time and money to accomplish.

We all know and deplore that at the present moment a larger number of the grown men of Europe are employed, and a larger portion of the industry of Europe is absorbed, to provide for, and maintain, the enormous armaments which are now on foot in every considerable Continental State. Assuming, then, that Europe is not much better in consequence of the sacrifices we have made, let us inquire what has been the result in England, because, after all, that is the question which becomes us most to consider. I believe that I understate the sum when I say that, in pursuit of this will-of-the-wisp (the liberties of Europe and the balance of power), there has been extracted from the industry of the people of this small island no less an amount than £2,000,000,000 sterling. I cannot imagine how much £2,000,000,000 is, and therefore I shall not attempt to make you comprehend it. I presume it is something like those vast and incomprehensible astronomical distances with which we have been lately made familiar, but, however familiar, we feel that we do not know one bit more about them than we did before. When I try to think of that sum of £2,000,000,000 there is a sort of vision passes before my mind's eye. I see your peasant labourer delve and plough, sow and reap, sweat beneath the summer's sun, or grow prematurely old before the winter's blast. I see your noble mechanic, with his manly countenance and his matchless skill, toiling at his bench or his forge. I see one of the workers in our factories in the north, a woman—a girl it may be—gentle and good, as many of them are, as your sisters and daughters are—I see her intent upon the spindle, whose revolutions are so rapid that the eye fails

altogether to detect them, or watching the alternating flight of the unresting shuttle. I turn again to another portion of your population, which, 'plunged in mines, forgets a sun was made', and I see the man who brings up from the secret chambers of the earth the elements of the riches and greatness of his country. When I see all this I have before me a mass of produce and of wealth which I am no more able to comprehend than I am that £2,000,000,000 of which I have spoken, but I behold in its full proportion the hideous error of your Governments, whose fatal policy consumes in some cases a half, never less than a third, of all the results of that industry which God intended should fertilize and bless every home in England, but the fruits of which are squandered in every part of the surface of the globe, without producing the smallest good to the people of England.

We have, it is true, some visible results that are of a more positive character. We have that which some people call a great advantage—the National Debt—a debt which is now so large that the most prudent, the most economical, and the most honest have given up all hope, not of its being paid off, but of its being diminished in amount. We have, too, taxes which have been during many years so onerous that there have been times when the patient beast of burden threatened to revolt, so onerous that it has been utterly impossible to levy them with any kind of honest equality, according to the means of the people to pay them. We have that, moreover, which is a standing wonder to all foreigners who consider our condition, an amount of apparently immovable pauperism, which to strangers is wholly irreconcilable with the

fact that we, as a nation, produce more of what should make us all comfortable than is produced by any other nation of similar numbers on the face of the globe. Let us likewise remember that during the period of those great and so-called glorious contests on the continent of Europe, every description of home reform was not only delayed, but actually crushed out of the minds of the great bulk of the people. There can be no doubt whatever that in 1793 England was about to realize political changes and reforms, such as did not appear again until 1830; and during the period of that war, which now almost all men agree to have been wholly unnecessary, we were passing through a period which may be described as the dark age of English politics; when there was no more freedom to write or speak or politically to act, than there is now in the most despotic country of Europe.

But it may be asked, did nobody gain? If Europe is no better, and the people of England have been so much worse, who has benefited by the new system of foreign policy? What has been the fate of those who were enthroned at the Revolution, and whose supremacy has been for so long a period undisputed among us? Mr. Kinglake, the author of an interesting book on Eastern Travel, describing the habits of some acquaintances that he made in the Sahara deserts, says, that the jackals of the desert follow their prey in families like the place-hunters of Europe. I will reverse, if you like, the comparison, and say that the great territorial families of England, which were enthroned at the Revolution, have followed their prey like the jackals of the desert. Do you not observe,

at a glance, that, from the time of William III, by reason of the foreign policy which I denounce, wars have been multiplied, taxes increased, loans made, and the sums of money which every year the Government has to expend augmented, and that so the patronage at the disposal of Ministers must have increased also, and the families who were enthroned and made powerful in the legislation and administration of the country must have had the first pull at, and the largest profit out of, that patronage? There is no actuary in existence who can calculate how much of the wealth, of the strength, of the supremacy of the territorial families of England has been derived from an unholy participation in the fruits of the industry of the people, which have been wrested from them by every device of taxation, and squandered in every conceivable crime of which a Government could possibly be guilty.

The more you examine this matter the more you will come to the conclusion which I have arrived at, that this foreign policy, this regard for 'the liberties of Europe', this care at one time for 'the Protestant interests', this excessive love for 'the balance of power', is neither more nor less than a gigantic system of out-door relief for the aristocracy of Great Britain. (Great laughter.) I observe that you receive that declaration as if it were some new and important discovery. In 1815, when the great war with France was ended, every Liberal in England whose politics, whose hopes, and whose faith had not been crushed out of him by the tyranny of the time of that war, was fully aware of this, and openly admitted it, and up to 1832, and for some years afterwards, it was the fixed and

undoubted creed of the great Liberal party. But somehow all is changed. We who stand upon the old landmarks, who walk in the old paths, who would conserve what is wise and prudent, are hustled and shoved about as if we were come to turn the world upside down. The change which has taken place seems to confirm the opinion of a lamented friend of mine, who, not having succeeded in all his hopes, thought that men made no progress whatever, but went round and round like a squirrel in a cage. The idea is now so general that it is our duty to meddle everywhere, that it really seems as if we had pushed the Tories from the field, expelling them by our competition.

I should like to lay before you a list of the treaties which we have made, and of the responsibilities under which we have laid ourselves with respect to the various countries of Europe. I do not know where such an enumeration is to be found, but I suppose it would be possible for antiquaries and men of investigating minds to dig them out from the recesses of the Foreign Office, and perhaps to make some of them intelligible to the country. I believe, however, that if we go to the Baltic we shall find that we have a treaty to defend Sweden, and the only thing which Sweden agrees to do in return is not to give up any portion of her territories to Russia. Coming down a little south, we have a treaty which invites us, enables us, and perhaps, if we acted fully up to our duty with regard to it, would compel us to interfere in the question between Denmark and the Duchies. If I mistake not, we have a treaty which binds us down to the maintenance of the little kingdom of Belgium, as established after its

separation from Holland. We have numerous treaties with France. We are understood to be bound by treaty to maintain constitutional government in Spain and Portugal. If we go round into the Mediterranean, we find the little kingdom of Sardinia, to which we have lent some millions of money, and with which we have entered into important treaties for preserving the balance of power in Europe. If we go beyond the kingdoms of Italy and cross the Adriatic, we come to the small kingdom of Greece, against which we have a nice account that will never be settled, while we have engagements to maintain that respectable but diminutive country under its present constitutional government. Then, leaving the kingdom of Greece, we pass up the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and from Greece to the Red Sea, whereever the authority of the Sultan is more or less admitted, the blood and the industry of England are pledged to the permanent sustentation of the 'independence and integrity' of the Ottoman Empire.

I confess that, as a citizen of this country, wishing to live peaceably among my fellow countrymen, and wishing to see my countrymen free, and able to enjoy the fruits of their labour, I protest against a system which binds us in all these networks and complications, from which it is impossible that we can gain one single atom of advantage for this country. It is not all glory, after all. Glory may be worth something, but it is not always glory. We have had within the last few years dispatches from Vienna and from St. Petersburg which, if we had not deserved them, would have been very offensive and not a little insolent. We

have had the Ambassador of the Queen expelled summarily from Madrid, and we have had an Ambassador driven almost with ignominy from Washington. We have blockaded Athens for a claim which was known to be false. We have quarrelled with Naples, for we chose to give advice to Naples, which was not received in the submissive spirit expected from her, and our Minister was therefore withdrawn. Not three years ago, too, we seized a considerable kingdom in India, with which our Government had but recently entered into the most solemn treaty, which every lawyer in England and in Europe, I believe, would consider binding before God and the world. We deposed its monarch, we committed a great immorality and a great crime, and we have reaped an almost instantaneous retribution in the most gigantic and sanguinary revolt which probably any nation ever made against its conquerors. Within the last few years we have had two wars with a great Empire, which we are told contains at least one-third of the whole human race. The first war was called, and appropriately called, the Opium War. No man, I believe, with a spark of morality in his composition, no man who cares anything for the opinion of his fellow countrymen, has dared to justify that war. The war which has just been concluded, if it has been concluded, had its origin in the first war; for the enormities committed in the first war are the foundation of the implacable hostility which it is said the inhabitants of Canton bear to all persons connected with the English name. Yet though we have these troubles in India—a vast country which we do not know how to govern—and a war with China—a country with which, though

everybody else can remain at peace, we cannot—such is the inveterate habit of conquest, such is the insatiable lust of territory, such is, in my view, the depraved, unhappy state of opinion of the country on this subject, that there are not a few persons, Chambers of Commerce to wit, in different parts of the kingdom (though I am glad to say it has not been so with the Chamber of Commerce at Birmingham), who have been urging our Government to take possession of a province of the greatest island in the Eastern Seas, a possession which must at once necessitate increased estimates and increased taxation, and which would probably lead us into merciless and disgraceful wars with the half-savage tribes who inhabit that island.

I will not dwell upon that question. The gentleman who is principally concerned in it is at this moment, as you know, stricken down with affliction, and I am unwilling to enter here into any considerable discussion of the case which he is urging upon the public; but I say that we have territory enough in India, and if we have not troubles enough there, if we have not difficulties enough in China, if we have not taxation enough, by all means gratify your wishes for more; but I hope that whatever may be the shortcomings of the Government with regard to any other questions in which we are all interested—and may they be few!—they will shut their eyes, they will turn their backs obstinately from adding in this mode, or in any mode, to the English possessions in the East. I suppose that if any ingenious person were to prepare a large map of the world, as far as it is known, and were to mark upon it, in any colour that he liked, the spots where Englishmen have

fought, and English blood has been poured forth, and the treasure of England squandered, scarcely a country, scarcely a province of the vast expanse of the habitable globe would be thus undistinguished.

Perhaps there are in this room, I am sure there are in the country, many persons who hold a superstitious traditionary belief that, somehow or other, our vast trade is to be attributed to what we have done in this way, that it is thus we have opened markets and advanced commerce, that English greatness depends upon the extent of English conquests and English military renown. But I am inclined to think that, with the exception of Australia, there is not a single dependency of the Crown which, if we come to reckon what it has cost in war and protection, would not be found to be a positive loss to the people of this country. Take the United States, with which we have such an enormous and constantly increasing trade. The wise statesmen of the last generation, men whom your school histories tell you were statesmen, serving under a monarch who they tell you was a patriotic monarch, spent £130,000,000 of the fruits of the industry of the people in a vain—happily a vain—endeavour to retain the colonies of the United States in subjection to the Monarchy of England. Add up the interest of that £130,000,000 for all this time, and how long do you think it will be before there will be a profit on the trade with the United States which will repay the enormous sum we invested in a war to retain those States as colonies of this Empire? It never will be paid off. Wherever you turn, you will find that the opening of markets, developing of new countries,

introducing cotton cloth with cannon balls, are vain, foolish, and wretched excuses for wars, and ought not to be listened to for a moment by any man who understands the multiplication table or who can do the simplest sum in arithmetic.

Since the 'Glorious Revolution', since the enthronization of the great Norman territorial families, they have spent in wars, and we have worked for, about £2,000,000,000. The interest on that is £100,000,000 per annum, which alone, to say nothing of the principal sum, is three or four times as much as the whole amount of your annual export trade from that time to this. Therefore, if war has provided you with a trade, it has been at an enormous cost; but I think it is by no means doubtful that your trade would have been no less in amount and no less profitable had peace and justice been inscribed on your flag instead of conquest and the love of military renown. But even in this year, 1858—we have got a long way into the century—we find that within the last seven years our public debt has greatly increased. Whatever be the increase of our population, of our machinery, of our industry, of our wealth, still our national debt goes on increasing. Although we have not a foot more territory to conserve, or an enemy in the world who dreams of attacking us, we find that our annual military expenses during the last twenty years have risen from £12,000,000 to £22,000,000

Some people think that it is a good thing to pay a great revenue to the State. Even so eminent a man as Lord John Russell is not without a delusion of this sort. Lord John Russell, as you have heard, while speaking of me in flattering and

friendly terms, says he is unfortunately obliged to differ from me frequently; therefore, I suppose, there is no particular harm in my saying that I am sometimes obliged to differ from him. Some time ago he was a great star in the northern hemisphere, shining, not with unaccustomed, but with his usual brilliancy at Liverpool. He made a speech in which there was a great deal to be admired, to a meeting composed, it was said, to a great extent of working-men; and in it he stimulated them to a feeling of pride in the greatness of their country and in being citizens of a State which enjoyed a revenue of £100,000,000 a year, which included the revenues of the United Kingdom and of British India. But I think it would have been far more to the purpose if he could have congratulated the working-men of Liverpool on this vast Empire being conducted in an orderly manner, on its laws being well administered and well obeyed, its shores sufficiently defended, its people prosperous and happy, on a revenue of £20,000,000. The State, indeed, of which Lord John Russell is a part, may enjoy a revenue of £100,000,000, but I am afraid the working-men can only be said to enjoy it in the sense in which men not very choice in their expressions say that for a long time they have enjoyed 'very bad health'.

I am prepared to admit that it is a subject of congratulation that there is a people so great, so free, and so industrious, that it can produce a sufficient income out of which £100,000,000 a year, if need absolutely were, could be spared for some great and noble object; but it is not a thing to be proud of that our Government should require us to pay that enormous sum for the simple purposes

of government and defence. Nothing can by any possibility tend more to the corruption of a Government than enormous revenues. We have heard lately of instances of certain joint-stock institutions with very great capital collapsing suddenly, bringing disgrace upon their managers and ruin upon hundreds of families. A great deal of that has arisen, not so much from intentional fraud, as from the fact that weak and incapable men have found themselves tumbling about in an ocean of bank-notes and gold, and they appear to have lost all sight of where it came from, to whom it belonged, and whether it was possible by any maladministration ever to come to an end of it. That is absolutely what is done by Governments. You have read in the papers lately some accounts of the proceedings before a Commission appointed to inquire into alleged maladministration with reference to the supply of clothing to the army, but if anybody had said anything in the time of the late Government about any such maladministration, there is not one of those great statesmen, of whom we are told we ought always to speak with so much reverence, who would not have got up and declared that nothing could be more admirable than the system of book-keeping at Weedon, nothing more economical than the manner in which the War Department spent the money provided by public taxation. But we know that it is not so. I have heard a gentleman—one who is as competent as any man in England to give an opinion about it—a man of business, and not surpassed by any one as a man of business, declare, after a long examination of the details of the question, that he would undertake to do everything that is done not only for the

defence of the country, but for many other things which are done by your navy, and which are not necessary for that purpose, for half the annual cost that is voted in the estimates!

I think the expenditure of these vast sums, and especially of those which we spend for military purposes, leads us to adopt a defiant and insolent tone towards foreign countries. We have the freest press in Europe, and the freest platform in Europe, but every man who writes an article in a newspaper, and every man who stands on a platform, ought to do it under a solemn sense of responsibility. Every word he writes, every word I utter, passes with a rapidity, of which our forefathers were utterly ignorant, to the very ends of the earth; the words become things and acts, and they produce on the minds of other nations effects which a man may never have intended. Take a recent case; take the case of France. I am not expected to defend, and I shall certainly not attack, the present Government of France. The instant that it appeared in its present shape, the Minister of England conducting your foreign affairs, speaking ostensibly for the Cabinet, for his Sovereign, and for the English nation, offered his congratulations, and the support of England was at once accorded to the re-created French Empire. Soon after this an intimate alliance was entered into between the Queen of England, through her Ministers, and the Emperor of the French. I am not about to defend the policy which flowed from that alliance, nor shall I take up your time by making any attack upon it. An alliance was entered into, and a war was entered into. English and French soldiers fought on the same field, and they suffered, I fear, from the same

neglect. They now lie buried on the bleak heights of the Crimea, and except by their mothers, who do not soon forget their children, I suppose they are mostly forgotten. I have never heard it suggested that the French Government did not behave with the most perfect honour to this Government and this country all through these grave transactions; but I have heard it stated by those who must know, that nothing could be more honourable, nothing more just, than the conduct of the French Emperor to this Government throughout the whole of that struggle. More recently, when the war in China was begun by a Government which I have condemned and denounced in the House of Commons, the Emperor of the French sent his ships and troops to co-operate with us, but I have never heard that anything was done there to create a suspicion of a feeling of hostility on his part towards us. The Emperor of the French came to London, and some of those powerful organs of the press, who have since taken the line of which I am complaining, did all but invite the people of London to prostrate themselves under the wheels of the chariot which conveyed along our streets the revived Monarchy of France. The Queen of England went to Paris, and was she not received there with as much affection and as much respect as her high position and her honourable character entitle her to?

What has occurred since? If there was a momentary unpleasantness, I am quite sure that every impartial man will agree that, under the peculiarly irritating circumstances of the time, there was at least as much forbearance shown on one side of the Channel as on the other. Then, we

have had much said lately about a naval fortification recently completed in France, which has been more than one hundred years in progress, which was not devised by the present Emperor of the French. For one hundred years great sums have been spent on it, and at last, like every other great work, it was brought to an end. The English Queen and others were invited over, and many went who were not invited. And yet in all this we are told that there is something to create extreme alarm and suspicion; we, who have never fortified any places; we, who have not a greater than Sebastopol at Gibraltar; we, who have not an impregnable fortress at Malta, who have not spent the fortune of a nation almost in the Ionian Islands; we, who are doing nothing at Alderney; we are to take offence at the fortifications of Cherbourg! There are few persons who at some time or other have not been brought into contact with a poor unhappy fellow creature who has some peculiar delusion or suspicion pressing on his mind. I recollect a friend of mine going down from Derby to Leeds in the train with a very quiet and respectable-looking gentleman sitting opposite to him. They had both been staying at the Midland Hotel, and they began talking about it. All at once the gentleman said, 'Did you notice anything particular about the bread at breakfast?' 'No,' said my friend, 'I did not.' 'Oh! but I did,' said the poor gentleman, 'and I am convinced there was an attempt made to poison me, and it is a very curious thing that I never go to an hotel without I discover some attempt to do me mischief.' The unfortunate man was labouring under one of the greatest calamities which can befall a human creature.

But what are we to say of a nation which lives under a perpetual delusion that it is about to be attacked, a nation which is the most combined on the face of the earth, with little less than 30,000,000 of people all united under a Government which, though we intend to reform it, we do not the less respect, and which has mechanical power and wealth to which no other country offers any parallel? There is no causeway to Britain; the free waves of the sea flow day and night for ever round her shores, and yet there are people going about with whom this hallucination is so strong that they do not merely discover it quietly to their friends, but they write it down in double-leaded columns, in leading articles. Nay, some of them actually get up on platforms and proclaim it to hundreds and thousands of their fellow countrymen. I should like to ask you whether these delusions are to last for ever, whether this policy is to be the perpetual policy of England, whether these results are to go on gathering and gathering until there come, as come there must inevitably, some dreadful catastrophe on our country?

I should like to-night, if I could, to inaugurate one of the best and holiest revolutions that ever took place in this country. We have had a dozen revolutions since some of us were children. We have had one revolution in which you had a great share, a great revolution of opinion on the question of the suffrage. Does it not read like madness that men, thirty years ago, were frantic at the idea of the people of Birmingham having a £10 franchise? Does it not seem something like idiotcy to be told that a banker in Leeds, when it was proposed to transfer the seats of one rotten borough to the town

of Leeds, should say (and it was repeated in the House of Commons on his authority) that if the people of Leeds had the franchise conferred upon them it would not be possible to keep the bank doors open with safety, and that he should remove his business to some quiet place out of danger from the savage race that peopled that town? But now all confess that the people are perfectly competent to have votes, and nobody dreams of arguing that the privilege will make them less orderly.

Take the question of colonial government. Twenty years ago the government of our colonies was a huge job. A small family party in each, in connexion with the Colonial Office, ruled our colonies. We had then discontent, and, now and then, a little wholesome insurrection, especially in Canada. The result was that we have given up the colonial policy which had hitherto been held sacred, and since that time not only have our colonies greatly advanced in wealth and material resources, but no parts of the Empire are more tranquil and loyal.

Take also the question of Protection. Not thirty years ago, but twelve years ago, there was a great party in Parliament, led by a duke in one House and by the son and brother of a duke in the other, which declared that utter ruin must come, not only on the agricultural interest, but upon the manufactures and commerce of England, if we departed from our old theories upon this subject of Protection. They told us that the labourer—the unhappy labourer—of whom it may be said in this country,

> Here landless labourers hopeless toil and strive,
> But taste no portion of the sweets they hive,—

that the labourer was to be ruined; that is, that

the paupers were to be pauperized. These gentlemen were overthrown. The plain, honest, common sense of the country swept away their cobweb theories, and they are gone. What is the result? From 1846 to 1857 we have received into this country of grain of all kinds, including flour, maize, or India corn—all objects heretofore not of absolute prohibition, but which were intended to be prohibited until it was not safe for people to be starved any more—not less than an amount equal in value to £224,000,000. That is equal to £18,700,000 per annum on the average of twelve years. During that period, too, your home growth has been stimulated to an enormous extent. You have imported annually 200,000 tons of guano, and the result has been a proportionate increase in the productions of the soil, for 200,000 tons of guano will grow an equal weight and value of wheat. With all this, agriculture was never more prosperous, while manufactures were never, at the same time, more extensively exported; and with all this the labourers, for whom the tears of the Protectionist were shed, have, according to the admission of the most violent of the class, never been in a better state since the beginning of the great French war.

One other revolution of opinion has been in regard to our criminal law. I have lately been reading a book which I would advise every man to read—the *Life of Sir Samuel Romilly*. He tells us in simple language of the almost insuperable difficulties he had to contend with to persuade the Legislature of this country to abolish the punishment of death for stealing from a dwelling-house to the value of 5*s*., an offence which now is punished

by a few weeks' imprisonment. Lords, bishops, and statesmen opposed these efforts year after year, and there have been some thousands of persons put to death publicly for offences which are not now punishable with death. Now, every man and woman in the kingdom would feel a thrill of horror if told that a fellow creature was to be put to death for such a cause. These are revolutions in opinion, and let me tell you that when you accomplish a revolution in opinion upon a great question, when you alter it from bad to good, it is not like charitably giving a beggar 6*d.* and seeing him no more, but it is a great beneficent act, which affects not merely the rich and the powerful, but penetrates every lane, every cottage in the land, and wherever it goes brings blessings and happiness. It is not from statesmen that these things come. It is not from them that have proceeded these great revolutions of opinion on the questions of Reform, Protection, Colonial Government, and Criminal Law, it was from public meetings such as this, from the intelligence and conscience of the great body of the people who have no interest in wrong, and who never go from the right but by temporary error and under momentary passion.

It is for you to decide whether our greatness shall be only temporary or whether it shall be enduring. When I am told that the greatness of our country is shown by the £100,000,000 of revenue produced, may I not also ask how it is that we have 1,100,000 paupers in this kingdom, and why it is that £7,000,000 should be taken from the industry, chiefly of the labouring classes, to support a small nation, as it were, of paupers? Since your legislation upon the Corn Laws, you

have not only had nearly £20,000,000 of food brought into the country annually, but such an extraordinary increase of trade that your exports are about doubled, and yet I understand that in the year 1856, for I have no later return, there were no less than 1,100,000 paupers in the United Kingdom, and the sum raised in poor-rates was not less than £7,200,000. And that cost of pauperism is not the full amount, for there is a vast amount of temporary, casual, and vagrant pauperism that does not come in to swell that sum.

Then do not you well know—I know it, because I live among the population of Lancashire, and I doubt not the same may be said of the population of this city and county—that just above the level of the 1,100,000 there is at least an equal number who are ever oscillating between independence and pauperism, who, with a heroism which is not the less heroic because it is secret and unrecorded, are doing their very utmost to maintain an honourable and independent position before their fellow men? While Irish labour, notwithstanding the improvement which has taken place in Ireland, is only paid at the rate of about 1*s.* a day, while in the straths and glens of Scotland there are hundreds of shepherd families whose whole food almost consists of oatmeal porridge from day to day, and from week to week; while these things continue, I say that we have no reason to be self-satisfied and contented with our position; but that we who are in Parliament and are more directly responsible for affairs, and you who are also responsible though in a lower degree, are bound by the sacred duty which we owe our country to examine why it is that with all this trade,

all this industry, and all this personal freedom, there is still so much that is unsound at the base of our social fabric ?

Let me direct your attention now to another point which I never think of without feelings which words would altogether fail to express. You hear constantly that woman, the helpmate of man, who adorns, dignifies, and blesses our lives, that woman in this country is cheap; that vast numbers whose names ought to be synonyms for purity and virtue are plunged into profligacy and infamy. But do you not know that you sent 40,000 men to perish on the bleak heights of the Crimea, and that the revolt in India, caused, in part at least, by the grievous iniquity of the seizure of Oude, may tax your country to the extent of 100,000 lives before it is extinguished; and do you know that for the 140,000 men thus drafted off and consigned to premature graves, nature provided in your country 140,000 women ? If you have taken the men who should have been the husbands of these women, and if you have sacrificed £100,000,000, which as capital reserved in the country would have been an ample fund for their employment and for the sustentation of their families, are you not guilty of a great sin in involving yourselves in such a loss of life and of money in war, except on grounds and under circumstances which, according to the opinion of every man in the country, should leave no kind of option whatever for your choice ?

I know perfectly well the kind of observations which a certain class of critics will make upon this speech. I have been already told by a very eminent newspaper publisher in Calcutta, who, commenting on a speech I made at the close of

the session, with regard to the condition of India and our future policy in that country, said, that the policy I recommended was intended to strike at the root of the advancement of the British Empire, and that its advancement did not necessarily involve the calamities which I pointed out as likely to occur. My Calcutta critic assured me that Rome pursued a similar policy for a period of eight centuries, and for those eight centuries she remained great. Now, I do not think that examples taken from pagan, sanguinary Rome are proper models for the imitation of a Christian country, nor would I limit my hopes of the greatness of England even to the long duration of 800 years. But what is Rome now? The great city is dead. A poet has described her as 'the lone mother of dead empires'. Her language even is dead. Her very tombs are empty; the ashes of her most illustrious citizens are dispersed—

> The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now.

Yet I am asked, I, who am one of the legislators of a Christian country, to measure my policy by the policy of ancient and pagan Rome!

I believe there is no permanent greatness to a nation except it be based upon morality. I do not care for military greatness or military renown. I care for the condition of the people among whom I live. There is no man in England who is less likely to speak irreverently of the Crown and Monarchy of England than I am; but crowns, coronets, mitres, military display, the pomp of war, wide colonies, and a huge empire, are, in my view, all trifles light as air, and not worth considering, unless with them you can have a fair share of

comfort, contentment, and happiness among the great body of the people. Palaces, baronial castles, great halls, stately mansions, do not make a nation. The nation in every country dwells in the cottage; and unless the light of your constitution can shine there, unless the beauty of your legislation and the excellence of your statesmanship are impressed there on the feelings and condition of the people, rely upon it you have yet to learn the duties of government.

I have not, as you have observed, pleaded that this country should remain without adequate and scientific means of defence. I acknowledge it to be the duty of your statesmen, acting upon the known opinions and principles of ninety-nine out of every hundred persons in the country, at all times, with all possible moderation, but with all possible efficiency, to take steps which shall preserve order within and on the confines of your kingdom. But I shall repudiate and denounce the expenditure of every shilling, the engagement of every man, the employment of every ship which has no object but intermeddling in the affairs of other countries, and endeavouring to extend the boundaries of an empire which is already large enough to satisfy the greatest ambition, and I fear is much too large for the highest statesmanship to which any man has yet attained.

The most ancient of profane historians has told us that the Scythians of his time were a very warlike people, and that they elevated an old scimitar upon a platform as a symbol of Mars, for to Mars alone, I believe, they built altars and offered sacrifices. To this scimitar they offered sacrifices of horses and cattle, the main wealth of

the country, and more costly sacrifices than to all the rest of their gods. I often ask myself whether we are at all advanced in one respect beyond those Scythians. What are our contributions to charity, to education, to morality, to religion, to justice, and to civil government, when compared with the wealth we expend in sacrifices to the old scimitar? Two nights ago I addressed in this hall a vast assembly composed to a great extent of your countrymen who have no political power, who are at work from the dawn of the day to the evening, and who have therefore limited means of informing themselves on these great subjects. Now I am privileged to speak to a somewhat different audience. You represent those of your great community who have a more complete education, who have on some points greater intelligence, and in whose hands reside the power and influence of the district. I am speaking, too, within the hearing of those whose gentle nature, whose finer instincts, whose purer minds, have not suffered as some of us have suffered in the turmoil and strife of life. You can mould opinion, you can create political power. You cannot think a good thought on this subject and communicate it to your neighbours, you cannot make these points topics of discussion in your social circles and more general meetings, without affecting sensibly and speedily the course which the Government of your country will pursue. May I ask you, then, to believe, as I do most devoutly believe, that the moral law was not written for men alone in their individual character, but that it was written as well for nations, and for nations great as this of which we are citizens. If nations reject and deride that moral law, there is a penalty which

will inevitably follow. It may not come at once, it may not come in our lifetime ; but, rely upon it, the great Italian is not a poet only, but a prophet, when he says :

> The sword of heaven is not in haste to smite,
> Nor yet doth linger.

We have experience, we have beacons, we have landmarks enough. We know what the past has cost us, we know how much and how far we have wandered, but we are not left without a guide. It is true we have not, as an ancient people had, Urim and Thummim—those oraculous gems on Aaron's breast—from which to take counsel, but we have the unchangeable and eternal principles of the moral law to guide us, and only so far as we walk by that guidance can we be permanently a great nation, or our people a happy people.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

August 8 and 10, 1870

THE NEUTRALITY OF BELGIUM

Sir, in view of the approaching prorogation of Parliament, I am anxious to state at as early a period as possible that Her Majesty's Government are not in a position to lay further papers upon the table relating to the subject alluded to in the Question of the hon. member for Wakefield (Mr. Somerset Beaumont). Knowing well the anxiety which the House must feel with reference to the course which the Government intend to follow, I will, in a few sentences, explain to them exactly what we have done and what we have endeavoured to do. In so doing I shall confine myself strictly to statements of fact, not mixing up with them anything in the nature of explanation or defence, if, indeed, defence be requisite, but will allow such explanation or defence to stand over until the proper opportunity for making it shall arrive. On Saturday, the 30th of July, the Government made a proposal to France and Prussia severally in identical terms, and that proposal was that an agreement should be contracted by this country with each of them, whether under the name of a treaty or whatever other designation might be given to the agreement, to this effect: that if the armies of either one of the belligerents should, in the course of the operations of the war, violate the neutrality of Belgium, as secured by the terms of

the Treaty of 1839, this country should co-operate with the other belligerent in defence of that neutrality by arms. It was signified in the document so transmitted that Great Britain would not by that engagement, or by acting upon that engagement in case of need, be bound to take part in the general operations of the war. And, of course, the other contracting party was to enter into a similar undertaking to use force for the preservation of the neutrality of Belgium against the offending Power. We proposed that the treaty or engagement—for it has now taken the form of a treaty—should hold good for twelve months after the ratification of a treaty of peace between the two belligerent Powers, after which period it is stipulated that the respective parties, being parties to the Treaty of 1839, shall fall back upon the obligations they took upon themselves under that treaty. Briefly stated and divested of all technical language, that, I think, is the whole of the contents of the proposed treaty. On the same day—last Saturday week—and two days before the discussion which occurred in this House in connexion with foreign affairs, the whole proposal was made known by the British Government to the Austrian and Russian Governments, and confidence was expressed that, under the extreme pressure that existed as to time, those Powers would not hesitate to adopt a similar measure. That is the course Her Majesty's Government have followed in the matter. Now as to the reception of this proposal by the other Powers. As far as we have been informed, the Governments of both Austria and Russia take a favourable view of the proposal. I will not say that the negotiation has proceeded so far as to

entitle us to regard them as held bound to a particular course, but, in the main, I may say that the reception of our proposal has been favourable by both of those Powers. And now, with regard to the two belligerent Powers. The proposal, having been sent to Lord Augustus Loftus on the 30th ult., on Friday, the 5th inst., Count Bernstorff informed Earl Granville that Count Bismarck had left Berlin for head-quarters, and that, consequently the communication with him through Lord Augustus Loftus had been delayed. The terms of the proposed treaty, however, having been communicated on the same day—Saturday week—to the respective Ambassadors in London, Count Bernstorff had telegraphed their substance to Count Bismarck, who had informed him that he had not then received any proposal from Lord Augustus Loftus, that he was ready to agree to any engagement that would tend to the maintenance of the neutrality of Belgium; but that, as the intended instrument was not before him, he could only give a general assent to its purport, and must not be regarded as bound to any particular mode of proceeding intended to secure that neutrality. Count Bernstorff subsequently informed Earl Granville on the same day, on the 5th of August, that he had received a later telegram from Count Bismarck to the effect that he had then received a summary of the draft treaty from him, that he had submitted it to the King of Prussia, and that he was authorized to state that His Majesty had agreed to the plan. Later still on the same day Count Bernstorff informed Earl Granville that Count Bismarck again telegraphed to him stating that he had seen the actual document, and authorizing him to sign the treaty. Count

Bernstorff has not yet—at least, had not when I came down to the House—received his full powers in the technical sense, but he expects to receive them in the course of the day, and therefore I think that the engagement may be regarded as being completed on the part of Prussia. Now as regards France. That country has accepted the principle of the treaty, but the French Government were desirous to introduce some modifications into the terms of the instrument that were not of a nature, as we thought, in any degree to interfere with the substance of the clauses. The House will perceive that as we had made an identical proposal to the two Powers, it was impossible for us to undertake to alter the body of the instrument, for fear the whole arrangements might come to nothing, although the sole object of the modifications so proposed was to prevent misunderstanding. We had no difficulty in giving such an explanation as we thought amounted to no more than a simple and clear interpretation of the document. That explanation was sent to Paris on Saturday evening. Perhaps the pressure of affairs in Paris may naturally account for the fact that an answer did not arrive by return of post in a regular manner this morning; but we have reason to believe that this explanation will remove all difficulty on the part of the French Government and will lead to the signing of the treaty. Possibly, therefore, even before the termination of the present sitting it will be in our power to make a further communication to the House. In the meantime I shall be glad to answer any question, if my statement has not been sufficiently clear; but, as I said before, I should wish to refrain from saying more than is absolutely

necessary on the present occasion, and I hope the House will not enter into any general discussion upon the subject.

As far as I understand, my hon. and gallant friend the member for Waterford (Mr. Osborne) has complained that we have destroyed the Treaty of 1839 by this instrument. As I pay so much attention to everything that falls from him, I thought that by some mistake I must have read the instrument inaccurately; but I have read it again, and I find that by one of the articles contained in it the Treaty of 1839 is expressly recognized. But there is one omission I made in the matter which I will take the present opportunity to supply. The House, I think, have clearly understood that this instrument expresses an arrangement between this country and France, but an instrument has been signed between this country and the North German Confederation precisely the same in its terms, except that where the name of the Emperor of the French is read in one instrument, the name of the German Confederation is read in the other, and vice versa. I have listened with much interest to the conversation which has occurred, and I think we have no reason to be dissatisfied at the manner in which, speaking generally, this treaty has been received. My hon. friend the member for Brighton (Mr. White) speaking, as he says, from below the gangway, is quite right in thinking that his approval of the course the Government have taken is gratifying to us, on account of the evidently independent course of action which he always pursues in this House. The hon. and gallant gentleman opposite (Colonel Barttelot) has

expressed a different opinion from ours on the great question of policy, and he asks whether we should not have done well to limit ourselves to the Treaty of 1839. We differ entirely on that subject from the hon. and gallant gentleman; but we cannot complain of the manner in which he has expressed his opinion and recognized the intentions of the Government. From gentlemen who sit behind me we have had more positive and unequivocal expressions of approval than fell from the hon. and gallant gentleman. The only person who strongly objects to the course taken by the Government is my hon. and gallant friend the member for Waterford; and I do not in the least object to his frank method of stating whatever he feels in opposition to our proceedings in a matter of so much consequence, though I do not think it necessary to notice some of his objections. In the first place, he denounces this treaty as an example of the mischiefs of secret diplomacy. He thinks that if the treaty had been submitted to the House it would not have been agreed to. My hon. and gallant friend is a man much enamoured of public diplomacy. He remembers, no doubt, that three weeks ago the Duc de Gramont went to the Legislative body of France and made an announcement as to the policy which the French Government would pursue with respect to Prussia. The result of that example of public diplomacy no doubt greatly encouraged my hon. and gallant friend. Then we have a specimen in the speech of my hon. and gallant friend of the kind of public diplomacy which we should have in this case if his hopes and desires were realized. He says that if Belgium were in the hands of a hostile Power the liberties of this country would

not be worth twenty-four hours' purchase. I protest against that statement. With all my heart and soul I protest against it. A statement more exaggerated, a statement more extravagant, I never heard fall from the lips of any member in this House. (Mr. Osborne: Napoleon said it.) Whatever my hon. and gallant friend's accurate acquaintance with the correspondence of Napoleon may induce him to say, I may be permitted to observe that I am not prepared to take my impression of the character, of the strength, of the dignity, of the duty, or of the danger of this country, from that correspondence. I will avail myself of this opportunity of expressing my opinion, if I may presume to give it, that too much has been said by my hon. and gallant friend and others of the specially distinct, separate, and exclusive interest which this country has in the maintenance of the neutrality of Belgium. What is our interest in maintaining the neutrality of Belgium? It is the same as that of every great Power in Europe. It is contrary to the interest of Europe that there should be unmeasured aggrandizement. Our interest is no more involved in the aggrandizement supposed in this particular case than is the interest of other Powers. That it is a real interest, a substantial interest, I do not deny; but I protest against the attempt to attach to it the exclusive character which I never knew carried into the region of caricature to such a degree as it has been by my hon. and gallant friend. What is the immediate moral effect of those exaggerated statements of the separate interest of England? The immediate moral effect of them is this, that every effort we make on behalf of Belgium on other grounds than

those of interest, as well as on grounds of interest, goes forth to the world as a separate and selfish scheme of ours; and that which we believe to be entitled to the dignity and credit of an effort on behalf of the general peace, stability, and interest of Europe actually contracts a taint of selfishness in the eyes of other nations because of the manner in which the subject of Belgian neutrality is too frequently treated in this House. If I may be allowed to speak of the motives which have actuated Her Majesty's Government in the matter, I would say that while we have recognized the interest of England, we have never looked upon it as the sole motive, or even as the greatest of those considerations which have urged us forward. There is, I admit, the obligation of the treaty. It is not necessary, nor would time permit me, to enter into the complicated question of the nature of the obligations of that treaty; but I am not able to subscribe to the doctrine of those who have held in this House what plainly amounts to an assertion, that the simple fact of the existence of a guarantee is binding on every party to it irrespectively altogether of the particular position in which it may find itself at the time when the occasion for acting on the guarantee arises. The great authorities upon foreign policy to whom I have been accustomed to listen—such as Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston—never, to my knowledge, took that rigid and, if I may venture to say so, that impracticable view of a guarantee. The circumstance that there is already an existing guarantee in force is of necessity an important fact, and a weighty element in the case, to which we are bound to give full and ample consideration. There is also this further

consideration, the force of which we must all feel most deeply, and that is the common interest against the unmeasured aggrandizement of any Power whatever. But there is one other motive, which I shall place at the head of all, that attaches peculiarly to the preservation of the independence of Belgium. What is that country? It is a country containing 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 of people, with much of an historic past, and imbued with a sentiment of nationality and a spirit of independence as warm and as genuine as that which beats in the hearts of the proudest and most powerful nations. By the regulations of its internal concerns, amid the shocks of revolution, Belgium through all the crises of the age, has set to Europe an example of a good and stable government, gracefully associated with the widest possible extension of the liberty of the people. Looking at a country such as that, is there any man who hears me who does not feel that if, in order to satisfy a greedy appetite for aggrandizement, coming whence it may, Belgium were absorbed, the day that witnessed the absorption would hear the knell of public right and public law in Europe? But we have an interest in the independence of Belgium, which is wider than that—which is wider than that which we may have in the literal operation of the guarantee. It is found in the answer to the question whether, under the circumstances of the case, this country, endowed as it is with influence and power, would quietly stand by and witness the perpetration of the direst crime that ever stained the pages of history, and thus become participators in the sin? And now let me deal with the observation of the hon. member for

Waterford. The hon. member asks: What if both these Powers with whom we are making this treaty should combine against the independence of Belgium? Well, all I can say is that we rely on the faith of these parties. But if there be danger of their combining against that independence now, unquestionably there was much more danger in the position of affairs that was revealed to our astonished eyes a fortnight ago, and before these later engagements were contracted. I do not undertake to define the character of that position which, as I have said, was more dangerous a fortnight ago. I feel confident that it would be hasty to suppose that these great States would, under any circumstances, have become parties to the actual contemplation and execution of a proposal such as that which was made the subject of a communication between persons of great importance on behalf of their respective States. That was the state of facts with which we had to deal. It was the combination, and not the opposition, of the two Powers which we had to fear, and I contend—and we shall be ready on every proper occasion to argue—that there is no measure so well adapted to meet the peculiar character of such an occasion as that which we have proposed. It is said that the Treaty of 1839 would have sufficed, and that we ought to have announced our determination to abide by it. But if we were disposed at once to act upon the guarantee contained in that treaty, what state of circumstances does it contemplate? It contemplates the invasion of the frontiers of Belgium and the violation of the neutrality of that country by some other Power. That is the only case in which we could have been called upon to act

under the Treaty of 1839, and that is the only case in which we can be called upon to act under the treaty now before the House. But in what, then, lies the difference between the two treaties ? It is in this: that, in accordance with our obligations, we should have had to act under the Treaty of 1839 without any stipulated assurance of being supported from any quarter whatever against any combination, however formidable ; whereas by the treaty now formally before Parliament, under the conditions laid down in it, we secure powerful support in the event of our having to act—a support with respect to which we may well say that it brings the object in view within the sphere of the practicable and attainable, instead of leaving it within the sphere of what might have been desirable, but which might have been most difficult, under all the circumstances, to have realized. The hon. member says that by entering into this engagement we have destroyed the Treaty of 1839. But if he will carefully consider the terms of this instrument he will see that there is nothing in them calculated to bear out that statement. It is perfectly true that this is a cumulative treaty, added to the Treaty of 1839, as the right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Disraeli), with perfect precision, described it. Upon that ground I very much agree with the general opinion he expressed ; but, at the same time, peculiar circumstances call for a departure from general rules, and the circumstances are most peculiar under which we have thought it right to adopt the method of proceeding which we have actually done. The Treaty of 1839 loses nothing of its force even during the existence of this present treaty. There is no derogation from

it whatever. The Treaty of 1839 includes terms which are expressly included in the present instrument, lest by any chance it should be said that, in consequence of the existence of this instrument, the Treaty of 1839 had been injured or impaired. That would have been a mere opinion; but it is an opinion which we thought fit to provide against. The hon. member has said that this is a most peculiar method of bringing a treaty before the House. I admit it. There is no doubt at all that it is so. But it is not easy to say what circumstances there are that will justify the breaking up of general rules in a matter so delicate and important as the making of communications to Parliament upon political negotiations of great interest. The rule which has been uniformly followed in this country is this: that no treaty is communicated to Parliament unless it becomes binding; and it does not become absolutely binding upon the signatories until it has been ratified; and, by the law and usage of all civilized countries, ratification requires certain forms to be gone through which cannot be concluded in a moment. Under these circumstances, we had only this choice —whether we should be contented to present a treaty to Parliament without the usual forms having been gone through, or whether we should break down the rule which we think it is, on the whole, most desirable to observe, and we thought it best to adopt the course we have followed in the matter. The hon. member for Wakefield (Mr. Somerset Beaumont) has asked whether this treaty has been concluded with the sanction of Belgium. My answer is that I do not doubt the relevancy of that inquiry, but that the treaty has not been concluded

with the sanction of Belgium, for we have advisedly refrained from any attempt to make Belgium a party to the engagement. In the first place, Belgium was not a party to the Treaty of 1839. But that is a matter of secondary importance. What we had to consider was, what was the most prudent, the best, and the safest course for us to pursue in the interest of Belgium. Independently of Belgium, we had no right to assume that either of the parties would agree to it, and we had also to contemplate the case in which one party might agree to it and the other might not. If we had attempted to make Belgium a party we should have run the risk of putting her in a very false position in the event of one of the parties not agreeing to the proposal. It was, therefore, from no want of respect or friendly feeling towards Belgium, but simply from prudential considerations, that we abstained from bringing that country within the circle of these negotiations. The hon. member has also asked whether Austria and Russia have been consulted upon the subject of the treaty, but upon that point I have nothing to add to what I communicated to the House the other day. Both these parties have been invited—as Her Majesty has been advised to announce from the Throne—to accede to the treaty, and I said on Monday that the reception of the treaty, as far as those Powers were concerned, had been generally favourable. I have no reason to alter that statement; but, on the part of Russia, a question has arisen with regard to which I cannot quite say how it may eventually close, especially from the circumstance that the Emperor and his chief advisers upon foreign affairs do not happen to be in the same place. That

question, so raised, is whether it might be wise to give a wider scope to any engagements of this kind; but if there is any hesitation on this point, it is not of a kind which indicates an objection of principle, but, on the contrary, one which shows a disposition to make every possible effort in favour of the treaty. We are in full communication with friendly and neutral Powers on the subject of maintaining neutrality, and upon every side the very best dispositions prevail. There is the greatest inclination to abstain from all officious intermeddling between two Powers who, from their vast means and resources, are perfectly competent for the conduct of their own affairs; and there is not a less strong and decided desire on the part of every Power to take every step at the present moment that can contribute to restrict and circumscribe the area of the war, and to be ready without having lost or forfeited the confidence of either belligerent to avail itself of the first opportunity that may present itself to contribute towards establishing a peace which shall be honourable, and which shall present the promise of being permanent. That is the general state of the case, with regard to which I do not, in the least degree, question the right of the hon. member behind me to form his own judgement. I cannot help expressing the opinion that, allowing for all the difficulties of the case, and the rapidity with which it was necessary to conduct these operations, we have done all that appeared to be essential in the matter; and the country may feel assured that the conduct which we have pursued in relation to this matter has not been unworthy of the high responsibility with which we are entrusted.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

NOVEMBER 27, 1879

RIGHT PRINCIPLES OF FOREIGN POLICY

GENTLEMEN, I ask you again to go with me beyond the seas. And as I wish to do full justice, I will tell you what I think to be the right principles of foreign policy; and then, as far as your patience and my strength will permit, I will, at any rate for a short time, illustrate those right principles by some of the departures from them that have taken place of late years. I first give you, gentlemen, what I think the right principles of foreign policy. The first thing is to foster the strength of the Empire by just legislation and economy at home, thereby producing two of the great elements of national power—namely, wealth, which is a physical element, and union and contentment, which are moral elements—and to reserve the strength of the Empire, to reserve the expenditure of that strength, for great and worthy occasions abroad. Here is my first principle of foreign policy: good government at home. My second principle of foreign policy is this: that its aim ought to be to preserve to the nations of the world—and especially, were it but for shame, when we recollect the sacred name we bear as Christians, especially to the Christian nations of

the world—the blessings of peace. That is my second principle.

My third principle is this. Even, gentlemen, when you do a good thing, you may do it in so bad a way that you may entirely spoil the beneficial effect; and if we were to make ourselves the apostles of peace in the sense of conveying to the minds of other nations that we thought ourselves more entitled to an opinion on that subject than they are, or to deny their rights—well, very likely we should destroy the whole value of our doctrines. In my opinion the third sound principle is this: to strive to cultivate and maintain, ay, to the very uttermost, what is called the concert of Europe; to keep the Powers of Europe in union together. And why? Because by keeping all in union together you neutralize and fetter and bind up the selfish aims of each. I am not here to flatter either England or any of them. They have selfish aims, as, unfortunately, we in late years have too sadly shown that we too have had selfish aims; but then, common action is fatal to selfish aims. Common action means common objects; and the only objects for which you can unite together the Powers of Europe are objects connected with the common good of them all. That, gentlemen, is my third principle of foreign policy.

My fourth principle is—that you should avoid needless and entangling engagements. You may boast about them; you may brag about them. You may say you are procuring consideration for the country. You may say that an Englishman can now hold up his head among the nations. You may say that he is now not in the hands of

a Liberal Ministry, who thought of nothing but pounds, shillings, and pence. But what does all this come to, gentlemen? It comes to this, that you are increasing your engagements without increasing your strength; and if you increase engagements without increasing strength, you diminish strength, you abolish strength; you really reduce the Empire and do not increase it. You render it less capable of performing its duties; you render it an inheritance less precious to hand on to future generations.

My fifth principle is this, gentlemen, to acknowledge the equal rights of all nations. You may sympathize with one nation more than another. Nay, you must sympathize in certain circumstances with one nation more than another. You sympathize most with those nations, as a rule, with which you have the closest connexion in language, in blood, and in religion, or whose circumstances at the time seem to give the strongest claim to sympathy. But in point of right all are equal, and you have no right to set up a system under which one of them is to be placed under moral suspicion or espionage, or to be made the constant subject of invective. If you do that, but especially if you claim for yourself a superiority, a pharisaical superiority over the whole of them, then I say you may talk about your patriotism if you please, but you are a misjudging friend of your country, and in undermining the basis of the esteem and respect of other people for your country you are in reality inflicting the severest injury upon it. I have now given you, gentlemen, five principles of foreign policy. Let me give you a sixth, and then I have done.

And that sixth is, that in my opinion foreign policy, subject to all the limitations that I have described, the foreign policy of England should always be inspired by the love of freedom. There should be a sympathy with freedom, a desire to give it scope, founded not upon visionary ideas, but upon the long experience of many generations within the shores of this happy isle, that in freedom you lay the firmest foundations both of loyalty and order; the firmest foundations for the development of individual character, and the best provision for the happiness of the nation at large. In the foreign policy of this country the name of Canning ever will be honoured. The name of Russell ever will be honoured. The name of Palmerston ever will be honoured by those who recollect the erection of the kingdom of Belgium, and the union of the disjoined provinces of Italy. It is that sympathy, not a sympathy with disorder, but, on the contrary, founded upon the deepest and most profound love of order—it is that sympathy which, in my opinion, ought to be the very atmosphere in which a Foreign Secretary of England ought to live and to move.

Gentlemen, it is impossible for me to do more to-day than to attempt very slight illustrations of those principles. But in uttering those principles, I have put myself in a position in which no one is entitled to tell me—you will bear me out in what I say—that I simply object to the acts of others, and lay down no rules of action myself. I am not only prepared to show what are the rules of action which in my judgement are the right rules, but I am prepared to apply them, nor will I shrink from their application. I will take,

gentlemen, the name which, most of all others, is associated with suspicion, and with alarm, and with hatred in the minds of many Englishmen—I will take the name of Russia, and at once I will tell you what I think about Russia, and how I am prepared as a member of Parliament to proceed in anything that respects Russia. You have heard me, gentlemen, denounced sometimes, I believe, as a Russian spy, sometimes as a Russian agent, sometimes as perhaps a Russian fool, which is not so bad, but still not very desirable. But, gentlemen, when you come to evidence, the worst thing that I have ever seen quoted out of any speech or writing of mine about Russia is that I did one day say, or, I believe, I wrote, these terrible words: I recommended Englishmen to imitate Russia in her good deeds. Was not that a terrible proposition? I cannot recede from it. I think we ought to imitate Russia in her good deeds, and if the good deeds be few, I am sorry for it, but I am not the less disposed on that account to imitate them when they come. I will now tell you what I think just about Russia.

I make it one of my charges against the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government, that, while they have completely estranged from this country—let us not conceal the fact—the feelings of a nation of eighty millions, for that is the number of the subjects of the Russian Empire—while they have contrived completely to estrange the feelings of that nation, they have aggrandized the power of Russia. They have aggrandized the power of Russia in two ways, which I will state with perfect distinctness. They have augmented her territory. Before the European Powers met at Berlin, Lord

Salisbury met with Count Schouvaloff, and Lord Salisbury agreed that, unless he could convince Russia by his arguments in the open Congress of Berlin, he would support the restoration to the despotic power of Russia of that country north of the Danube which at the moment constituted a portion of the free State of Roumania. Why, gentlemen, what had been done by the Liberal Government, which, forsooth, attended to nothing but pounds, shillings, and pence? The Liberal Government had driven Russia back from the Danube. Russia, which was a Danubian Power before the Crimean War, lost this position on the Danube by the Crimean War; and the Tory Government, which has been incensing and inflaming you against Russia, yet nevertheless, by binding itself beforehand to support, when the judgement was taken, the restoration of that country to Russia, has aggrandized the power of Russia.

It further aggrandized the power of Russia in Armenia; but I would not dwell upon that matter if it were not for a very strange circumstance. You know that an Armenian province was given to Russia after the war, but about that I own to you I have very much less feeling of objection. I have objected from the first, vehemently, and in every form, to the granting of territory on the Danube to Russia, and carrying back the population of a certain country from a free State to a despotic State; but with regard to the transfer of a certain portion of the Armenian people from the government of Turkey to the government of Russia, I must own that I contemplate that transfer with much greater equanimity. I have no fear myself of the territorial extensions

of Russia in Asia, no fear of them whatever. I think the fears are no better than old women's fears. And I don't wish to encourage her aggressive tendencies in Asia, or anywhere else. But I admit it may be, and probably is, the case that there is some benefit attending the transfer of a portion of Armenia from Turkey to Russia.

But here is a very strange fact. You know that that portion of Armenia includes the port of Batoum. Lord Salisbury has lately stated to the country, that, by the Treaty of Berlin, the port of Batoum is to be only a commercial port. If the Treaty of Berlin stated that it was to be only a commercial port, which, of course, could not be made an arsenal, that fact would be very important. But happily, gentlemen, although treaties are concealed from us nowadays as long as and as often as is possible, the Treaty of Berlin is an open instrument. We can consult it for ourselves; and when we consult the Treaty of Berlin, we find it states that Batoum shall be essentially a commercial port, but not that it shall be only a commercial port. Why, gentlemen, Leith is essentially a commercial port, but there is nothing to prevent the people of this country, if in their wisdom or their folly they should think fit, from constituting Leith as a great naval arsenal or fortification; and there is nothing to prevent the Emperor of Russia, while leaving to Batoum a character that shall be essentially commercial, from joining with that another character that is not in the slightest degree excluded by the treaty, and making it as much as he pleases a port of military defence. Therefore I challenge the assertion of Lord Salisbury; and as Lord Salisbury is

fond of writing letters to *The Times* to bring the Duke of Argyll to book, he perhaps will be kind enough to write another letter to *The Times*, and tell in what clause of the Treaty of Berlin he finds it written that the port of Batoum shall be only a commercial port. For the present, I simply leave it on record that he has misrepresented the Treaty of Berlin.

With respect to Russia,—I take two views of the position of Russia. The position of Russia in Central Asia I believe to be one that has in the main been forced upon her against her will. She has been compelled—and this is the impartial opinion of the world—she has been compelled to extend her frontier southward in Central Asia by causes in some degree analogous to, but certainly more stringent and imperative than, the causes which have commonly led us to extend, in a far more important manner, our frontier in India; and I think it, gentlemen, much to the credit of the late Government, much to the honour of Lord Clarendon and Lord Granville, that, when we were in office, we made a covenant with Russia, in which Russia bound herself to exercise no influence or interference whatever in Afghanistan; we, on the other hand, making known our desire that Afghanistan should continue free and independent. Both the Powers acted with uniform strictness and fidelity upon this engagement until the day when we were removed from office. But Russia, gentlemen, has another position—her position in respect to Turkey; and here it is that I have complained of the Government for aggrandizing the power of Russia; it is on this point that I most complain.

The policy of Her Majesty's Government was a policy of repelling and repudiating the Slavonic populations of Turkey in Europe, and of declining to make England the advocate for their interests. Nay, more, she became in their view the advocate of the interests opposed to theirs. Indeed, she was rather the decided advocate of Turkey; and now Turkey is full of loud complaints—and complaints, I must say, not unjust—that we allured her on to her ruin; that we gave the Turks a right to believe that we should support them; that our ambassadors, Sir Henry Elliot and Sir Austin Layard, both of them said we had most vital interests in maintaining Turkey as it was, and consequently the Turks thought if we had vital interests, we should certainly defend them; and they were thereby lured on into that ruinous, cruel, and destructive war with Russia. But by our conduct to the Slavonic populations we alienated those populations from us. We made our name odious among them. They had every disposition to sympathize with us, every disposition to confide in us. They are, as a people, desirous of freedom, desirous of self-government, with no aggressive views, but hating the idea of being absorbed in a huge despotic empire like Russia. But when they found that we, and the other Powers of Europe under our unfortunate guidance, declined to become in any manner their champions in defence of the rights of life, of property, and of female honour—when they found that there was no call which could find its way to the heart of England through its Government, or to the hearts of the other Powers, and that Russia alone was disposed to fight for them, why,

naturally they said, Russia is our friend. We have done everything, gentlemen, in our power to drive these populations into the arms of Russia. If Russia has aggressive dispositions in the direction of Turkey—and I think it probable that she may have them—it is we who have laid the ground upon which Russia may make her march to the south—we who have taught the Bulgarians, the Servians, the Roumanians, the Montenegrins, that there is one Power in Europe, and only one, which is ready to support in act and by the sword her professions of sympathy with the oppressed populations of Turkey. That power is Russia; and how can you blame these people, if in such circumstances, they are disposed to say, Russia is our friend? But why did we make them say it? Simply because of the policy of the Government, not because of the wishes of the people of this country. Gentlemen, this is the most dangerous form of aggrandizing Russia. If Russia is aggressive anywhere, if Russia is formidable anywhere, it is by movements towards the south, it is by schemes for acquiring command of the Straits or of Constantinople; and there is no way by which you can possibly so much assist her in giving reality to these designs, as by inducing and disposing the populations of these provinces, who are now in virtual possession of them, to look upon Russia as their champion and their friend, to look upon England as their disguised, perhaps, but yet real and effective enemy.

Why, now, gentlemen, I have said that I think it not unreasonable either to believe, or at any rate to admit it to be possible, that Russia has aggressive designs in the east of Europe. I do

not mean immediate aggressive designs. I do not believe that the Emperor of Russia is a man of aggressive schemes or policy. It is that, looking to that question in the long run, looking at what has happened, and what may happen in ten or twenty years, in one generation, in two generations, it is highly probable that in some circumstances Russia may develop aggressive tendencies towards the south. Perhaps you will say I am here guilty of the same injustice to Russia that I have been deprecating, because I say that we ought not to adopt the method of condemning anybody without cause, and setting up exceptional principles in proscription of a particular nation. Gentlemen, I will explain to you in a moment the principle upon which I act, and the grounds upon which I form my judgement. They are simply these grounds: I look at the position of Russia, the geographical position of Russia relatively to Turkey. I look at the comparative strength of the two Empires; I look at the importance of the Dardanelles and the Bosphoros as an exit and a channel for the military and commercial marine of Russia to the Mediterranean; and what I say to myself is this. If the United Kingdom were in the same position relatively to Turkey which Russia holds upon the map of the globe, I feel quite sure that we should be very apt indeed both to entertain and to execute aggressive designs upon Turkey. Gentlemen, I will go farther and will frankly own to you that I believe if we, instead of happily inhabiting this island, had been in the possession of the Russian territory, and in the circumstances of the Russian people, we should most likely have eaten up Turkey long ago. And consequently,

in saying that Russia ought to be vigilantly watched in that quarter, I am only applying to her the rule which in parallel circumstances I feel convinced ought to be applied, and would be justly applied, to judgements upon our own country.

Gentlemen, there is only one other point on which I must still say a few words to you, although there are a great many upon which I have a great many words yet to say somewhere or other. Of all the principles, gentlemen, of foreign policy which I have enumerated, that to which I attach the greatest value is the principle of the equality of nations; because, without recognizing that principle, there is no such thing as public right, and without public international right there is no instrument available for settling the transactions of mankind except material force. Consequently the principle of equality among nations lies, in my opinion, at the very basis and root of a Christian civilization, and when that principle is compromised or abandoned, with it must depart our hopes of tranquillity and of progress for mankind.

I am sorry to say, gentlemen, that I feel it my absolute duty to make this charge against the foreign policy under which we have lived for the last two years, since the resignation of Lord Derby. It has been a foreign policy, in my opinion, wholly, or to a perilous extent, unregardful of public right, and it has been founded upon the basis of a false, I think an arrogant, and a dangerous assumption,—although I do not question its being made conscientiously and for what was believed the advantage of the country,—an untrue, arrogant, and dangerous assumption that we were entitled to assume for ourselves some dignity,

which we should also be entitled to withhold from others, and to claim on our own part authority to do things which we would not permit to be done by others. For example, when Russia was going to the Congress at Berlin, we said: 'Your Treaty of San Stefano is of no value. It is an act between you and Turkey; but the concerns of Turkey by the Treaty of Paris are the concerns of Europe at large. We insist upon it that the whole of your Treaty of San Stefano shall be submitted to the Congress at Berlin, that they may judge how far to open it in each and every one of its points, because the concerns of Turkey are the common concerns of the Powers of Europe acting in concert.'

Having asserted that principle to the world, what did we do? These two things, gentlemen: secretly, without the knowledge of Parliament, without even the forms of official procedure, Lord Salisbury met Count Schouvaloff in London, and agreed with him upon the terms on which the two Powers together should be bound in honour to one another to act upon all the most important points when they came before the Congress at Berlin. Having alleged against Russia that she should not be allowed to settle Turkish affairs with Turkey, because they were but two Powers, and these affairs were the common affairs of Europe, and of European interest, we then got Count Schouvaloff into a private room, and on the part of England and Russia, they being but two Powers, we settled a large number of the most important of these affairs, in utter contempt and derogation of the very principle for which the Government had been contending for months before; for which they had

asked Parliament to grant a sum of £6,000,000; for which they had spent that £6,000,000 in needless and mischievous armaments. That which we would not allow Russia to do with Turkey, because we pleaded the rights of Europe, we ourselves did with Russia, in contempt of the rights of Europe. Nor was that all, gentlemen.

That act was done, I think, on one of the last days of May in the year 1878, and the document was published, made known to the world, made known to the Congress at Berlin, to its infinite astonishment, unless I am very greatly misinformed,—to its infinite astonishment.

But that was not all. Nearly at the same time we performed the same operation in another quarter. We objected to a treaty between Russia and Turkey as having no authority, though that treaty was made in the light of day—namely, to the Treaty of San Stefano; and what did we do? We went not in the light of day, but in the darkness of the night—not in the knowledge and cognizance of other Powers, all of whom would have had the faculty and means of watching all along, and of preparing and taking their own objections and shaping their own policy—not in the light of day, but in the darkness of the night, we sent the Ambassador of England in Constantinople to the Minister of Turkey, and there he framed, even while the Congress of Berlin was sitting to determine these matters of common interest, he framed that which is too famous, shall I say, or rather too notorious as the Anglo-Turkish Convention. Gentlemen, it is said, and said truly, that truth beats fiction; that what happens in fact from time to time is of a character so daring, so strange,

that if the novelist were to imagine it and to put it upon his pages, the whole world would reject it from its improbability. And that is the case of the Anglo-Turkish Convention. For who would have believed it possible that we should assert before the world the principle that Europe only could deal with the affairs of the Turkish Empire, and should ask Parliament for six millions to support us in asserting that principle, should send Ministers to Berlin who declared that unless that principle was acted upon they would go to war with the material that Parliament had placed in their hands, and should at the same time be concluding a separate agreement with Turkey, under which those matters of European jurisdiction were coolly transferred to English jurisdiction; and the whole matter was sealed with the worthless bribe of the possession and administration of the island of Cyprus! I said, gentlemen, the worthless bribe of the island of Cyprus, and that is the truth. It is worthless for our purposes, worse than worthless for our purposes—not worthless in itself; an island of resources, an island of natural capabilities, provided they are allowed to develop themselves in the course of circumstances, without violent and unprincipled methods of action. But Cyprus was not thought to be worthless by those who accepted it as a bribe. On the contrary, you were told that it was to secure the road to India; you were told that it was to be the site of an arsenal very cheaply made, and more valuable than Malta; you were told that it was to revive trade. And a multitude of companies were formed, and sent agents and capital to Cyprus, and some of them, I fear,

grievously burned their fingers there. I am not going to dwell upon that now. What I have in view is not the particular merits of Cyprus, but the illustration that I have given you in the case of the agreement of Lord Salisbury with Count Schouvaloff, and in the case of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, of the manner in which we have asserted for ourselves a principle that we had denied to others—namely, the principle of overriding the European authority of the Treaty of Paris, and taking the matters which that treaty gave to Europe into our own separate jurisdiction.

Now, gentlemen, I am sorry to find that that which I call the pharisaical assertion of our own superiority has found its way alike into the practice and seemingly into the theories of the Government. I am not going to assert anything which is not known, but the Prime Minister has said that there is one day in the year—namely, the 9th of November, Lord Mayor's Day—on which the language of sense and truth is to be heard amidst the surrounding din of idle rumours generated and fledged in the brains of irresponsible scribes. I do not agree, gentlemen, in that panegyric upon the 9th of November. I am much more apt to compare the 9th of November—certainly a well-known day in the year—but as to some of the speeches that have lately been made upon it, I am very much disposed to compare it with another day in the year, well known to British tradition; and that other day in the year is the 1st of April. But, gentlemen, on that day the Prime Minister, speaking out,—I do not question for a moment his own sincere opinion,—made what I think one of the most unhappy and

ominous allusions ever made by a Minister of this country. He quoted certain words, easily rendered as 'Empire and Liberty'—words (he said) of a Roman statesman, words descriptive of the State of Rome—and he quoted them as words which were capable of legitimate application to the position and circumstance of England. I join issue with the Prime Minister upon that subject, and I affirm that nothing can be more fundamentally unsound, more practically ruinous, than the establishment of Roman analogies for the guidance of British policy. What, gentlemen, was Rome? Rome was indeed an Imperial State, you may tell me—I know not, I cannot read the counsels of Providence—a State having a mission to subdue the world; but a State whose very basis it was to deny the equal rights, to proscribe the independent existence, of other nations. That, gentlemen, was the Roman idea. It has been partially and not ill described in three lines of a translation from Virgil by our great poet Dryden, which run as follows:

> O Rome! 'tis thine alone with awful sway
> To rule mankind, and make the world obey,
> Disposing peace and war thine own majestic way.

We are told to fall back upon this example. No doubt the word 'Empire' was qualified with the word 'Liberty'. But what did the two words 'Liberty' and 'Empire' mean in a Roman mouth? They meant simply this—'Liberty for ourselves, Empire over the rest of mankind'.

I do not think, gentlemen, that this Ministry, or any other Ministry, is going to place us in the position of Rome. What I object to is the revival of the idea—I care not how feebly, I care

not even how, from a philosophic or historic point of view, how ridiculous the attempt at this revival may be. I say it indicates an intention—I say it indicates a frame of mind, and that frame of mind, unfortunately, I find, has been consistent with the policy of which I have given you some illustrations—the policy of denying to others the rights that we claim ourselves. No doubt, gentlemen, Rome may have had its work to do, and Rome did its work. But modern times have brought a different state of things. Modern times have established a sisterhood of nations, equal, independent; each of them built up under that legitimate defence which public law affords to every nation, living within its own borders, and seeking to perform its own affairs; but if one thing more than another has been detestable to Europe, it has been the appearance upon the stage from time to time of men who, even in the times of the Christian civilization, have been thought to aim at universal dominion. It was this aggressive disposition on the part of Louis XIV, King of France, that led your forefathers, gentlemen, freely to spend their blood and treasure in a cause not immediately their own, and to struggle against the method of policy which, having Paris for its centre, seemed to aim at a universal monarchy. It was the very same thing, a century and a half later, which was the charge launched, and justly launched, against Napoleon, that under his dominion France was not content even with her extended limits, but Germany, and Italy, and Spain, apparently without any limit to this pestilent and pernicious process, were to be brought under the dominion or influence of France,

and national equality was to be trampled under foot, and national rights denied. For that reason, England in the struggle almost exhausted herself, greatly impoverished her people, brought upon herself, and Scotland too, the consequences of a debt that nearly crushed their energies, and poured forth their best blood without limit, in order to resist and put down these intolerable pretensions.

Gentlemen, it is but in a pale and weak and almost despicable miniature that such ideas are now set up, but you will observe that the poison lies—that the poison and the mischief lie—in the principle and not the scale. It is the opposite principle which, I say, has been compromised by the action of the Ministry, and which I call upon you, and upon any who choose to hear my views, to vindicate when the day of our election comes; I mean the sound and the sacred principle that Christendom is formed of a band of nations who are united to one another in the bonds of right; that they are without distinction of great and small; there is an absolute equality between them,—the same sacredness defends the narrow limits of Belgium, as attaches to the extended frontiers of Russia, or Germany, or France. I hold that he who by act or word brings that principle into peril or disparagement, however honest his intentions may be, places himself in the position of one inflicting—I won't say intending to inflict—I ascribe nothing of the sort—but inflicting injury upon his own country, and endangering the peace and all the most fundamental interests of Christian society.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

April 2, 1880

THE AGGRANDIZEMENT OF RUSSIA

Now, I have charged at various times what I think an essential count in this indictment—that intelligence had been kept back from Parliament. Intelligence necessary to full understanding and to competent discussion has been withheld from Parliament at the very time of that discussion. I have shown various instances; I might show more. But I will name now only very briefly that remarkable case of the Afghan War. We were carried into that war, gentlemen, as you will recollect, without any previous notice or preparation. No papers had been laid upon the table to enable us to judge of the state of our relations with Afghanistan. Some suspicion had arisen, and a question had been put in the House of Lords; and the answer had been that there was no change of policy, or no sensible and serious change of policy towards Afghanistan intended. At that moment there were in possession of the Government—and for twelve months after—papers of the most vital consequence—what are called the conferences at Peshawur—opening up the whole case in every one of its aspects; and the Government, with these papers in their hands, kept them back for eighteen months, until they had hurried us into this deplorable, and,

I must say, into this guilty war. The island of Cyprus was taken; responsibility of governing Asia Minor was assumed; a *quasi*-territorial supremacy was asserted over Syria in common with the rest of Asia Minor, which was a matter with respect to which we knew very well that the jealousies of France were sure to be aroused; but we were called upon and compelled, gentlemen, to discuss that matter, I think, in the end of July, 1878, at the celebrated epoch of 'peace with honour' —we were called upon to discuss that matter in total ignorance that France had remonstrated, that France had complained; and the Government never let drop in the debate the slightest intimation or inkling that such was the case. We had to debate, we had to divide, we had to take the judgement of Parliament, in utter ignorance of the vital fact that great offence had been given to a faithful and a powerful ally by the steps taken by the Ministry; and it was only when the papers were laid, two or three months after, by the French Government, before the French Chamber, that we became aware of the fact that these papers were presented to us. How is it possible for any House of Commons to perform its duty if it consents to be treated in such a way,—if it consents not only to exercise every patience and forbearance, which must often be the case before intelligence can be produced, but if it consents to be dragged through the mire by being set to pronounce formal judgement upon national emergencies of the highest import, and to do that without the information necessary for a judgement; and when it is believed that information has been withheld, no notice whatever is taken of the fact, and perfect satisfaction is felt by the

members of that majority whom you are now called upon to try ?

Well, that is the withholding of information, gentlemen ; but there has been even worse than that—worse, I am grieved to say it. I cannot help saying it without being in a condition to trace home the charge if this was thought needful, and I am very unwilling to fasten it upon any one without that full and demonstrative evidence which the case hardly admits of ; but I will say this, that news—that intelligence—has been falsified to bewilder and mislead to their own peril and detriment the people of this country. You remember, gentlemen, what happened at the outbreak of the great war between France and Germany in 1870. At that time there existed for a few days a condition of things which produced in that case excitement of expectation as to the points upon which the quarrel turned ; and you remember that a telegram was sent from Berlin to Paris, and was published in Paris, or rather, if I recollect aright, it was announced by a Minister in the Chamber, stating that the King of Prussia, as he was then, had insulted the ambassador of France by turning his back upon him in a garden, where they had met, and refusing to communicate with him. The consequence was an immense exasperation in France ; and the telegram, which afterwards proved to be totally and absolutely false, was a necessary instrument for working up the minds of the French people to a state in which some of them desired, and the rest were willing to tolerate, what proved to be a most disastrous war. That war never was desired by the French nation at large, but by false intelligence heat was thrown

into the atmosphere, party feeling and national feeling to a certain extent were excited, and it became practicable to drag the whole nation into the responsibility of the war. I remember well at that time what passed through my mind. I thought how thankful we ought to be that the use of methods so perilous, and so abominable—for the word is not too strong—never could be known in our happy country. Yes, gentlemen; but since that time it has been known in our happy country. Since that time false telegrams about the entry of the Russian army into Constantinople have been sent home to disturb, and paralyse, and reverse the deliberations of Parliament, and have actually stopped these deliberations, and led experienced statesmen to withhold their action because of this intelligence, which was afterwards, and shortly afterwards, shown to be wholly without ground. Who invented that false intelligence I do not know, and I do not say. All I say is, that it was sent from Constantinople. It was telegraphed in the usual manner; it was published in the usual manner; it was available for a certain purpose. I can no more say who invented it than I can say who invented the telegram that came to Paris about the King of Prussia and the French ambassador; but the intelligence came, and it was false intelligence.

That was not the only, nor was it the most important case. You remember—I am now carrying your recollections back to the time of the outbreak of the war with Afghanistan, and if you recollect the circumstances of that outbreak, at the most critical moment we were told that the Ameer of Afghanistan had refused to receive a British

Mission with insult and with outrage, and that insult and outrage were represented as at once enlisting our honour and reputation in the case, as making it necessary to administer immediate chastisement. I do not hesitate to express my full belief that without that statement the war with Afghanistan would not have been made, would not have been tolerated by the country; but it was difficult, considering the nature of our Indian Empire, considering how it is dependent upon opinion in Asia, and upon the repute of strength, it was difficult to interfere strongly—indeed, Parliament was not sitting—but it was difficult even by opinion out of doors strongly to protest against military measures taken in a case where the authority of the Crown had been insulted, and outrage committed upon it by the Ameer of Afghanistan. That intelligence was sent. We were never undeceived about it until we were completely committed to the war, and until our troops were in the country. The Parliament met; after long and most unjustifiable delays the papers were produced, and when the papers were produced and carefully examined, we found that there was not a shred of foundation for that outrageous statement, and that the temper and pride of the people of this country had been wrought up, and the spirit of wrath fomented and kindled in their bosoms, by intelligence that was false intelligence, and that somebody or other—somebody or other having access to high quarters, if not dwelling in them—had invented, had fabricated for the evil purpose of carrying us into bloody strife.

All these are among the acts which I am sorry to say it is my business to charge upon the majority

of the late Parliament, and upon every member of that majority; and all these are the acts which those who are invited to vote or who intend to vote for my noble opponent—whatever may be his personal claims, all these are the acts, the responsibility of which they are now invited to take upon themselves, and the repetition of which, by giving that vote, they will directly encourage.

The next charge is the charge of broken laws. We have contended—it is impossible to trouble you with argument—but we have contended, and I think we have demonstrated, in the House of Commons, sustained by a great array of legal strength and bearing, that in making that war in Afghanistan, the Government of this country absolutely broke the laws which regulate the Government of India. I do not say they admit it; on the contrary, they deny it. But we have argued it; we believe, we think we have shown it. It is a very grave and serious question; but this much, I think, is plain, that unless our construction of that Indian Government Act, which limits the power of the Crown as to the employment of the Indian forces at the cost of the Indian revenue without the consent of Parliament—unless our construction of that Act be true, the restraining clauses of that Act are absolutely worthless, and the people who passed those restraining clauses, and who most carefully considered them at the time, must have been people entirely unequal to their business; although two persons—I won't speak of myself, who had much to do with them, but two persons who next to myself were most concerned, were the present and the late Lord Derby, neither of them persons very likely to go to work upon a subject of that kind

without taking care that what their hand did was done effectually.

Now besides the honour, if it be an honour, of broken laws, the Government has the honour of broken treaties. When I discussed the case of broken laws, I told you fairly that the Government denied the breaking of the laws, and make their own argument to show—I suppose they think they show—that they did not break the laws. But when I pass to the next head, of the broken treaties, the case is different, especially in one of the most material points, which I will state in a few words, but clearly. The first case which we consider to be that of a distinctly broken treaty is that of sending the warships of England through the Dardanelles without the consent of the Sultan of Turkey. We believe that to be a clear breach of the Treaty of Paris. But that also, if I remember aright, was argued on both sides, and, therefore, I pass on from it, and I charge another breach of the Treaty of Paris. That famous Anglo-Turkish Convention, which gave to you the inestimable privilege of being responsible for the government of the island of Cyprus without deriving from it any possible advantage; that famous Anglo-Turkish Convention, which invested us with the right of interference, and caused us to interfere both as to the integrity and as to the independence of the Sultan by our own sole act; that Anglo-Turkish Convention was a direct and an absolute breach of the Treaty of Paris, which, bearing as it did the signature of England, as well as the rest of the Powers, declared that no one of these Powers should of themselves interfere in any matter of the integrity or independence of Turkey without the

consent of the rest. And here I must tell you that I never heard from the Government, or any friend of the Government, the slightest attempt to defend that gross act of lawlessness, that unpardonable breach of international law, which is the highest sanction of the rights of nations and of the peace of Europe.

It is not, however, in matters of law only. We have been busy in alienating the sympathies of free peoples. The free Slavonic peoples of the East of Europe—the people of Roumania, the people of Montenegro, the people of Servia, the people of Bulgaria—each and all of these have been painfully taught in these last few years to look upon the free institutions of this country as being for them a dream, as being, perhaps, for the enjoyment of this country, but not as availing to animate a nation with a generous desire to extend to others the blessings they enjoyed themselves. In other times—it was so when Mr. Canning was the Minister of this country, when Lord Palmerston was the Minister of this country, when Lord Clarendon was the Minister of this country at the Foreign Office—it was well known that England, while regardful of her own just interests, and while measuring on every occasion her strength and her responsibility, yet was willing to use and willing to find opportunities for giving cordial aid and sympathy to freedom; and by aid and sympathy many a nation has been raised to its present position of free independence, which, without that sympathy, would probably never have attained to such a height in the order of civilization. The sympathies of free people ought to be a dear and precious object of our ambition. Ambition may be a questionable

quality; if you give a certain meaning to the phrase, it ill comports with the Christian law. But there is one sense in which ambition will never mislead men; that is the ambition to be good, and the ambition to do good in relieving from evil those who are grievously suffering, and who have not deserved the evils they endure; that is the ambition which every British statesman ought to cherish. But, as I have said, for the last two years especially—and even for more than two years—more or less, I think, during the whole active period of the foreign policy of the Beaconsfield Administration—the sympathies of these now free peoples of the East have been constantly more and more alienated; and except, perhaps, in a single case which I am glad to cling to—the single and isolated case of Eastern Roumelia—except this case, the whole strength of England, as far as they have been conversant with it, has been exercised for the purpose of opposing their best interests.

Well, gentlemen, while free peoples have been alienated, a despotic Power has been aggrandized through our direct agency. We have more than any other Power of Europe contributed to the direct aggrandizement of Russia and to its territorial extension. And how? Not by following the counsels of the Liberal party. The counsels of the Liberal party were the concert of Europe—the authoritative declaration of the will of Europe to Turkey. Had that authoritative declaration been made, we believe that it would have been enforced without the shedding of a drop of blood. But even suppose there had been bloodshed—I am not now speaking of that, I deem it too absurd a supposition; but suppose that force had required to be

used, that force would not have given to Russia, or to any other Power, a claim to territorial extension. We chose to cast upon her the responsibility; and she, making great exertions and great sacrifices of blood and treasure, advanced this claim to territory, the consequence of which is that she has received by that a great access of military reputation, and likewise an enlargement of her borders, which we have been the main agents in bringing about.

Now I think I anticipate your feelings when I say that although we, and all of us, say that the rights of a Power, the rights of a nation, ought not to be invaded because it happens to have the misfortune of a despotic Government, yet none of us would wish that the agency of England should be gratuitously and wantonly employed in extending the limits of that despotism, and causing it to exercise its power where that power had not before prevailed. In truth, as you know, the case is even more gross than I have supposed it, because the most important case of this extension was that in which a portion of Bessarabia was handed back to Russia. That portion of Bessarabia had been under free institutions—perfectly free representative institutions. It was handed back to Russia, and placed under despotic institutions, and it was so handed back under an arrangement made between Lord Salisbury, the Minister of England, and Count Schouvaloff, the Minister of Russia. They agreed beforehand that this should be done at the Congress at Berlin, with this reservation—Lord Salisbury said, 'Unless I convince you by my argument that you ought not to do it.' You may attach what value you please to the reservation, but I think I can illustrate without

much difficulty the effect of that promise made beforehand. You remember, perhaps, that in the year 1871 the Russians demanded that the Treaty of Paris should be altered, and that the restriction should be removed upon their right to build ships in the Black Sea. The whole of the Powers of Europe met in London by their representatives, and they agreed to that change, and the charge, gentlemen, has been laid upon the British Government of having made that change; and not only so, but I read in one of the blue placards this morning that Mr. Gladstone removed the restriction from the Emperor of Russia. Now I repel that charge. What we did was—we considered the matter with the other Powers of Europe; we required Russia to admit that she had no power to make the change except with the consent of the other Powers. The other Powers could not deny that the change was in itself not unreasonable, and so the change was made. But I want to know what people would have said, supposing, in the middle of these deliberations, somebody had produced a Salisbury-Schouvaloff agreement. Supposing he had produced a memorandum signed by Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary of England, and Count Brunow, the ambassador of Russia, and supposing in that memorandum Lord Granville had, before the meeting of Europe in congress, pledged himself to give this concession to Russia unless he could convince the Russians by his argument, I want to know what then would have been our responsibility? Gentlemen, I would not have been the man, under circumstances like those, to deny for one moment that virtually and practically the whole responsibility of the treaty rested upon our

shoulders ; and so I say now the responsibility for handing back free Bessarabia to despotic Russia rests upon the Cabinet that is now in power, and on the majority that is now soliciting your suffrages for re-election.

I cannot go through the whole of the matter ; yet, at the same time, it is desirable that you should have it in your minds. But while we thus handed over a free representative country to despotism, we likewise handed over a liberated country to servitude. We recollect the vote for six millions was taken in order to act upon the Congress at Berlin. It was taken in order to show, as was so much boasted of at the time—to show that we were ready to support in arms what we recommended at the Congress at Berlin. And what did we recommend, and what was the great change made at the Congress of Berlin, in deference to our representations —that is to say, what was the great change purchased by your six millions ? I will tell you what it was. The Treaty of San Stefano had relieved from the yoke of Turkish administration four and a half millions of people, and made them into a Bulgarian province. With regard to one and a quarter millions of those people who inhabited a country called Macedonia, we at the Treaty of Berlin, by virtue of your six millions—see how it was used to obtain 'peace with honour' !—we threw back that Macedonia from the free precinct into which it was to be introduced for self-government along with the rest of Bulgaria, and we put it back into the hands of the Sultan of Turkey, to remain in exactly the same condition in which it had been before the war.

Well, gentlemen, I won't speak of India. I have

spoken of India elsewhere. I won't speak of various things that I might enter upon, but one thing I must mention which I have never taken the opportunity of mentioning in Scotland, and that was the manner in which those proceedings are justified. I am going now to refer to a speech of the present Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Lord Salisbury. He was meeting an allegation some opponent had made, that it was wrong to take the island of Cyprus; and he justified himself by an appeal to history for once, which is, however, a rare thing with him. But he made out his case in this way: 'Take the island of Cyprus? Of course we took the island of Cyprus. Wherever there is a great European controversy localized in some portion of the great European region, we always step in and appropriate some territory in the very heart of the place where that controversy raged.' 'Why, dear me,' he said, 'in the time of the Revolutionary War, when the Revolutionary War turned very much upon events in Italy, we appropriated Malta. At a previous time when the interests of Europe had been concentrated a great deal upon Spain, at the time of the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV, we stepped in and appropriated Gibraltar.' And this is positively advanced as a doctrine by the Secretary of State, that wherever there is a serious conflict among the European Powers or the European peoples, we are to step in, not as mediators, not as umpires, not as friends, not to perform the Christian and the truly British art of binding together in alliance those who have been foes, but to appropriate something for ourselves. This is what Ministers have done, and this is what the majority have approved. Aye, and if, instead of appropriat-

ing Cyprus only, they had appropriated a great deal more—if they had taken Candia too, if they had taken whatever they could lay their hands upon—that majority, equally patient, and equally docile, and not only patient and docile, but exulting in the discreditable obedience with which it obeyed all the behests of the Administration—that majority never would have shrunk, but would have walked into the lobby as cheerfully as it did upon the occasions of which you have heard so much, and would have chuckled the next day over the glorious triumph they had obtained over factious Liberalism. I have done with these details, and I will approach my winding up, for I have kept you a long time. I have shown you—and I have shown you in a manner that our opponents will find it very difficult to grapple with, though I have stated it briefly—I have shown you what your six millions were used for; and I say without hesitation that the main purpose for which your six millions were used—the main change which was effected—was to throw a million or a million and a quarter of people inhabiting Macedonia, who were destined by the Treaty of San Stefano for freedom and self-government, back under the lawless government of Turkey.

All these things have been going on. I have touched some of them in detail. What has been the general result, what is the grand total, what is the profit, what is the upshot, what is the balance at the end? Worse than ever. When Her Majesty's Government came into office their Foreign Secretary declared that the state of our foreign relations all over the world was thoroughly and absolutely satisfactory; and what is the

declaration of the Prime Minister now? He says this is one of the most formidable crises ever known, and that unless you keep the present Government in power he cannot answer for the peace of Europe or the destinies of the country.

That is the report solemnly made by the head of the Government upon the state of things, which is as different from the state of things he found when he came into office as is the deficiency of eight and a quarter millions that he hands over to the new Parliament, from the surplus of six millions which the former Parliament handed over to him. I cannot, I think, state the matter more fairly than that. You are—deluded I was going to say, but I could not make a greater blunder, for deluded you are not; and deluded the people of England are not, and the people of Scotland will not be, but you are flattered and inveigled by compliments paid to the existing Administration in various newspapers abroad. Is not that a fine thing? Never mind your finances; never mind your legislation, or your interests, your characters, or anything else. You have only to look into some paper ardently devoted to the Government and you will see that a paper in Vienna, a paper in Berlin, or even sometimes a paper in Paris has been saying what very fine fellows these present Ministers are, how well they understand the interests of the country, and what a pity it would be if they were to be displaced. I will give you a sound practical rule upon this subject. It is totally untrue and absurd to suppose that there is a general approval by the foreign press. I see that Lord Dalkeith is reported to have said the other day that everywhere except in Russia the press was in favour of the present Government.

Well, I think I know a good deal of the foreign press, and I will give Lord Dalkeith this challenge—I defy him to produce Italian newspapers, that have any circulation or influence in Italy, in favour of the policy of the present Government. I defy him to produce a newspaper in the Greek tongue, representing the Greek people, either in free Greece or beyond it, that is in favour of the policy of the present Government. I defy him to produce a paper in the Slavonic language that is in favour of the policy of the present Government. Oh! you say, the Slavonic language—that means Russia. It does not mean Russia. It means in part Russia; but there are twenty, aye, and nearer thirty millions of Slavonic people outside of Russia in the east of Europe; and I doubt if you could produce a single paper in the Slavonic language in favour of the policy of the present Government. I say to him, go to the small States of Europe—go to Belgium, go to Holland, go to Denmark, go to Portugal—see what their press says. Gentlemen, I mistrust the press, and especially the official press, of foreign capitals, whether it be St. Petersburg, Vienna, or Berlin. When I see those articles I think that a large experience enables me tolerably well to understand their purpose. If they are vehemently praising the British Ministry—mind, not praising the British nation, not praising British institutions, but praising a particular British Ministry as opposed to some other possible Ministry—I know the meaning of that to be that they regard that Ministry as admirable instruments for the forwarding of their own purposes, and making the British nation, through their medium, both dupes and victims.

Now, gentlemen, I go back to the foreign policy

of the Liberal party, and I ask, what has that done ? I do not think that any party is perfect in its foreign or any other policy ; but I prefer the policy of the Government of Mr. Canning, and the policy of the Government of Lord Grey, and the greater part of what was done by Lord Palmerston in foreign affairs, and by Lord Russell in foreign affairs, to that which is now recommended to you. But they did not earn any praise at the hands of the press at Vienna or Berlin. There was no man more odious, no man more detested by the Continental press of those capitals than Mr. Canning, unless, possibly, it may have been Lord Palmerston. He did not seek honour in these quarters ; and seeking honour there is not a very good sign. But the praises of the Liberal party, if they are to be sung, are sung elsewhere ; they are sung in Italy, which had its hearty sympathy, and its efficient though always its moral aid. They were sung in Spain, when Mr. Canning, though he was too wise to undertake the task of going single-handed to war for the purpose—when Mr. Canning firmly and resolutely protested against the French invasion of that country under the Bourbon restoration. They were sung in Greece, when he constituted himself the first champion of the Greek regeneration, which has now taken effect in the establishment of a free and a progressive country, with, I hope, a bright future before it. They were sung in Portugal, when Mr. Canning sent the troops of England to defend it against Spain. Nay, even poor Denmark, unhappy as has been its lot, does not owe the unhappiness of that lot to England, for the British Government of Lord Palmerston, in which I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, did make a formal offer to France

that we should join together in forbidding the German Power to lay violent hands upon Denmark, and in leaving the question of Denmark's territorial rights to be settled by a process of law. We made that proposal to France, and the reason that it was not acted upon was that, most unfortunately, and, I think, most blindly, the Emperor of the French refused it.

These are the acts of the Liberal party. The Liberal party has believed that while it was the duty of England above all things to eschew an ostentatious policy, it was also the duty of England to have a tender and kindly feeling for the smaller States of Europe, because it is in the smaller States of Europe that liberty has most flourished; and it is in the smaller States of Europe that liberty is most liable to be invaded by lawless aggression. What we want in foreign policy is the substitution of what is true for what is imposing and pretentious, but unreal. We live in the age of sham. We live in the age of sham diamonds, and sham silver, and sham flour, and sham sugar, and sham butter, for even sham butter they have now invented, and dignified by the name of 'Oleo-Margarine'. But these are not the only shams to which we have been treated. We have had a great deal of sham glory, and sham courage, and sham strength. I say, let us get rid of all these shams, and fall back upon realities, the character of which is to be guided by unostentatiousness, to pretend nothing, not to thrust claims and unconstitutional claims for ascendancy and otherwise in the teeth of your neighbour, but to maintain your right and to respect the rights of others as much as your own. So much, then, for the great issue that is still before us, though I

rejoice to think how many of our fellow subjects in England have acquitted themselves well and honourably of their part in the fray ; and I rejoice —I will not say much more because here my expectations were so high—but I rejoice not less when I think how extraordinary has been the manifestation thus far of Scottish feeling in the only three contests that have taken place—in the city of Perth, in the city of Aberdeen, and in the city of Edinburgh, where we certainly owe some gratitude to the opponent for consenting to place himself in a position so ludicrous as that which he has occupied. But at the same time we are compelled to say, on general grounds of prudence and of justice, that it is a monstrous thing that communities should be disturbed with contests so absurd as these, which deserve to be censured in the old Parliamentary language as frivolous and vexatious.

One word upon your past. I have no doubt the great bulk of you are Liberals, but yet I shall be very glad if some of you are Conservatives. Are Conservatives seriously considering with the gravity which becomes the people of this country —the responsible people of this country—what course they shall take upon the coming occasion ? Great things have been done in the last three days, and these things are not done in a corner. The intelligence, limited, but, I think, intelligible, has been flashed over sea and land, and has reached, long before I address you, the remotest corners of the earth. I can well conceive that it has been received in different countries with different feelings. I can believe that there are one or two Ministers of State in the world, and possibly even here and there a sovereign, who would have eaten

this morning a heartier breakfast if the tidings conveyed by the telegraph had been reversed, and if the issue of the elections had been as triumphant for the existing Administration as it has been menacing, if not fatal, to their prospects. But this I know, among other places to which it has gone, it has passed to India—it has before this time reached the mind and the heart of many millions of your Indian fellow subjects—and I will venture to say that it has gladdened every heart among them. They have known this Government principally in connexion with the aggravation of their burdens and the limitation of their privileges. And, gentlemen, I will tell you more, that if there be in Europe any State or country which is crouching in fear at the feet of powerful neighbours with gigantic armaments, which loves, enjoys, and cherishes liberty, but which at the same time fears lest that inestimable jewel should be wrenched out of its hands by overweening force—if there be such a State, and there may be such a State in the East and in the West—then I will venture to say that in that State, from the highest to the lowest, from sovereign to subject, joy and satisfaction will have been diffused by the intelligence of these memorable days.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

July 4, 1864

DENMARK AND GERMANY

Mr. Speaker,—Some of the longest and most disastrous wars of modern Europe have been wars of succession. The Thirty Years' War was a war of succession. It arose from a dispute respecting the inheritance of a duchy in the north of Europe, not very distant from that Duchy of Holstein which now engages general attention. Sir, there are two causes why wars originating in disputed succession become usually of a prolonged and obstinate character. The first is internal discord, and the second foreign ambition. Sometimes a domestic party, under such circumstances, has an understanding with a foreign potentate, and, again, the ambition of that foreign potentate excites the distrust, perhaps the envy, of other Powers; and the consequence is, generally speaking, that the dissensions thus created lead to prolonged and complicated struggles. Sir, I apprehend—indeed I entertain no doubt—that it was in contemplation of such circumstances possibly occurring in our time, that the statesmen of Europe, some thirteen years ago, knowing that it was probable that the royal line of Denmark would cease, and that upon the death of the then

king, his dominions would be divided, and in all probability disputed, gave their best consideration to obviate the recurrence of such calamities to Europe. Sir, in these days, fortunately, it is not possible for the Powers of Europe to act under such circumstances as they would have done a hundred years ago. Then they would probably have met in secret conclave and have decided the arrangement of the internal government of an independent kingdom. In our time they said to the King of Denmark, 'If you and your people among yourselves can make an arrangement in the case of the contingency of your death without issue, which may put an end to all internal discord, we at least will do this for you and Denmark—we will in your lifetime recognize the settlement thus made, and, so far as the influence of the Great Powers can be exercised, we will at least relieve you from the other great cause which, in the case of disputed successions, leads to prolonged wars. We will save you from foreign interference, foreign ambition, and foreign aggression.' That, Sir, I believe, is an accurate account and true description of that celebrated treaty of May, 1852, of which we have heard so much, and of which some characters are given which in my opinion are unauthorized and unfounded.

There can be no doubt that the purpose of that treaty was one which entitled it to the respect of the communities of Europe. Its language is simple and expresses its purpose. The Powers who concluded that treaty announced that they concluded it, not from their own will or arbitrary impulse, but at the invitation of the Danish Government, in order to give to the arrangements

relative to the succession an additional pledge of stability by an act of European recognition. If honourable gentlemen look to that treaty—and I doubt not that they are familiar with it—they will find the first article entirely occupied with the recitals of the efforts of the King of Denmark—and, in his mind, successful efforts—to make the necessary arrangements with the principal estates and personages of his kingdom, in order to effect the requisite alterations in the *lex regia* regulating the order of succession; and the article concludes by an invitation and appeal to the Powers of Europe, by a recognition of that settlement, to preserve his kingdom from the risk of external danger.

Sir, under that treaty England incurred no legal responsibility which was not equally entered into by France and by Russia. If, indeed, I were to dwell on moral obligations—which I think constitute too dangerous a theme to introduce into a debate of this kind—but if I were to dwell upon that topic, I might say that the moral obligations which France, for example, had incurred to Denmark, were of no ordinary character. Denmark had been the ally of France in that severe struggle which forms the most considerable portion of modern history, and had proved a most faithful ally. Even at St. Helena, when contemplating his marvellous career and moralizing over the past, the first emperor of the dynasty which now governs France rendered justice to the complete devotion of the Kings of Denmark and Saxony, the only sovereigns, he said, who were faithful under all proof and the extreme of adversity. On the other hand, if we look to our relations with

Denmark, in her we found a persevering though a gallant foe. Therefore, so far as moral obligations are concerned, while there are none which should influence England, there is a great sense of gratitude which might have influenced the councils of France. But, looking to the treaty, there is no legal obligation incurred by England towards Denmark which is not equally shared by Russia and by France.

Now, the question which I would first ask the House is this: How is it that, under these circumstances, the position of France relative to Denmark is one so free from embarrassment—I might say, so dignified—that she recently received a tribute to her demeanour and unimpeachable conduct in this respect from Her Majesty's Secretary of State; while the position of England, under the same obligation, contained in the same treaty, with relation to Denmark, is one, all will admit, of infinite perplexity, and, I am afraid I must add, terrible mortification? That, Sir, is the first question which I will put to the House, and which, I think, ought to receive a satisfactory answer, among other questions, to-night. And I think that the answer that must first occur to every one—the logical inference—is that the affairs of this country with respect to our obligations under the treaty of 1852 must have been very much mismanaged to have produced consequences so contrary to the position occupied by another Power equally bound with ourselves by that treaty.

Sir, this is not the first time, as the House is aware, that the dominions of the King of Denmark have been occupied by Austrian and Prussian

armies. In the year 1848, when a great European insurrection occurred—I call it insurrection to distinguish it from revolution, for, though its action was very violent, the ultimate effect was almost nothing—but when the great European insurrection took place, there was no portion of Europe more influenced by it than Germany. There is scarcely a political constitution in Germany that was not changed at that period, and scarcely a throne that was not subverted. The King of Denmark, in his character of a sovereign prince of Germany, was affected by that great movement. The population of Germany, under the influence of peculiar excitement at that time, were impelled to redress the grievances, as they alleged them to be, of their fellow countrymen in the dominions of the King of Denmark who were his subjects. The Duchy of Holstein and the Duchy of Schleswig were invaded, a civil war was excited by ambitious princes, and that territory was ultimately subjected to a decree of that Diet with which now we have become familiar.

The office was delegated to the Austrian and Prussian armies to execute that decree, and they occupied, I believe, at one time the whole Continental possessions of the King of Denmark. In 1851 tranquillity had been restored to Europe, and especially to Germany, and the troops of Austria and Prussia ultimately quitted the dominions of the King of Denmark. That they quitted them in consequence of the military prowess of the Danes, though that was far from inconsiderable, I do not pretend to say. They quitted the territory, I believe the truth to be, in consequence of the influence of Russia, at that time irresistible

in Germany, and deservedly so, because she had interfered and established tranquillity, and Russia had expressed her opinion that the German forces should quit the dominions of the King of Denmark. They quitted the country, however, under certain conditions. A diplomatic correspondence had taken place between the King of Denmark and the Courts of Berlin and Vienna, and the King of Denmark in that correspondence entered into certain engagements, and those engagements undoubtedly were recommended to a certain degree by the wish, if possible, to remedy the abuses complained of, and also by the desire to find an honourable excuse for the relinquishment of his provinces by the German forces. The King of Denmark never fulfilled the engagements into which he then entered, partly, I have no doubt, from negligence. We know that it is not the habit of mankind to perform disagreeable duties when pressure is withdrawn, but I have no doubt, and I believe the candid statement to be, that it arose in a great degree from the impracticable character of the engagements into which he had entered. That was in the year 1851.

In 1852, tranquillity being then entirely restored, the treaty of May, which regulated the succession, was negotiated. And I may remind honourable members that in that treaty there is not the slightest reference to these engagements which the King of Denmark had entered into with the Diet of Germany, or with German Powers who were members of the Diet. Nevertheless, the consequence of that state of affairs was this, that though there was no international question respecting Denmark, and although the possible

difficulties which might occur of an international character had been anticipated by the treaty of 1852, still in respect to the King of Denmark's capacity as Duke of Holstein and a sovereign German prince, a controversy arose between him and the Diet of Germany in consequence of these engagements, expressed in hitherto private and secret diplomatic correspondence carried on between him and certain German Courts. The House will understand that this was not an international question; it did not affect the public law of Europe; but it was a municipal, local, or, as we now call it, a federal question. Notwithstanding that in reality it related only to the King of Denmark and the Diet of Germany, in time it attracted the attention of the Government of England and of the ministers of the Great Powers, signatories of the treaty of 1852. For some period after the treaty of 1852, very little was heard of the federal question and the controversy between the Diet and the King of Denmark. After the exertions and exhaustions of the revolutionary years, the question slept, but it did not die. Occasionally it gave signs of vitality; and as time proceeded, shortly—at least, not very long—after the accession of the present Government to office, the controversy between the Diet and the King of Denmark assumed an appearance of very great life and acrimony.

Now, Her Majesty's Ministers thought it their duty to interfere in that controversy between the German Diet and the King of Denmark—a controversy strictly federal and not international. Whether they were wise in taking that course

appears very doubtful. My own impression is, and always has been, that it would have been much better to have left the federal question between the Diet and the King to work itself out. Her Majesty's Ministers, however, were of opinion —and no doubt there is something to be said in favour of that opinion—that as the question, although federal, was one which would probably lead to events which would make it international, it was wiser and better to interfere by anticipation, and prevent, if possible, the federal execution ever taking place. The consequence of that extreme activity on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers is a mass of correspondence which has been placed on the table, and with which, I doubt not, many gentlemen have some acquaintance, though they may have been more attracted and absorbed by the interest of the more modern correspondence which has, within the year, been presented to the House. Sir, I should not be doing justice to the Secretary of State if I did not bear testimony to the perseverance and extreme ingenuity with which he conducted that correspondence. The noble lord the Secretary of State found in that business, no doubt, a subject genial to his nature—namely, drawing up constitutions for the government of communities. The noble lord, we know, is almost as celebrated as a statesman who flourished at the end of the last century for this peculiar talent. I will not criticize any of the lucubrations of the noble lord at that time. I think his labours are well described in a passage in one of the dispatches of a distinguished Swedish statesman—the present Prime Minister, if I am not mistaken—who, when he was called upon to

consider a scheme of the English Government for the administration of Schleswig, which entered into minute details with a power and prolixity which could have been acquired only by a constitutional Minister who had long served an apprenticeship in the House of Commons, said:

> Generally speaking, the monarchs of Europe have found it difficult to manage one Parliament, but I observe, to my surprise, that Lord Russell is of opinion that the King of Denmark will be able to manage four.

The only remark I shall make on this folio volume of between 300 and 400 pages relating to the affairs of Schleswig and Holstein is this—I observe that the other Powers of Europe, who were equally interested in the matter, and equally bound to interfere—if being signatories to the treaty of 1852 justified interference—did not interpose as the English Government did. That they disapproved the course taken by us I by no means assert. When we make a suggestion on the subject, they receive it with cold politeness; they have no objection to the course we announce we are going to follow, but confine themselves, with scarcely an exception, to this conduct on their part. The noble lord acted differently. But it is really unnecessary for me to dwell on this part of the question—we may dismiss it from our minds, and I have touched on it only to complete the picture which I am bound to place before the House—in consequence of events which very speedily occurred.

All this elaborate and, I may venture to say—not using the word offensively, but accurately—pragmatical correspondence of the noble lord on the affairs of Schleswig and Holstein was carried

on in perfect ignorance on the part of the people of this country, who found very little interest in the subject; and even in Europe, where affairs of diplomacy always attract more attention, little notice was taken of it. This correspondence, however, culminated in a celebrated dispatch which appeared in the autumn of 1862, and then, for the first time, a very great effect was produced in Europe generally—certainly in Germany and France—and some interest began to be excited in England. Sir, the effect of the Secretary of State's management of these transactions had been this, that he had encouraged—I will not now stop to inquire whether intentionally or not, but it is a fact that he had encouraged—the views of what is called the German party in this controversy. That had been the effect of the noble lord's general interference, but especially it was the result of the dispatch which appeared in the autumn of 1862. But, Sir, something shortly and in consequence occurred which removed that impression. Germany being agitated on the subject, England at last, in 1863, having had her attention called to the case, which began to produce some disquietude, and gentlemen in this House beginning to direct their attention to it, shortly before the prorogation of Parliament, the state of affairs caused such a degree of public anxiety, that it was deemed necessary that an inquiry should be addressed to Her Majesty's Government on the subject, and that some means should be taken to settle the uneasiness which prevailed, by obtaining from Ministers a declaration of their policy generally with regard to Denmark.

Sir, that appeal was not made, as I need hardly assure or even remind the House—for many were witnesses to it—in any party spirit, or in any way animated, I will say, by that disciplined arrangement with which public questions are by both sides of the House in general very properly brought before us. It was at the end of the session, when few were left, and when the answer of Her Majesty's Ministers could not at all affect the position of parties, though it might be of inestimable interest and importance in its effect on the opinion of Europe and on the course of events. That question was brought forward by an honourable friend of mine (Mr. Seymour Fitz-Gerald) who always speaks on these subjects with the authority of one who knows what he is talking about. Well, Sir, a communication was made to the noble lord the First Minister on the subject, and it was understood on this side of the House, from the previous declarations of the noble lord, and our experience of his career generally, that it was not an appeal which would be disagreeable to him, or one which he would have any desire to avoid. The noble lord was not taken by surprise. He was communicated with privately, and he himself fixed the day—it was a morning sitting—when he would come down and explain the views of the Government in regard to our relations with Denmark.

I am bound to say that the noble lord spoke with all that perspicuity and complete detail with which he always treats diplomatic subjects, and in which we acknowledge him to be a master. The noble lord entered into particulars and gave to the House—who, with few exceptions, knew

little about the matter—not only a popular, but generally an accurate account of the whole question. He described the constitution of the Diet itself. He explained, for the first time in Parliament, what federal execution meant. The noble lord was a little unhappy in his prophecy as to what was going to happen with regard to federal execution; but we are all liable to error when we prophesy, and it was the only mistake he made. The noble lord said he did not think there would be a federal execution, and that if there were we might be perfectly easy in our minds, for it would not lead to any disturbance in Europe. The noble lord also described the position of Holstein as a German duchy, in which the King of Denmark was a sovereign German prince, and in that capacity a member of the Diet, and subject to the laws of the Diet. The duchy of Schleswig, the noble lord said, was not a German duchy, and the moment it was interfered with, international considerations would arise. But the noble lord informed us in the most reassuring spirit that his views on our relations with Denmark were such as they had always been. I will quote the exact passage from the noble lord's speech, not because it will not be familiar to the majority of those whom I am addressing, but because on an occasion like the present, one should refer to documents, so that it may not be said afterwards that statements have been garbled or misrepresented. The noble lord concluded his general observations in this manner:

We are asked what is the policy and the course of Her Majesty's Government respecting that dispute. We concur entirely with the honourable gentleman (the member

for Horsham), and, I am satisfied, with all reasonable men in Europe, including those in France and Russia, in desiring that the independence, the integrity, and the rights of Denmark may be maintained. We are convinced—I am convinced at least—that if any violent attempt were made to overthrow those rights, and interfere with that independence, those who made the attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend.

I say that is a clear, statesmanlike, and manly declaration of policy. It was not a hurried or hasty expression of opinion, because on a subject of that importance and that character, the noble lord never makes a hasty expression of opinion. He was master of the subject, and could not be taken by surprise. But on that occasion there was no chance of his being taken by surprise. The occasion was arranged. The noble lord was perfectly informed of what our object on this side was. The noble lord sympathized with it. He wanted the disquietude of the public mind in England, and on the Continent especially, to be soothed and satisfied, and he knew that he could not arrive at such a desirable result more happily and more completely than by a frank expression of the policy of the Government.

Sir, it is my business to-night to vindicate the noble lord from those who have treated this declaration of policy as one used only to amuse the House. I am here to prove the sincerity of that declaration. It is long since the speech of the noble lord was delivered, and we have now upon our table the diplomatic correspondence which was then being carried on by Her Majesty's Government on the subject. It was then secret—it is now known to us all; and I will show you

what at that very time was the tone of the Secretary of State in addressing the Courts of Germany mainly interested in the question. I will show how entirely and how heartily the secret efforts of the Government were exercised in order to carry into effect the policy which was publicly in the House of Commons announced by the noble lord. I think it must have been very late in July that the noble lord spoke—upon the 23rd, I believe—and I have here the dispatches which, nearly at the same period, were being sent by the Secretary of State to the German Courts. For example, hear how, on July 31, the Secretary of State writes to Lord Bloomfield at Vienna:

> You will tell Count Rechberg that if Germany persists in confounding Schleswig with Holstein, other Powers of Europe may confound Holstein with Schleswig, and deny the right of Germany to interfere with the one any more than she has with the other, except as a European Power. Such a pretension might be as dangerous to the independence and integrity of Germany, as the invasion of Schleswig might be to the independence and integrity of Denmark. (*Denmark and Germany*, No. 2, 115.)

And what is the answer of Lord Bloomfield? On August 6, after having communicated with Count Rechberg, he writes:

> Before leaving his Excellency I informed him that the Swedish Government would not remain indifferent to a federal execution in Holstein, and that this measure of the Diet, if persisted in, might have serious consequences in Europe. (P. 117.)

I am showing how sincere the policy of the noble lord was, and that the speech which we have been told was mainly for the House of Commons, was really the policy of Her Majesty's Government. Well, that was to Austria. Let us

now see what was the dispatch to Prussia. In the next month Earl Russell writes to our Minister at the Prussian Court:

I have caused the Prussian chargé d'affaires to be informed that if Austria and Prussia persist in advising the Confederation to make a federal execution now, they will do so against the advice already given by Her Majesty's Government, and must be responsible for the consequences, whatever they may be. The Diet should bear in mind that there is a material difference between the political bearing of a military occupation of a territory which is purely and solely a portion of the Confederation, and the invasion of a territory which, although a part of the German Confederation, is also a portion of the territory of an independent Sovereign, whose dominions are counted as an element in the balance of power in Europe.

I have now shown the House what was the real policy of the Government with respect to our relations with Denmark when Parliament was prorogued, and I have also shown that the speech of the noble lord the First Minister of the Crown was echoed by the Secretary of State to Austria and Prussia. I have shown, therefore, that it was a sincere policy, as announced by the noble lord. I will now show that it was a wise and a judicious policy.

Sir, the noble lord having made this statement to the House of Commons, the House was disbanded, the members went into the country with perfect tranquillity of mind respecting these affairs of Denmark and Germany. The speech of the noble lord reassured the country, and gave them confidence that the noble lord knew what he was about. And the noble lord knew that we had a right to be confident in the policy he had announced, because at that period the noble lord was aware that France was perfectly ready to

co-operate with Her Majesty's Government in any measure which they thought proper to adopt with respect to the vexed transactions between Denmark and Germany. Nay, France was not only ready to co-operate, but she spontaneously offered to act with us in any way we desired. The noble lord made his speech at the end of July—I think July 23—and it is very important to know what at that moment were our relations with France in reference to this subject. I find in the correspondence on the table a dispatch from Lord Cowley, dated July 31. The speech of the noble lord having been made on the 23rd, this is a dispatch written upon the same subject on the 31st. Speaking of the affairs of Germany and Denmark, Lord Cowley writes:

> M. Drouyn de Lhuys expressed himself as desirous of acting in concert with Her Majesty's Government in this matter.

I have now placed before the House the real policy of the Government at the time Parliament was prorogued last year. I have shown you that it was a sincere policy when expressed by the noble lord. I have shown that it was a sound and judicious policy, because Her Majesty's Government was then conscious that France was ready to co-operate with this country, France having expressed its desire to aid us in the settlement of this question. Well, Sir, at the end of the summer of last year, and at the commencement of the autumn, after the speeches and dispatches of the First Minister and the Secretary of State, and after, at the end of July, that reassuring announcement from the French Government, there was great excitement in Germany. The

German people have been for some time painfully conscious that they do not exercise that influence in Europe which they believe is due to the merits, moral, intellectual, and physical, of forty millions of population, homogeneous and speaking the same language. During the summer of last year this feeling was displayed in a remarkable manner, and it led to the meeting at Frankfort, which has not been hitherto mentioned in reference to these negotiations, but which was in reality a very significant affair.

The German people at that moment found the old question of Denmark—the relations between Denmark and the Diet—to be the only practical question upon which they could exhibit their love of a united fatherland, and their sympathy with a kindred race who were subjects of a foreign prince. Therefore there was very great excitement in Germany on the subject; and to those who are not completely acquainted with the German character, and who take for granted that the theories they put forth are all to be carried into action, there were no doubt many symptoms which were calculated to alarm the Cabinet Her Majesty's Government, firm in their policy, firm in their ally, knowing that the moderate counsels urged by France and England in a spirit which was sincere and which could not be mistaken, must ultimately lead to some conciliatory arrangements between the King of Denmark and the Diet, I suppose did not much disquiet themselves respecting the agitation in Germany. But towards the end of the summer and the commencement of the autumn—in the month of September—after the meeting at Frankfort and after other circum-

stances, the noble lord the Secretary of State, as a prudent man—a wise, cautious, and prudent Minister—thought it would be just as well to take time by the forelock, to prepare for emergencies, and to remind his allies of Paris of the kind and spontaneous expression on their part of their desire to co-operate with him in arranging this business. I think it was on September 16, that Lord Russell, the Secretary of State, applied in this language to our Minister at Paris—our ambassador (Lord Cowley) being at that time absent:

> As it might produce some danger to the balance of power, especially if the integrity and independence of Denmark were in any way impaired by the demands of Germany, and the measures consequent thereupon, if the Government of the Emperor of the French are of opinion that any benefit would be likely to follow from an offer of good services on the part of Great Britain and France, Her Majesty's Government would be ready to take that course. If, however, the Government of France would consider such a step as likely to be unavailing, the two Powers might remind Austria, Prussia, and the Diet, that any act on their part tending to weaken the integrity and independence of Denmark would be at variance with the treaty of May 8, 1852. (No. 2, 130.)

Sir, I think that was a very prudent step on the part of the Secretary of State. It was virtually a reminder of the offer which France had made some months before. Yet, to the surprise, and entirely to the discomfiture of Her Majesty's Government, this application was received at first with coldness, and afterwards with absolute refusal.

Well, Sir, I pause now to inquire what had occasioned this change in the relations between the two Courts. Why was France, which at the end of the session of Parliament was so heartily

with England, and so approving the policy of the noble lord with respect to Denmark and Germany that she voluntarily offered to act with us in endeavouring to settle the question—why was France two or three months afterwards so entirely changed ? Why was she so cold, and ultimately in the painful position of declining to act with us ? I stop for a moment my examination of this correspondence to look for the causes of this change of feeling, and I believe they may be easily discerned.

Sir, at the commencement of last year an insurrection broke out in Poland. Unhappily, insurrection in Poland is not an unprecedented event. This insurrection was extensive and menacing ; but there had been insurrections in Poland before quite as extensive and far more menacing—the insurrection of 1831, for example, for at that time Poland possessed a national army second to none for valour and discipline. Well, Sir, the question of the Polish insurrection in 1831 was a subject of deep consideration with the English Government of that day. They went thoroughly into the matter ; they took the soundings of that question ; it was investigated maturely, and the Government of King William IV arrived at these two conclusions—first, that it was not expedient for England to go to war for the restoration of Poland ; and, second, that if England was not prepared to go to war, any interference of another kind on her part would only aggravate the calamities of that fated people. These were the conclusions at which the Government of Lord Grey arrived, and they were announced to Parliament.

This is a question which the English Government has had more than one opportunity of considering, and in every instance they considered it fully and completely. It recurred again in the year 1855, when a Conference was sitting at Vienna in the midst of the Russian War, and again the English Government—the Government of the Queen—had to deal with the subject of Poland. It was considered by them under the most favourable circumstances for Poland, for we were at war then, and at war with Russia. But after performing all the duties of a responsible Ministry on that occasion, Her Majesty's Government arrived at these conclusions—first, that it was not only not expedient for England to go to war to restore Poland, but that it was not expedient even to prolong a war for that object; and, in the next place, that any interference with a view to provoke a war in Poland, without action on our part, was not just to the Poles, and must only tend to bring upon them increased disasters. I say, therefore, that this question of Poland in the present century, and within the last thirty-four years, has been twice considered by different Governments; and when I remind the House that on its consideration by the Cabinet of Lord Grey in 1831, the individual who filled the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and who, of course, greatly guided the opinion of his colleagues on such a question, was the noble lord the present First Minister of the Crown; and when I also remind the House that the British plenipotentiary at the Conference of Vienna in 1855, on whose responsibility in a great degree the decision then come to was arrived at, is the

present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I think that England, when the great difficulties of last year with respect to Poland occurred, had a right to congratulate herself that, in a situation of such gravity, and at an emergency when a mistake might produce incalculable evils, her fortunes were regulated not only by two statesmen of such great ability and experience, but by statesmen who, on this subject, possessed peculiar advantages, who had thoroughly entered into the question, who knew all its issues, all the contingencies that might possibly arise in its management, and who on the two previous occasions on which it had been submitted to the consideration of England, had been the guiding Ministers to determine her to a wise course of action.

Now, I must observe that what is called the Polish question occupies a different position in France from that which it occupies in England. I will not admit that, in deep sympathy with the Poles, the French are superior to the English people. I believe I am only stating accurately the feelings of this country when I say, that among men of all classes there is no modern event which is looked back to with more regret than the partition of Poland. It is universally acknowledged by them to be one of the darkest pages of the history of the eighteenth century. But in France the Polish question is not a question which merely interests the sentiments of the millions. It is a political question, and a political question of the very highest importance—a question which interests Ministers, and Cabinets, and princes. Well, the ruler of France, a sagacious prince and a lover of peace, as the Secretary of State has just

informed us, was of course perfectly alive to the grave issues involved in what is called the Polish question. But the Emperor knew perfectly well that England had already had opportunities of considering it in the completest manner, and had arrived at a settled conclusion with regard to it. Therefore, with characteristic caution, he exercised great reserve, and held out little encouragement to the representatives of the Polish people. He knew well that in 1855 he himself, our ally—and with us a conquering ally—had urged this question on the English Government, and that, under the most favourable circumstances for the restoration of Poland, we had adhered to our traditional policy, neither to go to war nor to interfere. Therefore, the French Government exhibited a wise reserve on the subject.

But after a short time, what must have been the astonishment of the Emperor of the French when he found the English Government embracing the cause of Poland with extraordinary ardour! The noble lord the Secretary of State and the noble lord the First Minister, but especially the former, announced the policy as if it were a policy new to the consideration of statesmen, and likely to lead to immense results. He absolutely served a notice to quit on the Emperor of Russia. He sent a copy of this dispatch to all the Courts of Europe which were signatories to the Treaty of Vienna, and invited them to follow his example. From the King of Portugal down to the King of Sweden there was not a signatory of that treaty who was not, as it were, clattering at the palace gates of St. Petersburg, and calling the Czar to account respecting the affairs of Poland. For three months

Europe generally believed that there was to be a war on a great scale, of which the restoration of Poland was to be one of the main objects. Is it at all remarkable that the French Government and the French people, cautious as they were before, should have responded to such invitations and such stimulating proposals? We know how the noble lord fooled them to the top of their bent. The House recollects the six propositions to which the attention of the Emperor of Russia was called in the most peremptory manner. The House recollects the closing scene, when it was arranged that the ambassadors of France, Austria, and England, should on the very same day appear at the hotel of the Minister of Russia, and present notes ending with three identical paragraphs, to show the agreement of the Powers. An impression pervaded Europe that there was to be a general war, and that England, France, and Austria were united to restore Poland.

The House remembers the end of all this—it remembers the reply of the Russian Minister, couched in a tone of haughty sarcasm and of indignation that deigned to be ironical. There was then but one step to take, according to the views of the French Government, and that was action. They appealed to that England which had itself thus set the example of agitation on the subject; and England, wisely as I think, recurred to her traditionary policy, the Government confessing that it was a momentary indiscrétion which had animated her councils for three or four months; that they never meant anything more than words; and a month afterwards, I believe, they sent to St. Petersburg an obscure

dispatch, which may be described as an apology. But this did not alter the position of the French Government and the French Emperor. The Emperor had been induced by us to hold out promises which he could not fulfil. He was placed in a false position both to the people of Poland and the people of France; and therefore, Sir, I am not surprised that when the noble lord the Secretary of State, a little alarmed by the progress of affairs in Germany, thought it discreet to reconnoitre his position on September 17, he should have been received at Paris with coldness, and, ultimately, that his dispatch should have been answered in this manner.

I fear that I may weary the House with my narrative, but I will not abuse the privilege of reading extracts, which is generally very foreign to my desire. Yet, on a question of this kind it is better to have the documents, and not lay oneself open to the charge of garbling. Mr. Grey, writing to Lord Russell on September 18, 1863, says:

The second mode of proceeding suggested by your lordship, namely, 'to remind Austria, Russia, and the German Diet, that any acts on their part tending to weaken the integrity and independence of Denmark would be at variance with the treaty of May 8, 1852,' would be in a great measure analogous to the course pursued by Great Britain and France in the Polish question. He had no inclination (and he frankly avowed that he should so speak to the Emperor) to place France in the same position with reference to Germany as she had been placed in with regard to Russia. The formal notes addressed by the three Powers to Russia had received an answer which literally meant nothing, and the position in which those three great Powers were now placed was anything but dignified; and if England and France were to address such a reminder as

that proposed to Austria, Prussia, and the German Confederation, they must be prepared to go further, and to adopt their course of action more in accordance with the dignity of two great Powers than they were now doing in the Polish question. . . . Unless Her Majesty's Government was prepared to go further, if necessary, than the mere presentation of a note, and the receipt of an evasive reply, he was sure the Emperor would not consent to adopt your lordship's suggestion. (No. 2, 131.)

Well, Sir, that was an intimation to the noble lord with respect to the change in the relations between England and France that was significant; I think it was one that the noble lord should have duly weighed—and when he remembered the position which this country occupied with regard to Denmark—that it was a position under the treaty which did not bind us to interfere more than France itself—conscious, at the same time, that any co-operation from Russia in the same cause could hardly be counted upon—I should have said that a prudent Government would have well considered that position, and that they would not have taken any course which committed them too strongly to any decided line of action. But so far as I can judge from the correspondence before us, that was not the tone taken by Her Majesty's Government; because here we have extracts from the correspondence of the Secretary of State to the Swedish Minister, to the Diet at Frankfort, and a most important dispatch to Lord Bloomfield: all in the fortnight that elapsed after the receipt of the dispatch of Mr. Grey that notified the change in the feeling of the French Government. It is highly instructive that we should know what effect that produced in the system and policy of Her Majesty's Government.

Immediately—almost the day after the receipt of that dispatch—the Secretary of State wrote to the Swedish Minister:

Her Majesty's Government set the highest value on the independence and integrity of Denmark. . . . Her Majesty's Government will be ready to remind Austria and Prussia of their treaty obligations to respect the integrity and independence of Denmark. (No. 2, 137–8.)

Then on September 29—that is, only nine or ten days after the receipt of the French dispatch—we have this most important dispatch, which I shall read at some little length. It is at p. 136, and is really addressed to the Diet. The Secretary of State says:

Her Majesty's Government, by the Treaty of London of May 8, 1852, is bound to respect the integrity and independence of Denmark. The Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia have taken the same engagement. Her Majesty could not see with indifference a military occupation of Holstein, which is only to cease on terms injuriously affecting the constitution of the whole Danish monarchy. Her Majesty's Government could not recognize this military occupation as a legitimate exercise of the powers of the Confederation, or admit that it could properly be called a federal execution. Her Majesty's Government could not be indifferent to the bearing of such an act upon Denmark and European interest. Her Majesty's Government therefore earnestly entreats the German Diet to pause and to submit the questions in dispute between Germany and Denmark to the mediation of other Powers unconcerned in the controversy, but deeply concerned in the maintenance of the peace of Europe and the independence of Denmark. (No. 2, 145.)

My object in reading this dispatch is to show that, after the indication of the change of feeling on the part of France, the policy—the sincere policy—of the Government was not modified.

The Secretary of State writes thus on September 30, to Lord Bloomfield at Vienna:

> Her Majesty's Government trusts that no act of federal execution to which Austria may be a party, and no act of war against Denmark on the ground of the affairs of Schleswig, will be allowed to clash with this primary and essential treaty obligation. Her Majesty's Government, indeed, entertain a full confidence that the Government of Austria is as deeply impressed as Her Majesty's Government with the conviction that the independence and integrity of Denmark form an essential element in the balance of power in Europe. (No. 3, 147.)

Now, this takes us to the end of September; and I think the House up to this time tolerably clearly understands the course of the correspondence. Nothing of any importance happened in October that requires me to pause and consider it. We arrive, then, at the month of November, and now approach very important and critical affairs. The month of November was remarkable for the occurrence of two great events which completely changed the character and immensely affected the aspect of the whole relations between Denmark and Germany; and which produced consequences which none of us may see the end of. Early in November the Emperor of the French proposed a European Congress. His position was such—as he himself has described it, there can be no indelicacy in saying so—his position had become painful from various causes, but mainly from the manner in which he had misapprehended the conduct of the English Government with regard to Poland. He saw great troubles about to occur in Europe; he wished to anticipate their settlement; he felt himself in a false position with respect to his own subjects, because he had

experienced a great diplomatic discomfiture; but he was desirous—and there is no doubt of the sincerity of the declaration—he was desirous of still taking a course which should restore and retain the cordial understanding with this country. He proposed, then, a general Congress.

Well, when Parliament met on February 4, I had to make certain observations on the general condition of affairs, and I gave my opinion as to the propriety of Her Majesty's Government refusing to be a party to that Congress. Generally speaking, I think that a Congress should not precede action. If you wish any happy and permanent result from a Congress, it should rather follow the great efforts of nations; and when they are somewhat exhausted, give them the opportunity of an honourable settlement. Sir, I did not think it my duty to conceal my opinion, Her Majesty's Government having admitted that they had felt it their duty to refuse a proposition of that character. I should have felt that I was wanting in that ingenuousness and fair play in politics which I hope, whoever sits on that bench or this, we shall always pursue, if, when the true interests of the country are concerned, agreeing as I did with the Government, I did not express frankly that opinion. But, Sir, I am bound to say that had I been aware of what has been communicated to us by the papers on the table—had I been aware, when I spoke on February 4, that only a week before Parliament met, that only a week before we were assured by a Speech from the Throne that Her Majesty was continuing to carry on negotiations in the interest of peace—that Her Majesty's Government had made

a proposition to France which must inevitably have produced, if accepted, a great European war, I should have given my approbation in terms much more qualified.

But, Sir, whatever difference of opinion there might be as to the propriety or impropriety of Her Majesty's Government acceding to the Congress, I think there were not then—I am sure there are not now—two opinions as to the mode and manner in which that refusal was conveyed. Sir, when the noble lord vindicated that curt and, as I conceive, most offensive reply, he dilated the other night on the straightforwardness of British Ministers, and said that, by whatever else their language might be characterized, it was distinguished by candour and clearness, and that even where it might be charged with being coarse, it at least conveyed a determinate meaning. Well, Sir, I wish that if our diplomatic language is characterized by clearness and straightforwardness, some of that spirit had distinguished the dispatches and declarations addressed by the noble lord to the Court of Denmark. It is a great pity that we did not have a little of that rude frankness when the fortunes of that ancient kingdom were at stake.

But, Sir, another event of which I must now remind the House happened about that time. In November the King of Denmark died. The death of the King of Denmark entirely changed the character of the question between Germany and Denmark. The question was a federal question before, as the noble lord, from the dispatches I have read, was perfectly aware; but by the death of the King of Denmark it

became an international question, because the controversy of the King of Denmark was with the Diet of Germany, which had not recognized the change in the *lex regia*, or the changes in the succession to the various dominions of the King. It was, therefore, an international question of magnitude and of a menacing character. Under these circumstances, when the question became European, when the difficulties were immensely magnified and multiplied—the offer of a Congress having been made on November 5, and not refused until the 27th, the King of Denmark having died on the 16th—it was, I say, with the complete knowledge of the increased risk and of the increased dimensions of the interests at stake, that the noble lord sent that answer to the invitation of the Emperor of the French. I say, Sir, that at this moment it became the Government of England seriously to consider their position. With the offer of the Congress and with the death of the King of Denmark—with these two remarkable events before the noble lord's eyes, it is my duty to remind the House of the manner in which the noble lord the Secretary of State addressed the European Powers. Neither of these great events seems to have induced the noble lord to modify his tone. On November 19, the King having just died, the Secretary of State writes to Sir Alexander Malet, our Minister to the Diet, to remind him that all the Powers of Europe had agreed to the treaty of 1852. On the 20th he writes a letter of menace to the German Powers, saying that Her Majesty's Government expect, as a matter of course, that all the Powers will recognize the succession of the King of Denmark

as heir of all the states which, according to the Treaty of London, were united under the sceptre of the late King. And on the 23rd, four days before he refused the invitation to the Congress, he writes to Lord Bloomfield:

> Her Majesty's Government would have no right to interfere on behalf of Denmark if the troops of the Confederation should enter Holstein on federal grounds. But if execution were enforced on international grounds, the Powers who signed the treaty of 1852 would have a right to interfere. (No. 3, 230.)

To Sir Augustus Paget, our Minister at Copenhagen, on November 30—the House will recollect that this was after he had refused the Congress, after the King had died, and after the question had become an international one—he writes announcing his refusal of the Congress and proposing the sole mediation of England. Then he writes to Sir Alexander Malet in the same month, that Her Majesty's Government can only leave to Germany the sole responsibility of raising a war in Europe, which the Diet seemed bent on making.

This is the tone which the Government adopted, after the consideration, as we are bound to believe, which the question demanded, after having incurred the responsibility of refusing the Congress offered by the Emperor of the French, after the death of the King of Denmark, after the question had been changed from a federal to an international one—such, I repeat, is the tone they took up, and in which they sent their menacing messages to every Court in Germany. I say that at the death of the King of Denmark it behoved Her Majesty's Ministers, instead of adopting such a course, maturely to consider their position in

relation to the events which had occurred. There were two courses open to Her Majesty's Government, both intelligible, both honourable. It was open to them, after the death of the King of Denmark, to have acted as France had resolved under the same circumstances to act—France, who occupies, we are told, a position in reference to these matters so dignified and satisfactory that it has received the compliments even of a baffled Minister. That course was frankly announced shortly afterwards to the English Minister by the Minister of France in Denmark. On November 19 General Fleury said to Lord Wodehouse at Copenhagen :

> That his own instructions from the Emperor were, not to take part in any negotiations here, but to tell the Danish Government explicitly that if Denmark became involved in a war with Germany, France would not come to her assistance.

If England had adopted that course it would have been intelligible and honourable. We were not bound by the treaty of 1852 to go to the assistance of Denmark if she became involved in a war with Germany. No one pretends that we were. As a matter of high policy, much as we may regret any disturbance in the territorial limits of Europe, being a country the policy of which is a policy of tranquillity and peace, there were no adequate considerations which could have justified England in entering into an extensive European war, without allies, to prevent a war between Denmark and Germany. That was, I say, an honourable and intelligible course.

There was another course equally intelligible and equally honourable. Though I am bound to

say that the course which I should have recommended the country to take would have been to adopt the same position as that of France, yet, if the Government really entertained the views with respect to the balance of power which have been expressed occasionally in the House by the noble lord, and in a literary form by the Secretary of State—from which I may say I disagree, because they appear to me to be founded on the obsolete tradition of an antiquated system, and because I think that the elements from which we ought to form an opinion as to the distribution of the power of the world must be collected from a much more extensive area, and must be formed of larger and more varied elements: but let that pass: yet, I say, if Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that the balance of power were endangered by a quarrel between Germany and Denmark, they were justified in giving their advice to Denmark, in threatening Germany, and in taking the general management of the affairs of Denmark; but they were bound, if a war did take place between Germany and Denmark, to support Denmark. Instead of that, they invented a process of conduct which I hope is not easily exampled in the history of this country, and which I can only describe in one sentence—it consisted of menaces never accomplished and promises never fulfilled.

With all these difficulties they never hesitate in their tone. At least, let us do them this justice—there never were, in semblance, more determined Ministers. They seemed at least to rejoice in the phantom of a proud courage. But what do they do? They send a special envoy to Denmark, who

was to enforce their policy and arrange everything. Formally the special envoy was sent to congratulate the King on his accession to the throne of Denmark, and all the other Powers did the same; but in reality the mission of Lord Wodehouse was for greater objects than that, and his instructions are before us in full. Without wearying the House by reading the whole of those instructions, I will read one paragraph, which is the last, and which is, as it were, a summary of the whole. They were written at the end of December. Recollect, this is the policy of the Government after refusing the Congress, and after the death of the King of Denmark, which had therefore incurred a still deeper responsibility, and which, we must suppose, had deeply considered all the issues involved. This is the cream of the instructions given by the Government to Lord Wodehouse:

> The result to be arrived at is the fulfilment of the treaty of May 8, 1852, and of the engagements entered into by Prussia and Austria and Denmark in 1851–2. (No. 3, 353.)

Lord Wodehouse could not possibly be at fault as to what he was to do when he arrived at his destination. His was, no doubt, a significant appointment. He was a statesman of some experience; he had held a subordinate but important position in the administration of our foreign affairs; he had been a Minister at a northern Court; he had recently distinguished himself in Parliament by a speech on the question of Germany and Denmark, in which he took a decidedly dangerous view. Lord Wodehouse received clear instructions as to what he was to do. But, at the same time, what was the conduct of the Secretary of State? While Lord Wodehouse was repairing

to his post, did the Secretary of State in the least falter in his tone? It was about this time that the great diplomatic reprimand was sent to Sir Alexander Malet for having talked of the 'protocol' of 1852 instead of the 'treaty'. This was the time that instructions were sent out that if anybody had the hardihood to mention the 'protocol' of 1852 he was immediately to be stopped. However elevated his position might be, even if it were M. Bismarck himself, he was to be pulled up directly, in the full flow of his eloquence; note was to be taken of this great diplomatic *lapsus*, and the Minister was to telegraph instantly home to his Government how he had carried out his instructions in this respect. On December 17, the noble lord wrote to Sir Andrew Buchanan, our ambassador at Berlin:

> Let it suffice at present for Her Majesty's Government to declare that they would consider any departure from the treaty of succession of 1852, by Powers who signed or acceded to that treaty, as entirely inconsistent with good faith. (No. 3, 383.)

Similar dispatches were sent to Wurtemberg, Hanover, and Saxony. On December 23 the noble earl wrote to Sir Andrew Buchanan:

> If the overthrow of the dynasty now reigning in Denmark is sought by Germany, the most serious consequences may ensue. (No. 3, 411.)

.. I want to know what honourable members mean by cheering the words I have just quoted. If you wish to convey even to a little Power that if it does a certain thing you will go to war with it, you take care not to announce your intention in an offensive manner; because, were you to do so, probably, even the smallest Power in Europe

would not yield. And certainly if you wish to tell a great Power in Europe what may be eventually the consequences if it should adopt a different line from that which you desire, you would not abruptly declare that if it declined to accede to your wish you would declare war. Why, there are no dispatches on record in the world—there is no record in any Foreign Office of language of this kind. The question is, what interpretation can be put on these threats. The Secretary of State writes again on December 25 to Sir Andrew Buchanan, stating that:

> Any precipitate action on the part of the German Confederation may lead to consequences fatal to the peace of Europe, and may involve Germany, in particular, in difficulties of the most serious nature. (No. 4, 414.)

On December 26 the Secretary of State writes to Sir Alexander Malet, and sends him a copy of the treaty of 1852, in order that he might communicate it to the Diet. Now, that is the state of affairs after the King of Denmark's death; after he had been perfectly acquainted with the policy of France; after he had been frankly told that the French Emperor had explicitly informed Denmark that if she got involved in war with Germany, France would not come to her assistance. Now the words 'if she went to war' might have been interpreted in two ways; because she might get into war without any fault of her own, and Germany might be the aggressor: but there could be no mistake in regard to the words 'if she became involved in war'. Neither Denmark nor England could make any mistake in regard to the policy of France, which the Secretary of State now says was a magnanimous policy.

Notwithstanding these threats, notwithstanding these repeated menaces, and notwithstanding every effort made by Her Majesty's Government to prevent it, federal execution took place, as it was intended to take place. One day after the most menacing epistle which I have ever read—the day after the copy of the treaty of 1852 had been solemnly placed before the Diet by Sir Alexander Malet—on December 27, federal execution took place. At any rate, I do not think that is evidence of the just influence of England in the councils of Germany.

What was the course of Her Majesty's Government at this critical conjuncture? Why, Sir, they went again to France. After all that had happened their only expedient was to go and supplicate France. I will read the letter. [Mr. Layard: Hear, hear!] The honourable gentleman seems to triumph in the recollection of mistakes and disappointments. I will give him the date, but I should think it must really be seared upon his conscience. December 27 is the date of federal execution: and Her Majesty's Government must have been in a state of complete panic, because on the 28th they made application to France, which is answered in a few hours by Lord Cowley: 'I said Her Majesty's Government were most sincerely anxious to——' (laughter). I wish really to be candid, not to misrepresent anything, and to put the case before the House without garbling any of the dispatches. —'I said that Her Majesty's Government were most sincerely anxious to act with the Imperial Government in this question.' No doubt they were. I am vindicating your conduct. I believe

in your sincerity throughout. It is only your intense incapacity that I denounce. The passage in the dispatch is Shakespearian; it is one of those dramatic descriptions which only a masterly pen could accomplish. Lord Cowley went on:

Her Majesty's Government felt that if the two Powers could agree, war might be avoided; otherwise the danger of war was imminent. M. Drouyn de Lhuys said he partook this opinion; but as his Excellency made no further observation, I remarked it would be a grievous thing if the difference of opinion which had arisen upon the merits of a general Congress were to produce an estrangement which would leave each Government to pursue its own course. I hoped that this would not be the case. Her Majesty's Government would do all in their power to avoid it. I presumed I might give them the assurance that the Imperial Government were not decided to reject the notion of a Conference. (No. 4, 444.)

Well, Sir, this received a curt and unsatisfactory reply. Nothing could be obtained from the plaintive appeal of Lord Cowley. Well, what did Her Majesty's Government do? Having received information that the threat of federal execution had been fulfilled, having appealed to France, and been treated in the manner I have described, what did the Government do? Why, the Secretary of State, within twenty-four hours afterwards, penned the fiercest dispatch he had ever yet written. It is dated December 31, 1863, and it is addressed to Sir Andrew Buchanan:

Her Majesty's Government do not hold that war would relieve Prussia from the obligations of the treaty of 1852. The King of Denmark would by that treaty be entitled still to be acknowledged as the sovereign of all the dominions of the late King of Denmark. He has been so entitled from the time of the death of the late King. A war of conquest undertaken by Germany avowedly for the purpose of adding some parts of the Danish dominions to

the territory of the German Confederation might, if successful, alter the state of succession contemplated by the Treaty of London, and give to Germany a title by conquest to parts of the dominions of the King of Denmark. The prospect of such an accession may no doubt be a temptation to those who think it can be accomplished; but Her Majesty's Government cannot believe that Prussia will depart from the straight line of good faith in order to assist in carrying such a project into effect. (No. 4, 445.)

You cheer as if it were a surprising thing that the Secretary of State should have written a single sentence of common sense. These are important state documents, and I hope Her Majesty's Government are not so fallen that there is not a Minister among them who is able to write a dispatch—I do not say a bad dispatch, but a very important one. I wish to call attention to its importance:

If German nationality in Holstein, and particularly in Schleswig, were made the ground of the dismemberment of Denmark, Polish nationality in the Duchy of Posen would be a ground equally strong for the dismemberment of Prussia. It appears to Her Majesty's Government that the safest course for Prussia to pursue is to act with good faith and honour and to stand by and fulfil her treaty engagements. By such a course she will command the sympathy of Europe; by a contrary course she will draw down upon herself the universal condemnation of all disinterested men. By this course alone war in Europe can be with certainty prevented. (No. 4, 445.)

Well, Sir, that I think was a bold dispatch to write after the rejection, for the second or third time, of our overtures to France. That brings us up to the last day of the year.

But before I proceed to more recent transactions, it is necessary to call the attention of the House to the remarkable contrast between the menaces lavished on Germany and the expectations—to

use the mildest term—that were held out to Denmark. The great object of Her Majesty's Government when the difficulties began to be very serious, was to induce Denmark to revoke the patent of Holstein—that is, to terminate the constitution. The constitution of Holstein had been granted very recently before the death of the King, with a violent desire on the part of the monarch to fulfil his promises. It was a wise and excellent constitution by which Holstein became virtually independent. It enjoyed the fullness of self-government, and was held only by sovereign ties to Denmark, as Norway is held to Sweden. The Danish Government were not at all willing to revoke the constitution in Holstein. It was one that did them credit, and was naturally popular in Holstein. Still, the Diet was very anxious that the patent should be revoked, because if Holstein continued satisfied it was impossible to trade on the intimate connexion between Schleswig and Holstein, the lever by which the kingdom of Denmark was to be destroyed. The Diet, therefore, insisted that the patent should be revoked. Her Majesty's Government, I believe, approved the patent of Holstein as the Danish Government had done, but, as a means of obtaining peace and saving Denmark, they made use of all the means in their power to induce Denmark to revoke that constitution. Sir Augustus Paget, writing to the Foreign Secretary on October 14, and describing an interview with M. Hall, the Prime Minister of Denmark, says:

After much further conversation, in which I made use of every argument to induce his Excellency to adopt a conciliatory course, and in which I warned him of the danger

of rejecting the friendly counsels now offered by Her Majesty's Government—(No. 3, 162)—

M. Hall promises to withdraw the patent. What interpretation could M. Hall place on that interview? He was called upon to do what he knew to be distasteful, and believed to be impolitic. He is warned of the danger of rejecting those friendly counsels, and in consequence of that warning he gives way and surrenders his opinion. I would candidly ask what is the interpretation which in private life would be put on such language as I have quoted, and which had been acted upon by those to whom it was addressed?

Well, we now come to the federal execution in Holstein. Speaking literally, the federal execution was a legal act, and Denmark could not resist it. But from the manner in which it was about to be carried into effect, and in consequence of the pretensions connected with it, the Danes were of opinion that it would have been better at once to resist the execution, which aimed a fatal blow at the independence of Schleswig, and upon this point they felt strongly. Well, Her Majesty's Government—and I give them full credit for being actuated by the best motives—thought otherwise, and wished the Danish Government to submit to this execution. And what was the sort of language used by them in order to bring about that result? Sir Augustus Paget replied in this way to the objections of the Danish Minister:

I replied that Denmark would at all events have a better chance of securing the assistance of the Powers if the execution were not resisted.

I ask any candid man to put his own interpretation upon this language. And on the 12th

of the same month Lord Russell himself tells M. Bille, the Danish Minister in London, that there is no connexion between the engagements of Denmark to Germany, and the engagements of the German Powers under the treaty of 1852. After such a declaration from the English Minister in the metropolis, a declaration which must have had the greatest effect upon the policy of the Danish Government—of course they submitted to the execution. But having revoked the patent and submitted to the execution, as neither the one nor the other was the real object of the German Powers, a new demand was made which was one of the greatest consequence.

Now, listen to this. The new demand was to repeal the old constitution. I want to put clearly before the House the position of the Danish Government with respect to this much-talked-of constitution. There had been in the preceding year a Parliamentary Reform Bill carried in Denmark. The King died before having given his assent to it, though he was most willing to have done so. The instant the new King succeeded, the Parliamentary Reform Bill was brought to him. Of course great excitement prevailed in Denmark, just as it did in England at the time of the Reform Bill under similar circumstances, and the King was placed in a most difficult position. Now, observe this: England, who was so obtrusive and pragmatical in the counsels which she gave, who was always offering advice and suggestions, hung back when the question arose whether the new King should give his assent to the Reform Bill or not. England was selfishly silent, and would incur no responsibility. The

excitement in Copenhagen was great, and the King gave his assent to the Bill. But mark! at that moment it was not at all impossible that if Her Majesty's Government had written a dispatch to Copenhagen asking the King not to give his assent to the Bill for the space of six weeks in order to assist England in the negotiations she was carrying on in behalf of Denmark; and if the King had convened his council and laid before them the express wish of an ally who was then looked upon by Denmark with confidence and hope, especially from the time that France had declared she would not assist her, I cannot doubt that the King would have complied with a request that was so important to his fortunes. But the instant the King had sanctioned the new constitution, the English Government began writing dispatches calling upon him to revoke it. Aye, but what was his position then? How could he revoke it? The King was a constitutional king; he could have put an end to this constitution only by a *coup d'état*; and he was not in a position, nor I believe if he were had he the inclination, to do such an act. The only constitutional course open to him was to call the new Parliament together with the view of revoking the constitution.

But see what would have been the position of affairs then. In England the Reform Act was passed in 1832, new elections took place under it, and the House assembled under Lord Althorp, as the leader of the Government. Now, suppose Lord Althorp had come down to that House with a King's speech recommending them to revoke the Reform Act, and have asked leave to introduce

another Bill for the purpose of reforming the constitution, would it not have been asking an utter impossibility? But how did Her Majesty's Government act towards Denmark in similar circumstances? First of all, the noble lord at the head of the Foreign Office wrote to Lord Wodehouse on December 20, giving formal advice to the Danish Government to repeal the constitution, and Lord Wodehouse, who had been sent upon this painful and, I must say, impossible office to the Danish Minister, thus speaks of the way in which he had performed his task:

I pointed out to M. Hall also that if, on the one hand, Her Majesty's Government would never counsel the Danish Government to yield anything inconsistent with the honour and independence of the Danish Crown, and the integrity of the King's dominions; so, on the other hand, we had a right to expect that the Danish Government would not, by putting forward extreme pretensions, drive matters to extremities.

And Sir Augustus Paget, who appears to have performed his duty with great temper and talent, writing on December 22, says:

I asked M. Hall to reflect what would be the position of Denmark if the advice of the Powers were refused, and what it would be if accepted, and to draw his own conclusions. (No. 4, 420.)

Now, I ask, what are the conclusions which any gentleman—I do not care on what side of the House he may sit—would have drawn from such language as that? But before that, a special interview took place between Lord Wodehouse and the Danish Minister, of which Lord Wodehouse writes:

It was my duty to declare to M. Hall that if the Danish Government rejected our advice, Her Majesty's Govern-

ment must leave Denmark to encounter Germany on her own responsibility.

Well, Sir, I ask again whether there are two interpretations to be put upon such observations as these? And what happened? It was impossible for M. Hall, who was the author of the constitution, to put an end to it; so he resigned—a new Government is formed, and under the new constitution Parliament is absolutely called together to pass an Act to terminate its own existence. And in January Sir Augustus Paget tells the Danish Government with some *naïveté*:

If they would summon the Rigsraad, and propose a repeal of the constitution, they would act wisely, in accordance with the advice of their friends, and the responsibility of the war would not be laid at their door.

Well, then, these were three great subjects on which the representation of England induced Denmark to adopt a course against her will, and, as the Danes believed, against their policy. The plot begins to thicken. Notwithstanding the revocation of the patent, the federal execution, and the repeal of the constitution, one thing more is wanted, and Schleswig is about to be invaded. Affairs now become most critical. No sooner is this known than a very haughty menace is sent to Austria. From a dispatch of Lord Bloomfield, dated December 31, it will be seen that Austria was threatened, if Schleswig was invaded, that

The consequences would be serious. The question would cease to be a purely German one, and would become one of European importance.

On January 4, Earl Russell writes to Mr. Murray, at the Court of Saxony:

The most serious consequences are to be apprehended if the Germans invade Schleswig. (No. 4, 481.)

On the 9th, again, he writes to Dresden:

The line taken by Saxony destroys confidence in diplomatic relations with that State. (No. 4, 502.)

On January 18 he writes to Lord Bloomfield:

You are instructed to represent in the strongest terms to Count Rechberg, and, if you shall have an opportunity of doing so, to the Emperor, the extreme injustice and danger of the principle and practice of taking possession of the territory of a State as what is called a material guarantee for the obtainment of certain international demands, instead of pressing those demands by the usual method of negotiation. Such a practice is fatal to peace, and destructive of the independence of States. It is destructive of peace because it is an act of war, and if resistance takes place it is the beginning of war. But war so begun may not be confined within the narrow limits of its early commencement, as was proved in 1853, when the occupation of the Danubian Principalities by Russia as a material guarantee proved the direct cause of the Crimean War. (No. 4, 564.)

It is only because I do not wish to weary the House that I do not read it all, but it is extremely well written. ['Read.']

Well, then, the dispatch goes on to say:

Such a practice is most injurious to the independence and integrity of the State to which it is applied, because a territory so occupied can scarcely be left by the occupying force in the same state in which it was when the occupation took place. But, moreover, such a practice may recoil upon those who adopt it, and, in the ever-varying course of events, it may be most inconveniently applied to those who, having set the example, had flattered themselves it never could be applied to them. (No. 4, 564.)

Well, the invasion of Schleswig is impending, and then an identic note is sent to Vienna and Berlin in these terms:

Her Majesty's Government having been informed that the Governments of Austria and Prussia have addressed a threatening summons to Denmark, the undersigned has

been instructed to ask for a formal declaration on the part of those Governments that they adhere to the principle of the integrity of the Danish monarchy. (No. 4, 565.)

And again, writing to Lord Bloomfield, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs speaks of the invasion as 'a breach of faith which may entail upon Europe widespread calamities'. But all these remonstrances were in vain. Notwithstanding these solemn warnings, notwithstanding this evidence that in the German Courts the just influence of England was lowered, the invasion of Schleswig takes place. And what is the conduct of the Government? They hurry again to Paris. They propose a joint declaration of the non-German Powers. Earl Russell writes to Lord Cowley in the middle of January. An answer was sent, I believe, the next day, the 14th, and this is Lord Cowley's statement in reference to the opinion of the French Government:

As to the four Powers impressing upon the Diet the heavy responsibility that it would incur if, by any precipitate measures, it were to break the peace of Europe before the Conference which had been proposed by the British Government for considering the means of settling the question between Germany and Denmark, and thereby maintaining that peace, can be assembled, M. Drouyn de Lhuys observed that he had not forgotten that when Russia had been warned by France, Great Britain, and Austria of the responsibility which she was incurring by her conduct towards Poland, Prince Gortschakoff had replied, 'that Russia was ready to assume that responsibility before God and man.' He, for one, did not wish to provoke another answer of the same sort to be received with the same indifference. (No. 4, 536.)

The drama now becomes deeply interesting. The events are quick. That is the answer of the French Government; and on the next day Lord

Russell writes to Lord Cowley to propose concert and co-operation with France to maintain the treaty—that is, to prevent the occupation of Schleswig. Lord Cowley writes the next day to Lord Russell that the French Government want to know what 'concert and co-operation' mean. Lord Russell at last, on January 24, writes to say that concert and co-operation mean 'if necessary, material assistance to Denmark'. That must have been about the same time when the Cabinet was sitting to draw up Her Majesty's speech, assuring Parliament that negotiations continued to be carried on in the interest of peace. Now, Sir, what was the answer of the French Government when, at last, England invited her to go to war to settle the question between Germany and Denmark? I will read the reply:

M. Drouyn de Lhuys, after recapitulating the substance of my dispatch of January 24 to your Excellency, explains very clearly the views of the French Government upon the subject. The Emperor recognizes the value of the London treaty as tending to preserve the balance of power and maintain the peace of Europe. But the Government of France, while paying a just tribute to the purport and objects of the treaty of 1852, is ready to admit that circumstances may require its modification. The Emperor has always been disposed to pay great regard to the feelings and aspirations of nationalities. It is not to be denied that the national feelings and aspirations of Germany tend to a closer connexion with the Germans of Holstein and Schleswig. The Emperor would feel repugnance to any course which should bind him to oppose in arms the wishes of Germany. It may be comparatively easy for England to carry on a war which can never go beyond the maritime operations of blockade and capture of ships. Schleswig and England are far apart from each other. But the soil of Germany touches the soil of France, and a war between France and Germany would be one of the most burdensome and one of the most hazardous which the French Empire

could engage. Besides these considerations, the Emperor cannot fail to recollect that he has been made an object of mistrust and suspicion in Europe on account of his supposed projects of aggrandizement on the Rhine. A war commenced on the frontiers of Germany would not fail to give strength to these unfounded and unwarrantable imputations. For these reasons, the Government of the Emperor will not take at present any engagement on the subject of Denmark. If, hereafter, the balance of power should be seriously threatened, the Emperor may be inclined to take new measures in the interest of France and of Europe. But for the present the Emperor reserves to his Government entire liberty. (No. 4, 620.)

Well, Sir, I should think that, after the reception of that dispatch, though it might have been very hard to convince the Foreign Secretary of the fact, any other person might easily have suspected that the just influence of England was lowered in another quarter of Europe.

Sir, I have now brought events to the period when Parliament met, trespassing, I fear, too much on the indulgence of the House; but honourable members will remember that, in order to give this narrative to-day, it was necessary for me to peruse 1,500 printed folio pages, and I trust I have done no more than advert to those passages to which it was requisite to direct attention in order that the House might form a complete and candid opinion of the case. I will not dwell, or only for the slightest possible time, on what occurred upon the meeting of Parliament. Sir, when we met there were no papers; and I remember that when I asked for papers there was not, I will frankly say, on both sides of the House, a sufficient sense of the very great importance of the occasion, and of the singular circumstance that the papers were not presented to us. It turned out afterwards from

what fell from the Secretary of State in another place, that it was never intended that the papers should be presented at the meeting of Parliament. The noble lord at the head of the Government treated the inquiry for papers in a jaunty way, and said, 'Oh! you shall have papers, and I wish you joy of them.' That was the tone of the First Minister in reference to the most important diplomatic correspondence ever laid before Parliament since the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens: but we are all now aware of the importance of these transactions. It was weeks—months almost—before we became masters of the case, but during the interval the most disastrous circumstances occurred, showing the increased peril and danger of Denmark, and the successes of the invaders of her territory. We all remember their entrance into Jutland. We all remember the inquiries which were made on the subject, and the assurances which were given. But it was impossible for the House to pronounce any opinion, because the papers were not before it, and the moment we had the papers, a Conference was announced.

One word with respect to the Conference. I never was of opinion that the Conference would arrive at any advantageous result. I could not persuade myself, after reading the papers, that, whatever might be the cause, any one seriously wished for a settlement, except, of course, Her Majesty's Ministers, and they had a reason for it. The Conference lasted six weeks. It wasted six weeks. It lasted as long as a carnival, and, like a carnival, it was an affair of masks and mystification. Our Ministers went to it as men in distressed circumstances go to a place of amusement—to while away

the time, with a consciousness of impending failure. However, the summary of the Conference is this, that Her Majesty's Government made two considerable proposals. They proposed, first, the dismemberment of Denmark. So much for its integrity. They proposed, in the second place, that the remainder of Denmark should be placed under the joint guarantee of the Great Powers. They would have created another Turkey in Europe, in the same geographical relation, the scene of the same rival intrigues, and the same fertile source of constant misconceptions and wars. So much for the independence of Denmark. These two propositions having been made, the one disastrous to the integrity and the other to the independence of Denmark, the Conference, even with these sacrifices offered, was a barren failure.

And I now wish to ask—after having, I hope, with some clearness and in a manner tolerably comprehensive, placed the case before honourable members—what is their opinion of the management of these affairs by Her Majesty's Government? I showed you that the beginning of this interference was a treaty by which England entered into obligations as regards Denmark not different from those of France. I have shown you, on the evidence of the Secretary of State, that the present position of France with respect to Denmark is one quite magnanimous, free from all difficulties and disgrace. I have shown you, I think, what every man indeed feels, that the position of England under this treaty, on the contrary, is most embarrassing, surrounded with difficulties, and full of humiliation. I have stated my opinion that the difference between the position

of England and that of France arose from the mismanagement of our affairs. That appeared to me to be the natural inference and logical deduction. I have given you a narrative of the manner in which our affairs have been conducted, and now I ask you what is your opinion? Do you see in the management of those affairs that capacity, and especially that kind of capacity that is adequate to the occasion? Do you find in it that sagacity, prudence, that dexterity, that quickness of perception, and those conciliatory moods which we are always taught to believe necessary in the transaction of our foreign affairs? Is there to be seen that knowledge of human nature, and especially that peculiar kind of science, most necessary in these affairs—an acquaintance with the character of foreign countries and of the chief actors in the scene?

Sir, for my part I find all these qualities wanting; and in consequence of the want of these qualities, I see that three results have accrued. The first is that the avowed policy of Her Majesty's Government has failed. The second is, that our just influence in the councils of Europe has been lowered. Thirdly, in consequence of our just influence in the councils of Europe being lowered, the securities for peace are diminished. These are three results which have followed in consequence of the want of the qualities to which I have alluded, and in consequence of the management of these affairs by the Government. Sir, I need not, I think, trouble the House with demonstrating that the Government have failed in their avowed policy of upholding the independence and integrity of Denmark. The first result may be thrown aside. I come therefore to

the second. By the just influence of England in the councils of Europe I mean an influence contradistinguished from that which is obtained by intrigue and secret understanding; I mean an influence that results from the conviction of foreign Powers that our resources are great and that our policy is moderate and steadfast. Since the settlement that followed the great revolutionary war, England, who obtained at that time—as she deserved to do, for she bore the brunt of the struggle—who obtained at that time all the fair objects of her ambition, has on the whole followed a Conservative foreign policy. I do not mean by Conservative foreign policy a foreign policy that would disapprove—still less oppose—the natural development of nations. I mean a foreign policy interested in the tranquillity and prosperity of the world, the normal condition of which is peace, and which does not ally itself with the revolutionary party of Europe. Other countries have their political systems and public objects, as England had, though they may not have attained them. She is not to look upon them with unreasonable jealousy. The position of England in the councils of Europe is essentially that of a moderating and mediatorial Power. Her interest and her policy are, when changes are inevitable and necessary, to assist so that these changes, if possible, may be accomplished without war, or, if war occurs, that its duration and asperity may be lessened. This is what I mean by the just influence of England in the councils of Europe. It appears to me that just influence of England in the councils of Europe has been lowered. Within twelve months we have been twice repulsed at St. Peters-

burg. Twice have we supplicated in vain at Paris. We have menaced Austria, and Austria has allowed our menaces to pass her like an idle wind. We have threatened Prussia, and Prussia has defied us. Our objurgations have rattled over the head of the German Diet, and the German Diet has treated them with contempt.

Again, Sir, during the last few months there is scarcely a form of diplomatic interference which has not been suggested or adopted by the English Government—except a Congress. Conferences at Vienna, at Paris, at London, all have been proposed; protocols, joint declarations, sole mediation, joint mediation, identic notes, sole notes, united notes—everything has been tried. Couriers from the Queen have been scouring Europe with the exuberant fertility of abortive projects. After the termination of the most important Conference, held in the capital of the Queen, over which the chief Minister of Her Majesty's foreign relations presided, and which was attended with all the pomp and ceremony requisite for so great an occasion, we find that its sittings have been perfectly barren; and the chief Ministers of the Cabinet closed the proceedings by quitting the scene of their exertions and appearing in the two Houses of Parliament to tell the country that they have no allies, and that, as they have no allies, they can do nothing. Pardon me, I must not omit to do justice to the exulting boast of the Secretary of State, who, in the midst of discomfiture, finds solace in the sympathy and politeness of the neutral Powers. I do not grudge Lord Russell the sighs of Russia or the smiles of France; but I regret that, with characteristic discretion, he should have quitted

the battle of the Conference only to take his seat in the House of Lords to denounce the perfidy of Prussia, and to mourn over Austrian fickleness. There wanted but one touch to complete the picture, and it was supplied by the noble lord, the First Minister.

Sir, I listened with astonishment—I listened with astonishment as the noble lord condemned the vices of his victim, and inveighed at the last moment against the obstinacy of unhappy Denmark. Denmark would not submit to arbitration. But on what conditions did the German Powers accept it? And what security had Denmark? That if in the Conference she could not obtain an assurance that the neutral Powers would support her by force on the line of the Schlei—what security, I say, had she that any other line would be maintained—an unknown line by an unknown arbiter? Sir, it does appear to me impossible to deny, under these circumstances, that the just influence of England in the councils of Europe is lowered. And now, I ask, what are the consequences of the just influence of England in the councils of Europe being lowered? The consequences are—to use a familiar phrase in the dispatches—'most serious', because in exact proportion as that influence is lowered the securities for peace are diminished. I lay this down as a great principle, which cannot be controverted, in the management of our foreign affairs. If England is resolved upon a particular policy, war is not probable. If there is, under these circumstances, a cordial alliance between England and France, war is most difficult; but if there is a thorough understanding between England, France, and Russia, war is impossible.

These were the happy conditions under which Her Majesty's Ministers entered office, and which they enjoyed when they began to move in the question of Denmark. Two years ago, and even less, there was a cordial understanding between England, France, and Russia upon this question or any question which might arise between Germany and Denmark. What cards to play! What advantages in the management of affairs! It seemed, indeed, that they might reasonably look forward to a future which would justify the confidence of Parliament; when they might point with pride to what they had accomplished, and appeal to public opinion to support them. But what has happened? They have alienated Russia, they have estranged France, and then they call Parliament together to declare war against Germany. Why, such a thing never happened before in the history of this country. Nay, more, I do not think it can ever happen again. It is one of those portentous results which occur now and then to humiliate and depress the pride of nations, and to lower our confidence in human intellect. Well, Sir, as the difficulties increase, as the obstacles are multiplied, as the consequences of the perpetual errors and constant mistakes are gradually becoming more apparent, you always find Her Majesty's Government nearer war. As in private life we know it is the weak who are always violent, so it is with Her Majesty's Ministers. As long as they are confident in their allies, as long as they possess the cordial sympathy of the Great Powers, they speak with moderation, they counsel with dignity; but, like all incompetent men, when they are in extreme difficulty, they can see but one resource,

and that is force. When affairs cannot be arranged in peace you see them turning first to St. Petersburg —that was a bold dispatch which was sent to St. Petersburg in January last, to ask Russia to declare war against Germany—and twice to Paris, entreating that violence may be used to extricate them from the consequences of their own mistakes. It is only by giving Government credit, as I have been doing throughout, for the complete sincerity of their expressions and conduct, that their behaviour is explicable. Assume that their policy was a war policy, and it is quite intelligible. Whenever difficulties arise, their resolution is instantly to have recourse to violence. Every word they utter, every dispatch they write, seems always to look to a scene of collision. What is the state of Europe at this moment? What is the state of Europe produced by this management of our affairs? I know not what other honourable gentlemen may think, but it appears to me most serious. I find the great German Powers openly avowing that it is not in their capacity to fulfil their engagements. I find Europe impotent to vindicate public law because all the great alliances are broken down; and I find a proud and generous nation like England shrinking with the reserve of magnanimity from the responsibility of commencing war, yet sensitively smarting under the impression that her honour is stained—stained by pledges which ought not to have been given, and expectations which I maintain ought never to have been held out by wise and competent statesmen.

Sir, this is anarchy. It therefore appears to me obvious that Her Majesty's Government have failed in their avowed policy of maintaining the independence and integrity of Denmark. It appears

to me undeniable that the just influence of England is lowered in the councils of Europe. It appears to me too painfully clear that to lower our influence is to diminish the securities of peace. And what defence have we? If ever a criticism is made on his ambiguous conduct the noble lord asks me, 'What is your policy?' My answer might be my policy is the honour of England and the peace of Europe, and the noble lord has betrayed both. I can understand a Minister coming to Parliament when there is a question of domestic interest of the highest character for consideration, such as the emancipation of the Catholics, the principles on which our commercial code is to be established, or our representative system founded. I can quite understand—although I should deem it a very weak step—a Minister saying, 'Such questions are open questions, and we leave it to Parliament to decide what is to be our policy.' Parliament is in possession of all the information on such subjects that is necessary or can be obtained. Parliament is as competent to come to a judgement upon the emancipation of any part of our subjects who are not in possession of the privileges to which they are entitled; the principles on which a commercial code is to be established or a representative system founded are as well known to them as to any body of men in the world; but it is quite a new doctrine to appeal to Parliament to initiate a foreign policy.

To initiate a foreign policy is the prerogative of the Crown, exercised under the responsibility of constitutional Ministers. It is devised, initiated, and carried out in secrecy, and justly and wisely so. What do we know as to what may be going on

in Downing Street at this moment? We know not what dispatches may have been written, or what proposals may have been made to any foreign Power. For aught I know, the noble lord this morning may have made another proposition which might light up a general European war. It is for Parliament to inquire, to criticize, to support, or condemn in questions of foreign policy; but it is not for Parliament to initiate a foreign policy in absolute ignorance of the state of affairs. That would be to ask a man to set his house on fire. I will go further. He is not a wise, I am sure he is not a patriotic, man who, at a crisis like the present, would accept office on conditions. What conditions could be made when we are in ignorance of our real state? Any conditions we could offer in a vote of the House of Commons carried upon a particular point might be found extremely unwise when we were placed in possession of the real position of the country. No, Sir, we must not allow Her Majesty's Government to escape from their responsibility. That is at the bottom of all their demands when they ask, 'What is your policy?' The very first night we met—on February 4—we had the same question. Parliament was called together by a Ministry in distress to give them a policy. But Parliament maintained a dignified and discreet reserve: and you now find in what a position the Ministry are placed to-night.

Sir, it is not for any man in this House, on whatever side he sits, to indicate the policy of this country in our foreign relations—it is the duty of no one but the responsible Ministers of the Crown. The most we can do is to tell the noble lord what

is not our policy. We will not threaten and then refuse to act. We will not lure on our allies with expectations we do not fulfil. And, Sir, if it ever be the lot of myself or any public men with whom I have the honour to act to carry on important negotiations on behalf of this country, as the noble lord and his colleagues have done, I trust that we at least shall not carry them on in such a manner that it will be our duty to come to Parliament to announce to the country that we have no allies, and then declare that England can never act alone. Sir, those are words which ought never to have escaped the lips of a British Minister. They are sentiments which ought never to have occurred even to his heart. I repudiate, I reject them. I remember there was a time when England, with not a tithe of her present resources, inspired by a patriotic cause, triumphantly encountered a world in arms. And, Sir, I believe now, if the occasion were fitting, if her independence or her honour were assailed, or her empire in danger, I believe that England would rise in the magnificence of her might, and struggle triumphantly for those objects for which men live and nations flourish. But I, for one, will never consent to go to war to extricate Ministers from the consequences of their own mistakes. It is in this spirit that I have drawn up this Address to the Crown. I have drawn it up in the spirit in which the Royal Speech was delivered at the commencement of the session. I am ready to vindicate the honour of the country whenever it is necessary, but I have drawn up this Address in the interest of peace. Sir, I beg leave to move the resolution of which I have given notice.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

JULY 18, 1878

BERLIN TREATY

MY LORDS, in laying on the Table of your Lordships' House, as I am about to do, the Protocols of the Congress of Berlin, I have thought I should only be doing my duty to your Lordships' House, to Parliament generally, and to the country, if I made some remarks on the policy which was supported by the Representatives of Her Majesty at the Congress, and which is embodied in the Treaty of Berlin and in the Convention which was placed on your Lordships' Table during my absence.

My Lords, you are aware that the Treaty of San Stefano was looked on with much distrust and alarm by Her Majesty's Government—that they believed it was calculated to bring about a state of affairs dangerous to European independence, and injurious to the interests of the British Empire. Our impeachment of that policy is before your Lordships and the country, and is contained in the Circular of my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in April last. Our present contention is that we can show that, by the changes and modifications which have been made in the Treaty of San Stefano by the Congress

of Berlin and by the Convention of Constantinople, the menace to European independence has been removed, and the threatened injury to the British Empire has been averted. Your Lordships will recollect that by the Treaty of San Stefano about one-half of Turkey in Europe was formed into a State called Bulgaria—a State consisting of upwards of 50,000 geographical square miles, and containing a population of 4,000,000, with harbours on either sea—both on the shores of the Euxine and of the Archipelago. That disposition of territory severed Constantinople and the limited district which was still spared to the possessors of that city—severed it from the Provinces of Macedonia and Thrace by Bulgaria descending to the very shores of the Aegean; and, altogether, a State was formed, which, both from its natural resources and its peculiarly favourable geographical position, must necessarily have exercised a predominant influence over the political and commercial interests of that part of the world. The remaining portion of Turkey in Europe was reduced also to a considerable degree by affording what was called compensation to previous rebellious tributary Principalities, which have now become independent States—so that the general result of the Treaty of San Stefano was, that while it spared the authority of the Sultan so far as his capital and its immediate vicinity, it reduced him to a state of subjection to the Great Power which had defeated his Armies, and which was present at the gates of his capital. Accordingly, though it might be said that he still seemed to be invested with one of the highest functions of public duty—the protection and custody of the Straits—it was

apparent that his authority in that respect could be exercised by him only in deference to the superior Power which had vanquished him, and to whom the proposed arrangements would have kept him in subjection. My Lords, in these matters the Congress of Berlin have made great changes. They have restored to the Sultan two-thirds of the territory which was to have formed the great Bulgarian State. They have restored to him upwards of 30,000 geographical square miles, and 2,500,000 of population—that territory being the richest in the Balkans, where most of the land is rich, and the population one of the wealthiest, most ingenious, and most loyal of his subjects. The frontiers of his State have been pushed forward from the mere environs of Salonica and Adrianople to the lines of the Balkans and Trajan's Pass; the new Principality, which was to exercise such an influence, and produce a revolution in the disposition of the territory and policy of that part of the globe is now merely a State in the Valley of the Danube, and both in its extent and its population is reduced to one-third of what was contemplated by the Treaty of San Stefano. My Lords, it has been said that while the Congress of Berlin decided upon a policy so bold as that of declaring the range of the Balkans as the frontier of what may now be called New Turkey, they have, in fact, furnished it with a frontier which, instead of being impregnable, is in some parts undefended, and is altogether one of an inadequate character. My Lords, it is very difficult to decide, so far as nature is concerned, whether any combination of circumstances can ever be brought about which would furnish

what is called an impregnable frontier. Whether it be river, desert, or mountainous range, it will be found, in the long run, that the impregnability of a frontier must be supplied by the vital spirit of man; and that it is by the courage, discipline, patriotism, and devotion of a population that impregnable frontiers can alone be formed. And, my Lords, when I remember what race of men it was that created and defended Plevna, I must confess my confidence that, if the cause be a good one, they will not easily find that the frontier of the Balkans is indefensible. But it is said that although the Congress has furnished—and it pretended to furnish nothing more—a competent military frontier to Turkey, the disposition was so ill managed, that, at the same time, it failed to secure an effective barrier—that in devising the frontier, it so arranged matters that this very line of the Balkans may be turned. The Congress has been charged with having committed one of the greatest blunders that could possibly have been accomplished by leaving Sofia in the possession of a Power really independent of Turkey, and one which, in the course of time, might become hostile to Turkey. My Lords, this is, in my opinion, an error on the part of those who furnish information of an authentic character to the different populations of Europe, who naturally desire to have correct information on such matters. It is said that the position of Sofia is of a commanding character, and that of its value the Congress were not aware, and that it was yielded to an imperious demand on the part of one of the Powers represented at the Congress. My Lords, I can assure your Lordships that there is not a shadow of

truth in the statement. I shall show that when the Congress resolved to establish the line of the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey, they felt that there would have been no difficulty, as a matter of course, in Turkey retaining the possession of Sofia. What happened was this. The highest military authority of the Turks—so I think I may describe him—was one of the Plenipotentiaries at the Congress of the Porte—I allude to Mehemet Ali Pasha. Well, the moment the line of the Balkans was spoken of, he brought under the notice of his Colleagues at the Conference—and especially, I may say, of the Plenipotentiaries of England—his views on the subject; and, speaking as he did not only with military authority, but also with consummate acquaintance with all these localities, he said nothing could be more erroneous than the idea that Sofia was a strong strategical position, and that those who possessed it would immediately turn the Balkans and march on Constantinople. He said that as a strategical position it was worthless, but that there was a position in the Sandjak of Sofia which, if properly defended, might be regarded as impregnable, and that was the Pass of Ichtiman. He thought it of vital importance to the Sultan that that position should be secured to Turkey, as then His Majesty would have an efficient defence to his capital.

That position was secured. It is a pass which, if properly defended, will prevent any host, however powerful, from taking Constantinople by turning the Balkans. But, in consequence of that arrangement, it became the duty of the Plenipotentiaries to see what would be the best arrangement in regard of Sofia and its immediate districts. The

population of Sofia and its district are, I believe, without exception, Bulgarian, and it was thought wise, they being Bulgarians, that, if possible, it should be included in Bulgaria. That was accomplished by exchanging it for a district in which the population, if not exclusively, are numerically, Mohammedan, and which, so far as the fertility of the land is concerned, is an exchange highly to the advantage of the Porte. That, my Lords, is a short account of an arrangement which I know has for a month past given rise in Europe, and especially in this country, to a belief that it was in deference to Russia that Sofia was not retained, and that by its not having been retained Turkey had lost the means of defending herself, in the event of her being again plunged into war.

My Lords, it has also been said, with regard to the line of the Balkans, that it was not merely in respect of the possession of Sofia that an error was committed, but that the Congress made a great mistake in not retaining Varna. My Lords, I know that there are in this Assembly many Members who have recollections—glorious recollections—of that locality. They will know at once that if the line of the Balkans were established as the frontier, it would be impossible to include Varna, which is to the North of the Balkans. Varna itself is not a place of importance, and only became so in connexion with a system of fortifications which are now to be razed. No doubt, in connexion with a line of strongholds, Varna formed a part of a system of defence; but of itself Varna is not a place of importance. Of itself it is only a roadstead, and those who dwell upon the importance of Varna and consider that it was

a great error on the part of the Congress not to have secured it for Turkey, quite forget that between the Bosphorus and Varna, upon the coast of the Black Sea, the Congress has allotted to Turkey a much more important point on the Black Sea—the harbour of Burgos. My Lords, I think I have shown that the charges made against the Congress on these three grounds—the frontiers of the Balkans, the non-retention of Sofia, and the giving up of Varna—have no foundation whatever.

Well, my Lords, having established the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey in Europe, the Congress resolved that South of the Balkans, to a certain extent, the country should be formed into a Province to which should be given the name of Eastern Roumelia. At one time it was proposed by some to call it South Bulgaria; but it was manifest that with such a name between it and North Bulgaria there would be constant intriguing to bring about a union between the two Provinces. We, therefore, thought that the Province of East Roumelia should be formed, and that there should be established in it a Government somewhat different from that of contiguous provinces where the authority of the Sultan might be more unlimited. I am not myself of opinion that, as a general rule, it is wise to interfere with a military Power which you acknowledge; but, though it might have been erroneous, as a political principle, to limit the military authority of the Sultan, yet there are in this world other things besides political principles—there are such things as historical facts, and he would not be a prudent statesman who did not take into consideration historical facts as well

as political principles. The province which we have formed into Eastern Roumelia had been the scene of many excesses, by parties on both sides, to which human nature looks with deep regret; and it was thought advisable, in making these arrangements for the peace of Europe, that we should take steps to prevent the probable recurrence of such events. Yet to do this, and not give the Sultan a direct military authority in the province, would have been, in our opinion, a grievous error. We have, therefore, decided that the Sultan should have the power to defend the barrier of the Balkans with all his available force. He has power to defend his frontiers by land and by sea, both by the passes of the mountains and the ports and strongholds of the Black Sea. No limit has been placed on the amount of force he may bring to bear with that object. No one can dictate to him what the amount of that force shall be; but, in respect to the interior and the internal government of the province, we thought the time had arrived when we should endeavour to carry into effect some of those important proposals intended for the better administration of the States of the Sultan, which were discussed and projected at the Conference of Constantinople.

My Lords, I will not enter into any minute details on these questions. They might weary you at this moment, and I have several other matters on which I must yet touch; but, generally speaking, I imagine there are three great points which we shall have before us in any attempt to improve the administration of Turkish Dominion. First of all, it is most important—and we have so established it in Eastern Roumelia—that the office of Governor

shall be for a specific period, and that, as in India, it should not be for less than five years. If that system generally obtained in the dominions of the Sultan, I believe it would be of incalculable benefit. Secondly, we thought it desirable that there should be instituted public assemblies, in which the popular element should be adequately represented, and that the business of those assemblies should be to levy and administer the local finances of the province. And, thirdly, we thought it equally important that order should be maintained in this province, either by a *gendarmerie* of adequate force or by a local militia, in both cases the officers holding their commissions from the Sultan. But the whole subject of the administration of Eastern Roumelia has been referred to an Imperial Commission at Constantinople, and this Commission, after making its investigations, will submit recommendations to the Sultan, who will issue Firmans to carry those recommendations into effect. I may mention here—as it may save time—that in all the arrangements which have been made to improve the condition of the subject-races of Turkey in Europe, inquiry by local commissions in all cases where investigation may be necessary is contemplated. Those commissions are to report their results to the Chief Commission; and, after the Firman of the Sultan has been issued, the changes will take place. It is supposed that in the course of three months from the time of the ratification of the Treaty of Berlin, the principal arrangements may be effected.

My Lords, I may now state what has been effected by the Congress in respect of Bosnia—that being a point on which I think considerable

error prevails. One of the most difficult matters we had to encounter in attempting what was the object of the Congress of Berlin—namely, to re-establish the Sultan as a real and substantial authority—was the condition of some of his distant provinces, and especially of Bosnia. The state of Bosnia, and of those provinces and principalities contiguous to it, was one of chronic anarchy. There is no language which can describe adequately the condition of that large portion of the Balkan peninsula occupied by Roumania, Servia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and other provinces. Political intrigues, constant rivalries, a total absence of all public spirit, and of the pursuit of objects which patriotic minds would wish to accomplish, the hatred of races, the animosities of rival religions, and, above all, the absence of any controlling power that could keep these large districts in anything like order—such were the sad truths, which no one who has investigated the subject could resist for a moment. Hitherto—at least until within the last two years—Turkey had some semblance of authority which, though it was rarely adequate, and when adequate, was unwisely exercised, still was an authority to which the injured could appeal, and which sometimes might control violence. But the Turkey of the present time was in no condition to exercise that authority. I inquired into the matter of those most competent to give an opinion, and the result of my investigation was a conviction that nothing short of an army of 50,000 men of the best troops of Turkey would produce anything like order in those parts, and that, were the attempt to be made, it would be contested and resisted, and might finally be

defeated. But what was to be said at a time when all the statesmen of Europe were attempting to concentrate and condense the resources of the Porte with the view of strengthening them—what would have been the position of the Porte if it had to commence its new career—a career, it is to be hoped, of amelioration and tranquillity—by dispatching a large army to Bosnia to deal with those elements of difficulty and danger? It is quite clear, my Lords, that such an effort at this moment by Turkey might bring about its absolute ruin. Then what was to be done? There have been before, in the history of diplomacy, not unfrequent instances in which, even in civilized parts of the globe, States having fallen into decrepitude, have afforded no assistance to keep order and tranquillity, and have become, as these districts have become, a source of danger to their neighbours. Under such circumstances, the Powers of Europe have generally looked to see whether there was any neighbouring Power of a character entirely different from those disturbed and desolated regions, but deeply interested in their welfare and prosperity, who would undertake the task of attempting to restore their tranquillity and prosperity. In the present case, you will see that the position of Austria is one that clearly indicates her as fitted to undertake such an office. It is not the first time that Austria has occupied provinces at the request of Europe to ensure that order and tranquillity, which are European interests, might prevail in them. Not once, twice, or thrice has Austria undertaken such an office. There may be differences of opinion as to the policy on which Austria has acted, or as to

the principles of government which she has maintained ; but that has nothing to do with the fact that, under circumstances similar to those which I have described as existing in Bosnia and the provinces contiguous to it, Austria has been invited and has interfered in the manner I have described, and has brought about order and tranquillity. Austria, in the present case, was deeply interested that some arrangement should be made. Austria, for now nearly three years, has had upwards of 150,000 refugees from Bosnia, which have been supported by her resources, and whose demands notoriously have been of a vexatious and exhausting character. It was, therefore, thought expedient by the Congress that Austria should be invited to occupy Bosnia, and not to leave it until she had deeply laid the foundations of tranquillity and order. My Lords, I am the last man who would wish, when objections are made to our proceedings, to veil them under the decision of the Congress ; it was a decision which the Plenipotentiaries of England highly approved. It was a proposal which, as your Lordships will see when you refer to the Protocols which I shall lay on the table to-night, was made by my noble friend the Secretary of State, that Austria should accept this trust and fulfil this duty ; and I earnestly supported him on that occasion. My Lords, in consequence of that arrangement, cries have been raised against our ' partition of Turkey '. My Lords, our object has been directly the reverse —our object has been to prevent partition. The question of partition is one upon which, it appears to me, very erroneous ideas are in circulation. Some two years ago—before, I think, the war had

commenced, but when the disquietude and dangers of the situation were very generally felt—there was a school of statesmen who were highly in favour of what they believed to be the only remedy—what they called the partition of Turkey. Those who did not agree with them were those who thought we should, on the whole, attempt the restoration of Turkey. Her Majesty's Government at all times have resisted the partition of Turkey. They have done so, because, exclusive of the high moral considerations that are mixed up with the subject, they believed an attempt, on a great scale, to accomplish the partition of Turkey would inevitably lead to a long, a sanguinary, and often recurring struggle, and that Europe and Asia would both be involved in a series of troubles and sources of disaster and danger of which no adequate idea could be formed.

These professors of partition—quite secure, no doubt, in their own views—have freely spoken to us on this subject. We have been taken up to a high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the earth, and they have said—'All these shall be yours if you will worship Partition.' But we have declined to do so for the reasons I have shortly given. And it is a remarkable circumstance that after the great war, and after the prolonged diplomatic negotiations, which lasted during nearly a period of three years, on this matter, the whole Powers of Europe, including Russia, have strictly, and as completely as ever, come to the unanimous conclusion that the best chance for the tranquillity and order of the world is to retain the Sultan as part of the acknowledged political system of Europe. My Lords,

unquestionably after a great war—and I call the late war a great war, because the greatness of a war now must not be calculated by its duration, but by the amount of the forces brought into the field, and where a million of men have struggled for supremacy, as has been the case recently, I call that a great war—but, I say, after a great war like this, it is utterly impossible that you can have a settlement of any permanent character without a redistribution of territory and considerable changes. But that is not partition. My Lords, a country may have lost provinces, but that is not partition. We know that not very long ago a great country—one of the foremost countries of the world—lost provinces; yet, is not France one of the Great Powers of the world, and with a future—a commanding future? Austria herself has lost provinces—more provinces even than Turkey, perhaps; even England has lost provinces—the most precious possessions—the loss of which every Englishman must deplore to this moment. We lost them from bad government. Had the principles which now obtain between the metropolis and her dependencies prevailed then, we should not, perhaps, have lost those provinces, and the power of this Empire would have been proportionally increased. It is perfectly true that the Sultan of Turkey has lost provinces; it is true that his armies have been defeated; it is true that his enemy is even now at his gates; but all that has happened to other Powers. But a sovereign who has not yet forfeited his capital, whose capital has not been occupied by his enemy—and that capital one of the strongest in the world—who has armies

and fleets at his disposal, and who still rules over 20,000,000 of inhabitants, cannot be described as a Power whose Dominions have been partitioned. My Lords, it has been said that no limit has been fixed to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria. Well, I think that was a very wise step. The moment you limit an occupation you deprive it of half its virtue. All those opposed to the principles which occupation was devised to foster and strengthen feel that they have only to hold their breath and wait a certain time, and the opportunity for their interference would again present itself. Therefore, I cannot agree with the objection which is made to the arrangement with regard to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria on the question of its duration.

My Lords, there is a point on which I feel it now my duty to trouble your Lordships, and that is the question of Greece. A severe charge has been made against the Congress, and particularly against the English Plenipotentiaries, for not having sufficiently attended to the interests and claims of Greece. My Lords, I think you will find, on reflection, that that charge is utterly unfounded. The English Government were the first that expressed the desire that Greece should be heard at the Congress. But, while they expressed that desire, they communicated confidentially to Greece that it must on no account associate that desire on the part of the Government with any engagement for the redistribution of territory. That was repeated, and not merely once repeated. The Greek inhabitants, apart from the kingdom of Greece, are a considerable element in the Turkish Empire, and it is of the

greatest importance that their interests should be sedulously attended to. One of the many evils of that large Slav State—the Bulgaria of the San Stefano treaty—was, that it would have absorbed, and made utterly to disappear from the earth, a considerable Greek population. At the Congress the Greeks were heard, and they were heard by representatives of considerable eloquence and ability; but it was quite clear, the moment they put their case before the Congress, that they had totally misapprehended the reason why the Congress had met together, and what were its objects and character. The Greek representatives, evidently, had not in any way relinquished what they call their great idea—and your Lordships well know that it is one that has no limit which does not reach as far as Constantinople. But they did mention at the Congress, as a practical people, and feeling that they had no chance of obtaining at that moment all they desired—that they were willing to accept as an instalment the two large provinces of Epirus and Thessaly, and the island of Crete. It was quite evident to the Congress, that the representatives of Greece utterly misunderstood the objects of our labours—that we were not there to partition Turkey, and give them their share of Turkey, but for a very contrary purpose—as far as we could to re-establish the dominion of the Sultan on a rational basis, to condense and concentrate his authority, and to take the opportunity—of which we have largely availed ourselves—of improving the condition of his subjects. I trust, therefore, when I have pointed out to your Lordships this cardinal error in the views of Greece, that your Lordships

will feel that the charge made against the Congress has no substantial foundation. But the interests of Greece were not neglected, and least of all by Her Majesty's Government. Before the Congress of Berlin, believing that there was an opportunity of which considerable advantage might be made for Greece without deviating into partition, we applied to the Porte to consider the long-vexed question of the boundaries of the two States. The boundaries of Greece have always been inadequate and inconvenient; they are so formed as to offer a premium to brigandage—which is the curse of both countries, and has led to misunderstanding and violent intercourse between the inhabitants of both. Now, when some redistribution—and a considerable redistribution—of territories was about to take place—now, we thought, was the opportunity for Greece to urge her claim; and that claim we were ready to support, and to reconcile the Porte to viewing it in a large and liberal manner. And I am bound to say that the manner in which our overtures were received by the Porte was encouraging, and more than encouraging. For a long period Her Majesty's Government have urged upon both countries, and especially upon Greece, the advantage of a good understanding between them. We urged that it was only by union between Turks and Greeks that any reaction could be obtained against that overpowering Slav interest which was then exercising such power in the Peninsula, and which had led to this fatal and disastrous war. More than this, on more than one occasion—I may say, on many occasions—we have been the means of preventing serious misunderstandings between

Turkey and Greece, and on every occasion we have received from both States an acknowledgement of our good offices. We were, therefore, in a position to assist Greece in this matter. But, of course, to give satisfaction to a State which coveted Constantinople for its capital, and which talked of accepting large provinces and a powerful island as only an instalment of its claims for the moment, was difficult. It was difficult to get the views of that Government accepted by Turkey, however inclined it might be to consider a reconstruction of frontiers on a large and liberal scale. My noble friend the Secretary of State did use all his influence, and the result was that, in my opinion, Greece has obtained a considerable accession of resources and strength. But we did not find, on the part of the representatives of Greece, that response or that sympathy which we should have desired. Their minds were in another quarter. But though the Congress could not meet such extravagant and inconsistent views as those urged by Greece—views which were not in any way within the scope of the Congress or the area of its duty—we have still, as will be found in the Treaty, or certainly in the Protocol, indicated what we believe to be a rectification of frontier, which would add considerably to the strength and resources of Greece. Therefore, I think, under all the circumstances, it will be acknowledged that Greece has not been neglected. Greece is a country so interesting that it enlists the sympathies of all educated men. Greece has a future, and I would say, if I might be permitted, to Greece, what I would say to an individual who has a future—'Learn to be patient.'

Now, my Lords, I have touched upon most of the points connected with Turkey in Europe. My summary is that at this moment—of course, no longer counting Servia or Roumania, once tributary principalities, as part of Turkey; not counting even the new Bulgaria, though it is a tributary principality, as part of Turkey; and that I may not be taunted with taking an element which I am hardly entitled to place in the calculation, omitting even Bosnia—European Turkey still remains a Dominion of 60,000 geographical square miles, with a population of 6,000,000, and that population in a very great degree concentrated and condensed in the provinces contiguous to the capital. My Lords, it was said, when the line of the Balkans was carried—and it was not carried until after long and agitating discussions—it was said by that illustrious statesman who presided over our labours, that 'Turkey in Europe once more exists'. My Lords, I do not think that, so far as European Turkey is concerned, this country has any right to complain of the decisions of the Congress, or, I would hope, of the labours of the Plenipotentiaries. You cannot look at the map of Turkey as it had been left by the Treaty of San Stefano, and as it has been rearranged by the Treaty of Berlin, without seeing that great results have accrued. If these results had been the consequences of a long war—if they had been the results of a struggle like that we underwent in the Crimea—I do not think they would have been even then unsubstantial or unsatisfactory. My Lords, I hope that you and the country will not forget that these results have been obtained without shedding the blood of a single Englishman; and if there has been some

expenditure, it has been an expenditure which, at least, has shown the resources and determination of this country. Had you entered into that war —for which you were prepared—and well prepared—probably in a month you would have exceeded the whole expenditure you have now incurred.

My Lords, I now ask you for a short time to quit Europe and to visit Asia, and consider the labours of the Congress in another quarter of the world. My Lords, you well know that the Russian arms met with great success in Asia, and that in the Treaty of San Stefano considerable territories were yielded by Turkey to Russia. In point of population, they may not appear to be of that importance that they are generally considered; because it is a fact which should be borne in mind that the population which was yielded to Russia by Turkey amounted only to about 250,000 souls; and, therefore, if you look to the question of population, and to the increase of strength to a State which depends on population, you would hardly believe that the acquisition of 250,000 new subjects is a sufficient return for the terrible military losses which inevitably must accrue from campaigns in that country. But although the amount of population was not considerable, the strength which the Russians acquired was of very different character. They obtained Kars by conquest—they obtained Ardahan—another stronghold—they obtained Bayazid — and the Valley of Alashkerd with the adjoining territory, which contain the great commercial routes in that part of the world. They also obtained the port of Batoum. Now, my Lords, the Congress of Berlin have so far sanctioned the

Treaty of San Stefano that, with the exception of Bayazid and the valley which I have mentioned—no doubt very important exceptions, and which were yielded by Russia to the views of the Congress—they have consented to the yielding of the places I have named to Russia. The Congress have so far approved the Treaty of San Stefano that they have sanctioned the retention by Russia of Kars and Batoum. Now the question arises—the Congress having come to that determination—was it a wise step on the part of the Plenipotentiaries of Her Majesty to agree to that decision? That is a question which may legitimately be asked. We might have broken up the Congress, and said, 'We will not consent to the retention of these places by Russia, and we will use our force to oblige her to yield them up.' Now, my Lords, I wish fairly to consider what was our position in this state of affairs. It is often argued as if Russia and England had been at war, and peace was negotiating between the two Powers. That was not the case. The rest of Europe were critics over a Treaty which was a real treaty that existed between Russia and Turkey. Turkey had given up Batoum, she had given up Kars and Ardahan, she had given up Bayazid. In an examination of the question, then, we must remember that Russia at this moment, so far as Europe is concerned, has acquired in Europe nothing but a very small portion of territory, occupied by 130,000 inhabitants. Well, she naturally expected to find some reward in her conquests in Armenia for the sacrifices which she had made. Well, my Lords, consider what those conquests are. There was the strong fort of Kars. We might have gone to war with Russia in order to

prevent her acquiring Kars and Batoum, and other places of less importance. The war would not have been, probably, a very short war. It would have been a very expensive war—and, like most wars, it would probably have ended in some compromise, and we should have got only half what we had struggled for. Let us look these two considerable points fairly in the face. Let us first of all take the great stronghold of Kars. Three times has Russia captured Kars. Three times, either by our influence or by other influences, it has been restored to Turkey. Were we to go to war for Kars and restore it to Turkey, and then to wait till the next misunderstanding between Russia and Turkey, when Kars should have been taken again? Was that an occasion of a *casus belli*? I do not think your Lordships would ever sanction a war carried on for such an object and under such circumstances.

Then, my Lords, look at the case of Batoum, of which your Lordships have heard so much. I should have been very glad if Batoum had remained in the possession of the Turks, on the general principle that the less we had reduced its territory in that particular portion of the globe, the better it would be as regards the prestige on which the influence of the Ottoman Porte much depends there. But let us see what is this Batoum of which you have heard so much? It is generally spoken of in society and in the world as if it were a sort of Portsmouth—whereas, in reality, it should rather be compared with Cowes. It will hold three considerable ships, and if it were packed like the London Docks, it might hold six; but in that case the danger, if the wind blew from the north, would be immense. You cannot increase the port sea-

ward; for though the water touching the shore is not absolutely fathomless, it is extremely deep, and you cannot make any artificial harbour or breakwater. Unquestionably, in the interior the port might be increased, but it can only be increased by first-rate engineers, and by the expenditure of millions of capital; and if we were to calculate the completion of the port by the precedents which exist in many countries, and certainly in the Black Sea, it would not be completed under half a century. Now is that a question for which England would be justified in going to war with Russia? My Lords, we have, therefore, thought it advisable not to grudge Russia those conquests that have been made —especially after obtaining the restoration of the town of Bayazid and its important district.

But it seemed to us the time had come when we ought to consider whether certain efforts should not be made to put an end to these perpetually recurring wars between the Porte and Russia, ending, it may be, sometimes apparently in comparatively insignificant results; but always terminating with one fatal consequence—namely, shaking to the centre the influence and the prestige of the Porte in Asia and diminishing its means of profitably and advantageously governing that country. My Lords, it seemed to us that as we had now taken, and as Europe generally had taken, so avowedly deep an interest in the welfare of the subjects of the Porte in Europe, the time had come when we ought to consider whether we could not do something which would improve the general condition of the dominions of the Sultan in Asia; and, instead of these most favoured portions of the globe every year being in a more forlorn and disadvan-

tageous position, whether it would not be possible to take some steps which would secure at least tranquillity and order; and, when tranquillity and order were secured, whether some opportunity might not be given to Europe to develop the resources of a country which Nature has made so rich and teeming. My Lords, we occupy with respect to this part of the world a peculiar position, which is shared by no other Power. Our Indian Empire is on every occasion on which these discussions occur, or these troubles occur, or these settlements occur—our Indian Empire is to England a source of grave anxiety, and the time appeared to have arrived when, if possible, we should terminate that anxiety. In all the questions connected with European Turkey we had the assistance and sympathy sometimes of all, and often of many, of the European Powers—because they were interested in the question who should possess Constantinople, and who should have the command of the Danube and the freedom of the Mediterranean. But when we came to considerations connected with our Oriental Empire itself, they naturally are not so generally interested as they are in those which relate to the European portion of the Dominions of the Porte, and we have to look to our own resources alone. There has been no want, on our part, of invitations to neutral Powers to join with us in preventing or in arresting war. Besides the great Treaty of Paris, there was the Tripartite Treaty, which, if acted upon, would have prevented war. But that treaty could not be acted upon, from the unwillingness of the parties to it to act; and therefore we must clearly perceive that if anything could be effectually arranged, as

far as our Oriental Empire is concerned, the arrangements must be made by ourselves. Now, this was the origin of that Convention at Constantinople which is on your Lordship's table, and in that Convention our object was not merely a military or chiefly a military object. Our object was to place this country certainly in a position in which its advice and in which its conduct might at least have the advantage of being connected with a military power and with that force which it is necessary to possess often in great transactions, though you may not fortunately feel that it is necessary to have recourse to that force. Our object in entering into that arrangement with Turkey was, as I said before, to produce tranquillity and order. When tranquillity and order were produced, we believed that the time would come when the energy and enterprise of Europe might be invited to what really is another Continent, as far as the experience of man is concerned, and that its development will add greatly not merely to the wealth and the prosperity of the inhabitants, but to the wealth and prosperity of Europe. My Lords, I am surprised to hear—for though I have not heard it myself from any authority, it is so generally in men's mouths that I am bound to notice it—that the step we have taken should be represented as one that is calculated to excite the suspicion or enmity of any of our Allies, or of any State. My Lords, I am convinced that when a little time has elapsed, and when people are better acquainted with this subject than they are at present, no one will accuse England of having acted in this matter but with frankness and consideration for other Powers. And if there be a Power in existence to which we have

endeavoured to show most consideration from particular circumstances in this matter it is France. There is no step of this kind that I would take without considering the effect it might have upon the feelings of France—a nation to whom we are bound by almost every tie that can unite a people, and with whom our intimacy is daily increasing. If there could be any step which of all others was least calculated to excite the suspicion of France it would appear to be this—because we avoided Egypt, knowing how susceptible France is with regard to Egypt; we avoided Syria, knowing how susceptible France is on the subject of Syria; and we avoided availing ourselves of any part of the *terra firma*, because we would not hurt the feelings or excite the suspicions of France. France knows that for the last two or three years we have listened to no appeal which involved anything like an acquisition of territory, because the territory which might have come to us would have been territory which France would see in our hands with suspicion and dislike. But I must make this observation to your Lordships. We have a substantial interest in the East; it is a commanding interest, and its behest must be obeyed. But the interest of France in Egypt, and her interest in Syria are, as she acknowledges, sentimental and traditionary interests; and, although I respect them, I wish to see in the Lebanon and in Egypt the influence of France fairly and justly maintained, and although her officers and ours in that part of the world—and especially in Egypt—are acting together with confidence and trust, we must remember that our connexion with the East is not merely an affair of sentiment and tradition, but that we have urgent and substantial

and enormous interests which we must guard and keep. Therefore, when we find that the progress of Russia is a progress which, whatever may be the intentions of Russia, necessarily in that part of the world produces such a state of disorganization and want of confidence in the Porte, it comes to this—that if we do not interfere in the vindication of our own interests, that part of Asia must become the victim of anarchy, and ultimately become part of the possessions of Russia.

Now, my Lords, I have ventured to review the chief points connected with the subject on which I wished to address you—namely, what was the policy pursued by us, both at the Congress of Berlin and in the Convention of Constantinople. I am told, indeed, that we have incurred an awful responsibility by the Convention into which we have entered. My Lords, a prudent Minister certainly would not recklessly enter into any responsibility; but a Minister who is afraid to enter into responsibility is, to my mind, not a prudent Minister. We do not, my Lords, wish to enter into any unnecessary responsibility; but there is one responsibility from which we certainly shrink; we shrink from the responsibility of handing to our successors a diminished or a weakened Empire. Our opinion is that the course we have taken will arrest the great evils which are destroying Asia Minor and the equally rich countries beyond. We see in the present state of affairs the Porte losing its influence over its subjects; we see a certainty, in our opinion, of increasing anarchy, of the dissolution of all those ties which, though feeble, yet still exist and which have kept society together in those countries. We see the inevitable result of

such a state of things, and we cannot blame Russia for availing herself of it. But, yielding to Russia what she has obtained, we say to her—'Thus far, and no farther.' Asia is large enough for both of us. There is no reason for these constant wars, or fears of wars, between Russia and England. Before the circumstances which led to the recent disastrous war, when none of those events which we have seen agitating the world had occurred, and when we were speaking in 'another place' of the conduct of Russia in Central Asia, I vindicated that conduct, which I thought was unjustly attacked, and I said then, what I repeat now—there is room enough for Russia and England in Asia. But the room that we require we must secure. We have, therefore, entered into an alliance—a defensive alliance—with Turkey, to guard her against any further attack from Russia. We believe that the result of this Convention will be order and tranquillity. And then it will be for Europe—for we ask no exclusive privileges or commercial advantages—it will then be for Europe to assist England in availing ourselves of the wealth which has been so long neglected and undeveloped in regions once so fertile and so favoured. We are told, as I have said before, that we are undertaking great responsibilities. From those responsibilities we do not shrink. We think that, with prudence and discretion, we shall bring about a state of affairs as advantageous for Europe as for ourselves; and in that conviction we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the act which we have recommended is one that leads to trouble and to warfare. No, my Lords. I am sure there will be no jealousy between England and France upon this subject.

In taking Cyprus the movement is not Mediterranean; it is Indian. We have taken a step there which we think necessary for the maintenance of our Empire and for its preservation in peace. If that be our first consideration, our next is the development of the country. And upon that subject I am told that it was expected to-night that I should in detail lay before the House the minute system by which all those results, which years may bring about, are instantly to be acquired. I, my Lords, am prepared to do nothing of the kind. We must act with considerable caution. We are acting with a Power, let me remind the House, which is an independent Power—the Sultan—and we can decide nothing but with his consent and sanction. We have been in communication with that prince—who, I may be allowed to remind the House, has other things to think about, even than Asia Minor; for no man was ever tried, from his accession to the throne till this moment, so severely as the Sultan has been; but he has invariably during his reign expressed his desire to act with England and to act with Europe, and especially in the better administration and management of his affairs. The time will come—and I hope it is not distant—when my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs may be able to communicate to the House details of these matters, which will be most interesting. But we must protest against being forced into statements on matters of importance which are necessarily still immature. And we must remember that, formally speaking, even the Treaty of Berlin has not been ratified, and there are many things which cannot even be commenced until the ratification of that treaty has occurred.

My Lords, I have now laid before you the general outline of the policy that we have pursued, both in the Congress of Berlin and at Constantinople. They are intimately connected with each other, and they must be considered together. I only hope that the House will not misunderstand—and I think the country will not misunderstand—our motives in occupying Cyprus, and in encouraging those intimate relations between ourselves and the Government and the population of Turkey. They are not movements of war; they are operations of peace and civilization. We have no reason to fear war. Her Majesty has fleets and armies which are second to none. England must have seen with pride the Mediterranean covered with her ships; she must have seen with pride the discipline and devotion which have been shown to her and her Government by all her troops, drawn from every part of her Empire. I leave it to the illustrious duke, in whose presence I speak, to bear witness to the spirit of Imperial patriotism which has been exhibited by the troops from India, which he recently reviewed at Malta. But it is not on our fleets and armies, however necessary they may be for the maintenance of our Imperial strength, that I alone or mainly depend in that enterprise on which this country is about to enter. It is on what I most highly value—the consciousness that in the Eastern nations there is confidence in this country, and that, while they know we can enforce our policy, at the same time they know that our Empire is an Empire of liberty, of truth, and of justice.

SIR EDWARD GREY

August 3, 1914

NEGOTIATIONS

Last week I stated that we were working for peace not only for this country, but to preserve the peace of Europe. To-day events move so rapidly that it is exceedingly difficult to state with technical accuracy the actual state of affairs, but it is clear that the peace of Europe cannot be preserved. Russia and Germany, at any rate, have declared war upon each other.

Before I proceed to state the position of His Majesty's Government, I would like to clear the ground so that, before I come to state to the House what our attitude is with regard to the present crisis, the House may know exactly under what obligations the Government is, or the House can be said to be, in coming to a decision on the matter. First of all let me say, very shortly, that we have consistently worked with a single mind, with all the earnestness in our power, to preserve peace. The House may be satisfied on that point. We have always done it. During these last years, as far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, we would have no difficulty in proving that we have done so. Throughout the Balkan crisis, by general admission, we worked for peace. The co-operation of the Great Powers of Europe was

successful in working for peace in the Balkan crisis. It is true that some of the Powers had great difficulty in adjusting their points of view. It took much time and labour and discussion before they could settle their differences, but peace was secured, because peace was their main object, and they were willing to give time and trouble rather than accentuate differences rapidly.

In the present crisis, it has not been possible to secure the peace of Europe; because there has been little time, and there has been a disposition—at any rate in some quarters on which I will not dwell—to force things rapidly to an issue, at any rate, to the great risk of peace, and, as we now know, the result of that is that the policy of peace, as far as the Great Powers generally are concerned, is in danger. I do not want to dwell on that, and to comment on it, and to say where the blame seems to us to lie, which Powers were most in favour of peace, which were most disposed to risk or endanger peace, because I would like the House to approach this crisis in which we are now, from the point of view of British interests, British honour, and British obligations, free from all passion as to why peace has not been preserved.

We shall publish Papers as soon as we can regarding what took place last week when we were working for peace; and when those Papers are published, I have no doubt that to every human being they will make it clear how strenuous and genuine and whole-hearted our efforts for peace were, and that they will enable people to form their own judgement as to what forces were at work which operated against peace.

I come first, now, to the question of British

obligations. I have assured the House—and the Prime Minister has assured the House more than once—that, if any crisis such as this arose, we should come before the House of Commons and be able to say to the House that it was free to decide what the British attitude should be, that we would have no secret engagement which we should spring upon the House, and tell the House that, because we had entered into that engagement, there was an obligation of honour upon the country. I will deal with that point to clear the ground first.

There has been in Europe two diplomatic groups, the Triple Alliance and what came to be called the 'Triple Entente', for some years past. The Triple Entente was not an Alliance—it was a diplomatic group. The House will remember that in 1908 there was a crisis, also a Balkan crisis, originating in the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Russian Minister, M. Isvolsky, came to London, or happened to come to London, because his visit was planned before the crisis broke out. I told him definitely then, this being a Balkan crisis, a Balkan affair, I did not consider that public opinion in this country would justify us in promising to give anything more than diplomatic support. More was never asked from us, more was never given, and more was never promised.

In this present crisis, up till yesterday, we have also given no promise of anything more than diplomatic support—up till yesterday no promise of more than diplomatic support. Now I must make this question of obligation clear to the House. I must go back to the first Moroccan crisis of 1906. That was the time of the Algeciras

Conference, and it came at a time of very great difficulty to His Majesty's Government when a General Election was in progress, and Ministers were scattered over the country, and I—spending three days a week in my constituency and three days at the Foreign Office—was asked the question whether if that crisis developed into war between France and Germany we would give armed support. I said then that I could promise nothing to any foreign Power unless it was subsequently to receive the whole-hearted support of public opinion here if the occasion arose. I said, in my opinion, if war was forced upon France then on the question of Morocco—a question which had just been the subject of agreement between this country and France, an agreement exceedingly popular on both sides—that if out of that agreement war was forced on France at that time, in my view public opinion in this country would have rallied to the material support of France.

I gave no promise, but I expressed that opinion during the crisis, as far as I remember, almost in the same words, to the French Ambassador and the German Ambassador at the time. I made no promise, and I used no threats; but I expressed that opinion. That position was accepted by the French Government, but they said to me at the time—and I think very reasonably—'If you think it possible that the public opinion of Great Britain might, should a sudden crisis arise, justify you in giving to France the armed support which you cannot promise in advance, you will not be able to give that support, even if you wish to give it, when the time comes, unless some conversations have already taken place between naval and

military experts.' There was force in that. I agreed to it, and authorized those conversations to take place, but on the distinct understanding that nothing which passed between military or naval experts should bind either Government or restrict in any way their freedom to make a decision as to whether or not they would give that support when the time arose.

As I have told the House, upon that occasion a General Election was in prospect. I had to take the responsibility of doing that without the Cabinet. It could not be summoned. An answer had to be given. I consulted Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Prime Minister; I consulted, I remember, Lord Haldane, who was then Secretary of State for War, and the present Prime Minister, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer. That was the most I could do, and they authorized that, on the distinct understanding that it left the hands of the Government free whenever the crisis arose. The fact that conversations between military and naval experts took place was later on—I think much later on, because that crisis passed, and the thing ceased to be of importance—but later on it was brought to the knowledge of the Cabinet.

The Agadir crisis came—another Morocco crisis—and throughout that I took precisely the same line that had been taken in 1906. But subsequently, in 1912, after discussion and consideration in the Cabinet it was decided that we ought to have a definite understanding in writing, which was to be only in the form of an unofficial letter, that these conversations which took place were not binding upon the freedom of either Govern-

ment; and on the 22nd of November, 1912, I wrote to the French Ambassador the letter which I will now read to the House, and I received from him a letter in similar terms in reply. The letter which I have to read to the House is this, and it will be known to the public now as the record that, whatever took place between military and naval experts, they were not binding engagements upon the Government:

My dear Ambassador,—From time to time in recent years the French and British naval and military experts have consulted together. It has always been understood that such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation between experts is not, and ought not, to be regarded as an engagement that commits either Government to action in a contingency that has not yet arisen and may never arise. The disposition, for instance, of the French and British Fleets respectively at the present moment is not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war.

You have, however, pointed out that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, it might become essential to know whether it could in that event depend upon the armed assistance of the other.

I agree that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, or something that threatened the general peace, it should immediately discuss with the other whether both Governments should act together to prevent aggression and to preserve peace, and, if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common.

Lord Charles Beresford: What is the date of that?

Sir E. Grey: The 22nd November, 1912. That is the starting-point for the Government with regard to the present crisis. I think it makes it clear that

what the Prime Minister and I said to the House of Commons was perfectly justified, and that, as regards our freedom to decide in a crisis what our line should be, whether we should intervene or whether we should abstain, the Government remained perfectly free, and, *a fortiori*, the House of Commons remains perfectly free. That I say to clear the ground from the point of view of obligation. I think it was due, to prove our good faith to the House of Commons, that I should give that full information to the House now, and say what I think is obvious from the letter I have just read, that we do not construe anything which has previously taken place in our diplomatic relations with other Powers in this matter as restricting the freedom of the Government to decide what attitude they should take now, or restrict the freedom of the House of Commons to decide what their attitude should be.

Well, Sir, I will go further, and I will say this: The situation in the present crisis is not precisely the same as it was in the Morocco question. In the Morocco question it was primarily a dispute which concerned France—a dispute which concerned France and France primarily—a dispute, as it seemed to us, affecting France, out of an agreement subsisting between us and France, and published to the whole world, in which we engaged to give France diplomatic support. No doubt we were pledged to give nothing but diplomatic support; we were, at any rate, pledged by a definite public agreement to stand with France diplomatically in that question.

The present crisis has originated differently. It has not originated with regard to Morocco.

It has not originated as regards anything with which we had a special agreement with France; it has not originated with anything which primarily concerned France. It has originated in a dispute between Austria and Servia. I can say this with the most absolute confidence—no Government and no country has less desire to be involved in war over a dispute with Austria and Servia than the Government and the country of France. They are involved in it because of their obligation of honour under a definite alliance with Russia. Well, it is only fair to say to the House that that obligation of honour cannot apply in the same way to us. We are not parties to the Franco-Russian Alliance. We do not even know the terms of that Alliance. So far I have, I think, faithfully and completely cleared the ground with regard to the question of obligation.

I now come to what we think the situation requires of us. For many years we have had a long-standing friendship with France. I remember well the feeling in the House—and my own feeling—for I spoke on the subject, I think, when the late Government made their agreement with France—the warm and cordial feeling resulting from the fact that these two nations, who had had perpetual differences in the past, had cleared these differences away. I remember saying, I think, that it seemed to me that some benign influence had been at work to produce the cordial atmosphere that had made that possible. But how far that friendship entails obligation—it has been a friendship between the nations and ratified by the nations—how far that entails an obligation, let every man look into his own heart, and his

own feelings, and construe the extent of the obligation for himself. I construe it myself as I feel it, but I do not wish to urge upon any one else more than their feelings dictate as to what they should feel about the obligation. The House, individually and collectively, may judge for itself. I speak my personal view, and I have given the House my own feeling in the matter.

The French fleet is now in the Mediterranean, and the northern and western coasts of France are absolutely undefended. The French fleet being concentrated in the Mediterranean, the situation is very different from what it used to be, because the friendship which has grown up between the two countries has given them a sense of security that there was nothing to be feared from us.

The French coasts are absolutely undefended. The French fleet is in the Mediterranean, and has for some years been concentrated there because of the feeling of confidence and friendship which has existed between the two countries. My own feeling is that if a foreign fleet, engaged in a war which France had not sought, and in which she had not been the aggressor, came down the English Channel and bombarded and battered the undefended coasts of France, we could not stand aside and see this going on practically within sight of our eyes, with our arms folded, looking on dispassionately, doing nothing! I believe that would be the feeling of this country. There are times when one feels that if these circumstances actually did arise, it would be a feeling which would spread with irresistible force throughout the land.

But I also want to look at the matter without sentiment, and from the point of view of British interests, and it is on that that I am going to base and justify what I am presently going to say to the House. If we say nothing at this moment, what is France to do with her fleet in the Mediterranean? If she leaves it there, with no statement from us as to what we will do, she leaves her northern and western coasts absolutely undefended, at the mercy of a German fleet coming down the Channel, to do as it pleases in a war which is a war of life and death between them. If we say nothing, it may be that the French fleet is withdrawn from the Mediterranean. We are in the presence of a European conflagration; can anybody set limits to the consequences that may arise out of it? Let us assume that to-day we stand aside in an attitude of neutrality, saying, 'No, we cannot undertake and engage to help either party in this conflict.' Let us suppose the French fleet is withdrawn from the Mediterranean; and let us assume that the consequences—which are already tremendous in what has happened in Europe even to countries which are at peace, in fact, equally whether countries are at peace or at war—let us assume that out of that come consequences unforeseen, which make it necessary at a sudden moment that, in defence of vital British interests, we should go to war: and let us assume—which is quite possible—that Italy, who is now neutral because, as I understand, she considers that this war is an aggressive war, and the Triple Alliance being a defensive alliance her obligation did not arise—let us assume that consequences which are not yet foreseen—and which,

perfectly legitimately consulting her own interests, make Italy depart from her attitude of neutrality at a time when we are forced in defence of vital British interests ourselves to fight, what then will be the position in the Mediterranean? It might be that at some critical moment those consequences would be forced upon us because our trade-routes in the Mediterranean might be vital to this country.

Nobody can say that in the course of the next few weeks there is any particular trade-route the keeping open of which may not be vital to this country. What will be our position then? We have not kept a fleet in the Mediterranean which is equal to dealing alone with a combination of other fleets in the Mediterranean. It would be the very moment when we could not detach more ships to the Mediterranean, and we might have exposed this country from our negative attitude at the present moment to the most appalling risk. I say that from the point of view of British interests. We feel strongly that France was entitled to know, and to know at once, whether or not in the event of attack upon her unprotected northern and western coasts she could depend upon British support. In that emergency, and in these compelling circumstances, yesterday afternoon I gave to the French Ambassador the following statement:

I am authorized to give an assurance that if the German fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against the French coasts or shipping, the British fleet will give all the protection in its power. This assurance is, of course, subject to the policy of His Majesty's Government receiving the support of Parliament, and must not be taken as binding His Majesty's

Government to take any action until the above contingency of action by the German fleet takes place.

I read that to the House, not as a declaration of war on our part, not as entailing immediate aggressive action on our part, but as binding us to take aggressive action should that contingency arise. Things move very hurriedly from hour to hour. Fresh news comes in, and I cannot give this in any very formal way; but I understand that the German Government would be prepared, if we would pledge ourselves to neutrality, to agree that its fleet would not attack the northern coast of France. I have only heard that shortly before I came to the House, but it is far too narrow an engagement for us. And, Sir, there is the more serious consideration—becoming more serious every hour—there is the question of the neutrality of Belgium.

I shall have to put before the House at some length what is our position in regard to Belgium. The governing factor is the Treaty of 1839, but this is a treaty with a history—a history accumulated since. In 1870, when there was war between France and Germany, the question of the neutrality of Belgium arose, and various things were said. Amongst other things, Prince Bismarck gave an assurance to Belgium that, confirming his verbal assurance, he gave in writing a declaration which he said was superfluous in reference to the treaty in existence—that the German Confederation and its allies would respect the neutrality of Belgium, it being always understood that that neutrality would be respected by the other belligerent Powers. That is valuable as a recognition in 1870 on the part of Germany of the sacredness of these treaty rights.

What was our own attitude? The people who laid down the attitude of the British Government were Lord Granville in the House of Lords, and Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons. Lord Granville, on the 8th of August, 1870, used these words. He said:

We might have explained to the country and to foreign nations that we did not think this country was bound either morally or internationally, or that its interests were concerned in the maintenance of the neutrality of Belgium. Though this course might have had some conveniences, though it might have been easy to adhere to it, though it might have saved us from some immediate danger, it is a course which Her Majesty's Government thought it impossible to adopt in the name of the country with any due regard to the country's honour or to the country's interests.

Mr. Gladstone spoke as follows two days later:

There is, I admit, the obligation of the treaty. It is not necessary, nor would time permit me, to enter into the complicated question of the nature of the obligations of that treaty; but I am not able to subscribe to the doctrine of those who have held in this House what plainly amounts to an assertion, that the simple fact of the existence of a guarantee is binding on every party to it, irrespectively altogether of the particular position in which it may find itself at the time when the occasion for acting on the guarantee arises. The great authorities upon foreign policy to whom I have been accustomed to listen, such as Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston, never to my knowledge took that rigid and, if I may venture to say so, that impracticable view of the guarantee. The circumstance that there is already an existing guarantee in force is of necessity an important fact, and a weighty element in the case to which we are bound to give full and ample consideration. There is also this further consideration, the force of which we must all feel most deeply, and that is, the common interests against the unmeasured aggrandizement of any Power whatever.

The treaty is an old treaty—1839—and that was the view taken of it in 1870. It is one of

those treaties which are founded, not only on consideration for Belgium, which benefits under the treaty, but in the interests of those who guarantee the neutrality of Belgium. The honour and interests are, at least, as strong to-day as in 1870, and we cannot take a more narrow view or a less serious view of our obligations, and of the importance of those obligations than was taken by Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1870.

I will read to the House what took place last week on this subject. When mobilization was beginning, I knew that this question must be a most important element in our policy—a most important subject for the House of Commons. I telegraphed at the same time in similar terms to both Paris and Berlin to say that it was essential for us to know whether the French and German Governments respectively were prepared to undertake an engagement to respect the neutrality of Belgium. These are the replies. I got from the French Government this reply:

The French Government are resolved to respect the neutrality of Belgium, and it would only be in the event of some other Power violating that neutrality that France might find herself under the necessity, in order to assure the defence of her security, to act otherwise. This assurance has been given several times. The President of the Republic spoke of it to the King of the Belgians, and the French Minister at Brussels has spontaneously renewed the assurance to the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs to-day.

From the German Government the reply was:

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs could not possibly give an answer before consulting the Emperor and the Imperial Chancellor.

Sir Edward Goschen, to whom I had said it was important to have an answer soon, said he hoped

the answer would not be too long delayed. The German Minister for Foreign Affairs then gave Sir Edward Goschen to understand that he rather doubted whether they could answer at all, as any reply they might give could not fail, in the event of war, to have the undesirable effect of disclosing, to a certain extent, part of their plan of campaign. I telegraphed at the same time to Brussels to the Belgian Government, and I got the following reply from Sir Francis Villiers :

The Minister for Foreign Affairs thanks me for the communication, and replies that Belgium will, to the utmost of her power, maintain neutrality, and expects and desires other Powers to observe and uphold it. He begged me to add that the relations between Belgium and the neighbouring Powers were excellent, and there was no reason to suspect their intentions, but that the Belgian Government believe, in the case of violation, they were in a position to defend the neutrality of their country.

It now appears from the news I have received to-day—which has come quite recently, and I am not yet quite sure how far it has reached me in an accurate form—that an ultimatum has been given to Belgium by Germany, the object of which was to offer Belgium friendly relations with Germany on condition that she would facilitate the passage of German troops through Belgium. Well, Sir, until one has these things absolutely definitely, up to the last moment, I do not wish to say all that one would say if one were in a position to give the House full, complete, and absolute information upon the point. We were sounded in the course of last week as to whether, if a guarantee were given that, after the war, Belgium integrity would be preserved, that would content us. We replied that we could not bargain away whatever

interests or obligations we had in Belgian neutrality.

Shortly before I reached the House I was informed that the following telegram had been received from the King of the Belgians by our King—King George :

> Remembering the numerous proofs of your Majesty's friendship and that of your predecessors, and the friendly attitude of England in 1870, and the proof of friendship she has just given us again, I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty's Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium.

Diplomatic intervention took place last week on our part. What can diplomatic intervention do now ? We have great and vital interests in the independence—and integrity is the least part—of Belgium. If Belgium is compelled to submit to allow her neutrality to be violated, of course the situation is clear. Even if by agreement she admitted the violation of her neutrality, it is clear she could only do so under duress. The smaller States in that region of Europe ask but one thing. Their one desire is that they should be left alone and independent. The one thing they fear is, I think, not so much that their integrity but that their independence should be interfered with. If in this war which is before Europe the neutrality of one of those countries is violated, if the troops of one of the combatants violate its neutrality and no action be taken to resent it, at the end of the war, whatever the integrity may be, the independence will be gone.

I have one further quotation from Mr. Gladstone as to what he thought about the independence of Belgium. It will be found in *Hansard*, volume 203, page 1787. I have not had time to read the whole

speech and verify the context, but the thing seems to me so clear that no context could make any difference to the meaning of it. Mr. Gladstone said:

> We have an interest in the independence of Belgium which is wider than that which we may have in the literal operation of the guarantee. It is found in the answer to the question whether, under the circumstances of the case, this country, endowed as it is with influence and power, would quietly stand by and witness the perpetration of the direst crime that ever stained the pages of history, and thus become participators in the sin.

No, Sir, if it be the case that there has been anything in the nature of an ultimatum to Belgium, asking her to compromise or violate her neutrality, whatever may have been offered to her in return, her independence is gone if that holds. If her independence goes, the independence of Holland will follow. I ask the House from the point of view of British interests, to consider what may be at stake. If France is beaten in a struggle of life and death, beaten to her knees, loses her position as a Great Power, becomes subordinate to the will and power of one greater than herself—consequences which I do not anticipate, because I am sure that France has the power to defend herself with all the energy and ability and patriotism which she has shown so often—still, if that were to happen, and if Belgium fell under the same dominating influence, and then Holland, and then Denmark, then would not Mr. Gladstone's words come true, that just opposite to us there would be a common interest against the unmeasured aggrandizement of any Power?

It may be said, I suppose, that we might stand aside, husband our strength, and that, whatever happened in the course of this war, at the end of it

intervene with effect to put things right, and to adjust them to our own point of view. If, in a crisis like this, we run away from those obligations of honour and interest as regards the Belgian Treaty, I doubt whether, whatever material force we might have at the end, it would be of very much value in face of the respect that we should have lost. And do not believe, whether a Great Power stands outside this war or not, it is going to be in a position at the end of it to exert its superior strength. For us, with a powerful fleet, which we believe able to protect our commerce, to protect our shores, and to protect our interests,—if we are engaged in war, we shall suffer but little more than we shall suffer even if we stand aside.

We are going to suffer, I am afraid, terribly in this war whether we are in it or whether we stand aside. Foreign trade is going to stop, not because the trade-routes are closed, but because there is no trade at the other end. Continental nations engaged in war—all their populations, all their energies, all their wealth, engaged in a desperate struggle—they cannot carry on the trade with us that they are carrying on in times of peace, whether we are parties to the war or whether we are not. I do not believe for a moment that at the end of this war, even if we stood aside and remained aside, we should be in a position, a material position, to use our force decisively to undo what had happened in the course of the war, to prevent the whole of the west of Europe opposite to us—if that had been the result of the war—falling under the domination of a single Power, and I am quite sure that our moral position would be such as to have lost us all respect.

I can only say that I have put the question of Belgium somewhat hypothetically, because I am not yet sure of all the facts, but, if the facts turn out to be as they have reached us at present, it is quite clear that there is an obligation on this country to do its utmost to prevent the consequences to which those facts will lead if they are undisputed.

I have read to the House the only engagements that we have yet taken definitely with regard to the use of force. I think it is due to the House to say that we have taken no engagement yet with regard to sending an expeditionary armed force out of the country. Mobilization of the Fleet has taken place; mobilization of the Army is taking place; but we have as yet taken no engagement, because I do feel that in the case of a European conflagration such as this, unprecedented, with our enormous responsibilities in India and other parts of the Empire, or in countries in British occupation, with all the unknown factors, we must take very carefully into consideration the use which we make of sending an expeditionary force out of the country until we know how we stand. One thing I would say.

The one bright spot in the whole of this terrible situation is Ireland. The general feeling throughout Ireland—and I would like this to be clearly understood abroad—does not make the Irish question a consideration which we feel we have now to take into account. I have told the House how far we have at present gone in commitments and the conditions which influence our policy, and I have put to the House and dwelt at length upon how vital is the condition of the neutrality of Belgium.

What other policy is there before the House?

There is but one way in which the Government could make certain at the present moment of keeping outside this war, and that would be that it should immediately issue a proclamation of unconditional neutrality. We cannot do that. We have made the commitment to France that I have read to the House which prevents us from doing that. We have got the consideration of Belgium which prevents us also from any unconditional neutrality, and, without those conditions absolutely satisfied and satisfactory, we are bound not to shrink from proceeding to the use of all the forces in our power. If we did take that line by saying, 'We will have nothing whatever to do with this matter' under no conditions—the Belgian Treaty obligations, the possible position in the Mediterranean, with damage to British interests, and what may happen to France from our failure to support France—if we were to say that all those things mattered nothing, were as nothing, and to say we would stand aside, we should, I believe, sacrifice our respect and good name and reputation before the world, and should not escape the most serious and grave economic consequences.

My object has been to explain the view of the Government, and to place before the House the issue and the choice. I do not for a moment conceal, after what I have said, and after the information, incomplete as it is, that I have given to the House with regard to Belgium, that we must be prepared, and we are prepared, for the consequences of having to use all the strength we have at any moment—we know not how soon—to defend ourselves and to take our part. We know, if the facts all be as I have stated them,

though I have announced no intending aggressive action on our part, no final decision to resort to force at a moment's notice, until we know the whole of the case, that the use of it may be forced upon us. As far as the forces of the Crown are concerned, we are ready. I believe the Prime Minister and my right hon. friend the First Lord of the Admiralty have no doubt whatever that the readiness and the efficiency of those forces were never at a higher mark than they are to-day, and never was there a time when confidence was more justified in the power of the Navy to protect our commerce and to protect our shores. The thought is with us always of the suffering and misery entailed, from which no country in Europe will escape by abstention, and from which no neutrality will save us. The amount of harm that can be done by an enemy ship to our trade is infinitesimal, compared with the amount of harm that must be done by the economic condition that is caused on the Continent.

The most awful responsibility is resting upon the Government in deciding what to advise the House of Commons to do. We have disclosed our mind to the House of Commons. We have disclosed the issue, the information which we have, and made clear to the House, I trust, that we are prepared to face that situation, and that should it develop, as probably it may develop, we will face it. We worked for peace up to the last moment, and beyond the last moment. How hard, how persistently, and how earnestly we strove for peace last week, the House will see from the Papers that will be before it.

But that is over, as far as the peace of Europe is concerned. We are now face to face with

a situation and all the consequences which it may yet have to unfold. We believe we shall have the support of the House at large in proceeding to whatever the consequences may be and whatever measures may be forced upon us by the development of facts or action taken by others. I believe the country, so quickly has the situation been forced upon it, has not had time to realize the issue. It perhaps is still thinking of the quarrel between Austria and Servia, and not the complications of this matter which have grown out of the quarrel between Austria and Servia. Russia and Germany we know are at war. We do not yet know officially that Austria, the ally whom Germany is to support, is yet at war with Russia. We know that a good deal has been happening on the French frontier. We do not know that the German Ambassador has left Paris.

The situation has developed so rapidly that technically, as regards the condition of the war, it is most difficult to describe what has actually happened. I wanted to bring out the underlying issues which would affect our own conduct, and our own policy, and to put them clearly. I have put the vital facts before the House, and if, as seems not improbable, we are forced, and rapidly forced, to take our stand upon those issues, then I believe, when the country realizes what is at stake, what the real issues are, the magnitude of the impending dangers in the west of Europe, which I have endeavoured to describe to the House, we shall be supported throughout, not only by the House of Commons, but by the determination, the resolution, the courage, and the endurance of the whole country.

HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH

August 6, 1914

INFAMOUS PROPOSALS

In asking the House to agree to the resolution which Mr. Speaker has just read from the Chair, I do not propose, because I do not think it is in any way necessary, to traverse the ground again which was covered by my right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary two or three nights ago. He stated—and I do not think any of the statements he made are capable of answer and certainly have not yet been answered—the grounds upon which with the utmost reluctance and with infinite regret His Majesty's Government have been compelled to put this country in a state of war with what, for many years and indeed generations past, has been a friendly Power. But, Sir, the papers which have since been presented to Parliament, and which are now in the hands of hon. members, will, I think, show how strenuous, how unremitting, how persistent, even when the last glimmer of hope seemed to have faded away, were the efforts of my right hon. friend to secure for Europe an honourable and a lasting peace. Every one knows in the great crisis which occurred last year in the east of Europe, it was largely, if not mainly, by the acknowledgement of all Europe, due to the steps taken by my right hon. friend that the area of the conflict was limited, and that, so far as the

Great Powers are concerned, peace was maintained. If his efforts upon this occasion have, unhappily, been less successful, I am certain that this House and the country, and I will add posterity and history, will accord to him what is, after all, the best tribute that can be paid to any statesman: that, never derogating for an instant or by an inch from the honour and interests of his own country, he has striven, as few men have striven, to maintain and preserve the greatest interest of all countries—universal peace. These papers which are now in the hands of hon. members show something more than that. They show what were the terms which were offered to us in exchange for our neutrality. I trust that not only the members of this House, but all our fellow subjects everywhere will read the communications, will read, learn, and mark the communications which passed only a week ago to-day between Berlin and London in this matter. The terms by which it was sought to buy our neutrality are contained in the communication made by the German Chancellor to Sir Edward Goschen on the 29th July, No. 85 of the published Paper. I think I must refer to them for a moment. After referring to the state of things as between Austria and Russia, Sir Edward Goschen goes on:

He then proceeded to make the following strong bid for British neutrality. He said that it was clear, so far as he was able to judge the main principle which governed British policy, that Great Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed in any conflict there might be. That, however, was not the object at which Germany aimed. Provided that neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British Government that the Imperial Government—

Let the House observe these words:

aimed at no territorial acquisition at the expense of France should they prove victorious in any war that might ensue.

Sir Edward Goschen proceeded to put a very pertinent question:

I questioned his Excellency about the French colonies—

What are the French colonies? They mean every part of the dominions and possessions of France outside the geographical area of Europe—

and he said that he was unable to give a similar undertaking in that respect.

Let me come to what, in my mind, personally, has always been the crucial and almost the governing consideration, namely, the position of the small States:

As regards Holland, however, his Excellency said that so long as Germany's adversaries respected the integrity and neutrality of the Netherlands, Germany was ready to give His Majesty's Government an assurance that she would do likewise.'

Then we come to Belgium:

It depended upon the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter upon in Belgium, but, when the war was over, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany.

Let the House observe the distinction between those two cases. In regard to Holland it was not only independence and integrity but also neutrality; but in regard to Belgium, there was no mention of neutrality at all, nothing but an assurance that after the war came to an end the integrity of Belgium would be respected. Then his Excellency added:

Ever since he had been Chancellor the object of his policy had been to bring about an understanding with England. He trusted that these assurances—

the assurances I have read out to the House—

might form the basis of that understanding which he so much desired.

What does that amount to? Let me just ask the House. I do so, not with the object of inflaming passion, certainly not with the object of exciting feeling against Germany, but I do so to vindicate and make clear the position of the British Government in this matter. What did that proposal amount to? In the first place, it meant this: That behind the back of France—they were not made a party to these communications—we should have given, if we had assented to that, a free licence to Germany to annex, in the event of a successful war, the whole of the extra-European dominions and possessions of France. What did it mean as regards Belgium? When she addressed, as she has addressed in these last few days, her moving appeal to us to fulfil our solemn guarantee of her neutrality, what reply should we have given? What reply should we have given to that Belgian appeal? We should have been obliged to say that without her knowledge we had bartered away to the Power threatening her our obligation to keep our plighted word. The House has read, and the country has read, of course, in the last few hours, the most pathetic appeal addressed by the King of Belgium, and I do not envy the man who can read that appea with an unmoved heart. Belgians are fighting and losing their lives. What would have been the position of Great Britain to-day in the face of that spectacle if we had assented to this infamous proposal? Yes, and what are we to get in return for the betrayal of our friends and the dishonour

of our obligations ? What are we to get in return? A promise—nothing more ; a promise as to what Germany would do in certain eventualities ; a promise, be it observed—I am sorry to have to say it, but it must be put upon record—given by a Power which was at that very moment announcing its intention to violate its own treaty and inviting us to do the same. I can only say, if we had dallied or temporized, we, as a Government, should have covered ourselves with dishonour, and we should have betrayed the interests of this country, of which we are trustees. I am glad, and I think the country will be glad, to turn to the reply which my right hon. friend made, and of which I will read to the House two of the more salient passages. This document, No. 101 of my Paper, puts on record a week ago the attitude of the British Government, and, as I believe, of the British people. My right hon. friend says :

His Majesty's Government cannot for a moment entertain the Chancellor's proposal that they should bind themselves to neutrality on such terms. What he asks us in effect is to engage to stand by while French colonies are taken if France is beaten, so long as Germany does not take French territory as distinct from the colonies. From the material point of view—

My right hon. friend, as he always does, used very temperate language :

such a proposal is unacceptable, for France, without further territory in Europe being taken from her, could be so crushed as to lose her position as a Great Power, and become subordinate to German policy.

That is the material aspect. But he proceeded :

Altogether, apart from that, it would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country

would never recover. The Chancellor also in effect asks us to bargain away whatever obligation or interest we have as regards the neutrality of Belgium. We could not entertain that bargain either.

He then says:

We must preserve our full freedom to act, as circumstances may seem to us to require.

And he added, I think, in sentences which the House will appreciate:

You should . . . add most earnestly that the one way of maintaining the good relations between England and Germany is that they should continue to work together to preserve the peace of Europe. . . . For that object this Government will work in that way with all sincerity and goodwill.

If the peace of Europe can be preserved and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavour will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately. I have desired this and worked for it—

The statement was never more true—

as far as I could, through the last Balkan crisis, and Germany having a corresponding object, our relations sensibly improved. The idea has hitherto been too Utopian to form the subject of definite proposals, but if this present crisis, so much more acute than any that Europe has gone through for generations, be safely passed, I am hopeful that the relief and reaction which will follow may make possible some more definite *rapprochement* between the Powers than has been possible hitherto.

That document, in my opinion, states clearly, in temperate and convincing language, the attitude of this Government. Can any one who reads it fail to appreciate the tone of obvious sincerity and earnestness which underlies it; can any one honestly doubt that the Government of this country, in spite of great provocation—and I regard

the proposals made to us as proposals which we might have thrown aside without consideration and almost without answer—can any one doubt that in spite of great provocation the right hon. Gentleman, who had already earned the title—and no one ever more deserved it—of Peace Maker of Europe, persisted to the very last moment of the last hour in that beneficent but unhappily frustrated purpose. I am entitled to say, and I do so on behalf of this country—I speak not for a party, I speak for the country as a whole—that we made every effort any Government could possibly make for peace. But this war has been forced upon us. What is it we are fighting for? Every one knows, and no one knows better than the Government, the terrible incalculable suffering, economic, social, personal and political, which war, and especially a war between the Great Powers of the world, must entail. There is no man amongst us sitting upon this bench in these trying days—more trying perhaps than any body of statesmen for a hundred years have had to pass through—there is not a man amongst us who has not, during the whole of that time, had clearly before his vision the almost unequalled suffering which war, even in a just cause, must bring about, not only to the peoples who are for the moment living in this country and in the other countries of the world, but to posterity and to the whole prospects of European civilization. Every step we took we took with that vision before our eyes, and with a sense of responsibility which it is impossible to describe. Unhappily, if—in spite of all our efforts to keep the peace, and with that full and overpowering consciousness of the result,

if the issue be decided in favour of war,—we have, nevertheless, thought it to be the duty as well as the interest of this country to go to war, the House may be well assured it was because we believe, and I am certain the country will believe, we are unsheathing our sword in a just cause.

If I am asked what we are fighting for, I reply in two sentences. In the first place to fulfil a solemn international obligation, an obligation which, if it had been entered into between private persons in the ordinary concerns of life, would have been regarded as an obligation not only of law but of honour, which no self-respecting man could possibly have repudiated. I say, secondly, we are fighting to vindicate the principle,—which in these days when force, material force, sometimes seems to be the dominant influence and factor in the development of mankind,—we are fighting to vindicate the principle that small nationalities are not to be crushed, in defiance of international good faith, by the arbitrary will of a strong and overmastering Power. I do not believe any nation ever entered into a great controversy—and this is one of the greatest history will ever know—with a clearer conscience and stronger conviction that it is fighting, not for aggression, not for the maintenance even of its own selfish interest, but that it is fighting in defence of principles, the maintenance of which is vital to the civilization of the world. With a full conviction, not only of the wisdom and justice, but of the obligations which lay upon us to challenge this great issue, we are entering into the struggle. Let us now make sure that all the resources, not only of this United Kingdom, but

of the vast Empire of which it is the centre, shall be thrown into the scale, and it is that that object may be adequately secured, that I am now about to ask this Committee—to make the very unusual demand upon it—to give the Government a Vote of Credit of £100,000,000. I am not going, and I am sure the Committee do not wish it, into the technical distinctions between Votes of Credit and Supplementary Estimates and all the rarities and refinements which arise in that connexion. There is a much higher point of view than that. If it were necessary, I could justify, upon purely technical grounds, the course we propose to adopt, but I am not going to do so, because I think it would be foreign to the temper and disposition of the Committee. There is one thing to which I do call attention, that is, the Title and Heading of the Bill. As a rule, in the past Votes of this kind have been taken simply for naval and military operations, but we have thought it right to ask the Committee to give us its confidence in the extension of the traditional area of Votes of Credit so that this money which we are asking them to allow us to expend may be applied not only for strictly naval and military operations, but to assist the food supplies, promote the continuance of trade, industry, business, and communications,—whether by means of insurance or indemnity against risk or otherwise,—for the relief of distress, and generally for all expenses arising out of the existence of a state of war. I believe the Committee will agree with us that it was wise to extend the area of the Vote of Credit so as to include all these various matters. It gives the Government a free hand. Of course, the Treasury

will account for it, and any expenditure that takes place will be subject to the approval of the House. I think it would be a great pity—in fact, a great disaster—if, in a crisis of this magnitude, we were not enabled to make provision—provision far more needed now than it was under the simpler conditions that prevailed in the old days—for all the various ramifications and developments of expenditure which the existence of a state of war between the Great Powers of Europe must entail on any one of them.

I am asking also in my character of Secretary of State for War—a position which I held until this morning—for a Supplementary Estimate for men for the Army. Perhaps the Committee will allow me for a moment just to say on that personal matter that I took upon myself the office of Secretary of State for War under conditions, upon which I need not go back but which are fresh in the minds of every one, in the hope and with the object that the condition of things in the Army, which all of us deplored, might speedily be brought to an end and complete confidence re-established. I believe that is the case; in fact, I know it to be. There is no more loyal and united body, no body in which the spirit and habit of discipline are more deeply ingrained and cherished than in the British Army. Glad as I should have been to continue the work of that office, and I would have done so under normal conditions, it would not be fair to the Army, it would not be just to the country, that any Minister should divide his attention between that Department and another, still less that the First Minister of the Crown, who has to look into the affairs of all departments and

who is ultimately responsible for the whole policy of the Cabinet, should give, as he could only give, perfunctory attention to the affairs of our Army in a great war. I am very glad to say that a very distinguished soldier and administrator, in the person of Lord Kitchener, with that great public spirit and patriotism that every one would expect from him, at my request stepped into the breach. Lord Kitchener, as every one knows, is not a politician. His association with the Government as a member of the Cabinet for this purpose must not be taken as in any way identifying him with any set of political opinions. He has, at a great public emergency, responded to a great public call, and I am certain he will have with him, in the discharge of one of the most arduous tasks that has ever fallen upon a Minister, the complete confidence of all parties and all opinions.

I am asking on his behalf for the Army, power to increase the number of men of all ranks, in addition to the number already voted, by no less than 500,000. I am certain the Committee will not refuse its sanction, for we are encouraged to ask for it not only by our own sense of the gravity and the necessities of the case, but by the knowledge that India is prepared to send us certainly two Divisions, and that every one of our self-governing Dominions, spontaneously and unasked, has already tendered to the utmost limits of their possibilities, both in men and in money, every help they can afford to the Empire in a moment of need. Sir, the Mother Country must set the example, while she responds with gratitude and affection to those filial overtures from the outlying members of her family.

Sir, I will say no more. This is not an occasion for controversial discussion. In all that I have said, I believe I have not gone, either in the statement of our case or in my general description of the provision we think it necessary to make, beyond the strict bounds of truth. It is not my purpose—it is not the purpose of any patriotic man—to inflame feeling, to indulge in rhetoric, to excite international animosities. The occasion is far too grave for that. We have a great duty to perform, we have a great trust to fulfil, and confidently we believe that Parliament and the country will enable us to do it.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

September 19, 1914

INTERNATIONAL HONOUR

I have come here this afternoon to talk to my fellow countrymen about this great war and the part we ought to take in it. I feel my task is easier after we have been listening to the greatest battle-song in the world [1].

There is no man in this room who has always regarded the prospects of engaging in a great war with greater reluctance, with greater repugnance, than I have done throughout the whole of my political life. There is no man, either inside or outside of this room, more convinced that we could not have avoided it without national dishonour. I am fully alive to the fact that whenever a nation has been engaged in any war she has always invoked the sacred name of honour. Many a crime has been committed in its name ; there are some crimes being committed now. But, all the same, national honour is a reality, and any nation that disregards it is doomed.

Why is our honour as a country involved in this war ? Because, in the first place, we are bound in an honourable obligation to defend the independence, the liberty, the integrity of a small neighbour that has lived peaceably, but she could

[1] 'The Men of Harlech.'

not have compelled us, because she was weak. The man who declines to discharge his debt because his creditor is too poor to enforce it is a blackguard. We entered into this treaty, a solemn treaty, a full treaty, to defend Belgium and her integrity. Our signatures are attached to the document. Our signatures do not stand alone there. This was not the only country to defend the integrity of Belgium. Russia, France, Austria, and Prussia—they are all there. Why did they not perform the obligation? It is suggested that if we quote this treaty it is purely an excuse on our part. It is our low craft and cunning, just to cloak our jealousy of a superior civilization we are attempting to destroy. Our answer is the action we took in 1870. What was that? Mr. Gladstone was then Prime Minister. Lord Granville, I think, was then Foreign Secretary. I have never heard it laid to their charge that they were ever jingo.

What did they do in 1870? That Treaty Bond was this: We called upon the belligerent Powers to respect that treaty. We called upon France; we called upon Germany. At that time, bear in mind, the greatest danger to Belgium came from France and not from Germany. We intervened to protect Belgium against France exactly as we are doing now to protect her against Germany. We are proceeding exactly in the same way. We invited both the belligerent Powers to state that they had no intention of violating Belgian territory. What was the answer given by Bismarck? He said it was superfluous to ask Prussia such a question in view of the treaties in force. France gave a similar answer. We received the thanks at that time from the Belgian people for our intervention in a very remarkable

document. This is the document addressed by the municipality of Brussels to Queen Victoria after that intervention:

> The great and noble people over whose destinies you preside have just given a further proof of its benevolent sentiments towards this country. The voice of the English nation has been heard above the din of arms. It has asserted the principles of justice and right. Next to the unalterable attachment of the Belgian people to their independence, the strongest sentiment which fills their hearts is that of an imperishable gratitude to the people of Great Britain.

That was in 1870. Mark what follows.

Three or four days after that document of thanks the French Army was wedged up against the Belgian frontier. Every means of escape was shut up by a ring of flame from Prussian cannon. There was one way of escape. What was that? By violating the neutrality of Belgium. What did they do? The French on that occasion preferred ruin, humiliation, to the breaking of their bond. The French Emperor, French Marshals, 100,000 gallant Frenchmen in arms preferred to be carried captive to the strange land of their enemy rather than dishonour the name of their country. It was the last French Army defeat. Had they violated Belgian neutrality the whole history of that war would have been changed. And yet it was the interest of France to break the treaty. She did not do it.

It is now the interest of Prussia to break the treaty, and she has done it. Well, why? She avowed it with cynical contempt for every principle of justice. She says treaties only bind you when it is to your interest to keep them. 'What is a treaty?' says the German Chancellor. 'A scrap of paper.' Have you any £5 notes about

you? I am not calling for them. Have you any of those neat little Treasury £1 notes? If you have, burn them; they are only 'scraps of paper'. What are they made of? Rags. What are they worth? The whole credit of the British Empire. 'Scraps of paper.' I have been dealing with scraps of paper within the last month. It is suddenly found the commerce of the world is coming to a standstill. The machine had stopped. Why? I will tell you. We discovered, many of us for the first time—I do not pretend to say that I do not know much more about the machinery of commerce to-day than I did six weeks ago, and there are a good many men like me—we discovered the machinery of commerce was moved by bills of exchange. I have seen some of them —wretched, crinkled, scrawled over, blotched, frowsy, and yet these wretched little scraps of paper moved great ships, laden with thousands of tons of precious cargo, from one end of the world to the other. What was the motive power behind them? The honour of commercial men.

Treaties are the currency of international statesmanship. Let us be fair. German merchants, German traders had the reputation of being as upright and straightforward as any traders in the world. But if the currency of German commerce is to be debased to the level of her statesmanship, no trader from Shanghai to Valparaiso will ever look at a German signature again. This doctrine of the scrap of paper, this doctrine which is superscribed by Bernhardi, that treaties only bind a nation as long as it is to its interest, goes to the root of public law. It is the straight road to barbarism, just as if you removed the

magnetic pole whenever it was in the way of a German cruiser, the whole navigation of the seas would become dangerous, difficult, impossible, and the whole machinery of civilization will break down if this doctrine wins in this war.

We are fighting against barbarism.' But there is only one way of putting it right. If there are nations that say they will only respect treaties when it is to their interest to do so, we must make it to their interest to do so for the future. What is their defence ? Just look at the interview which took place between our Ambassador and great German officials when their attention was called to this treaty to which they were partners. They said: 'We cannot help that.' Rapidity of action was the great German asset. There is a greater asset for a nation than rapidity of action, and that is—honest dealing.

What are her excuses ? She said Belgium was plotting against her, that Belgium was engaged in a great conspiracy with Britain and with France to attack her. Not merely is that not true, but Germany knows it is not true. What is her other excuse ? France meant to invade Germany through Belgium. Absolutely untrue. France offered Belgium five army corps to defend her if she was attacked. Belgium said : 'I don't require them. I have got the word of the Kaiser. Shall Caesar send a lie ?' All these tales about conspiracy have been fanned up since. The great nation ought to be ashamed, ought to be ashamed to behave like a fraudulent bankrupt perjuring its way with its complications. She has deliberately broken this treaty, and we were in honour bound to stand by it.

Belgium has been treated brutally, how brutally we shall not yet know. We know already too much. What has she done? Did she send an ultimatum to Germany? Did she challenge Germany? Was she preparing to make war on Germany? Had she ever inflicted any wrongs upon Germany which the Kaiser was bound to redress? She was one of the most unoffending little countries in Europe. She was peaceable, industrious, thrifty, hard-working, giving offence to no one; and her cornfields have been trampled down, her villages have been burned to the ground, her art treasures have been destroyed, her men have been slaughtered, yea, and her women and children, too. What had she done? Hundreds of thousands of her people have had their quiet, comfortable little homes burned to the dust, and are wandering homeless in their own land. What is their crime? Their crime was that they trusted to the word of a Prussian King. I don't know what the Kaiser hopes to achieve by this war. I have a shrewd idea of what he will get, but one thing is made certain, that no nation in future will ever commit that crime again.

I am not going to enter into these tales. Many of them are untrue; war is a grim, ghastly business at best, and I am not going to say that all that has been said in the way of tales of outrage is true. I will go beyond that, and say that if you turn two millions of men forced, conscripted, and compelled and driven into the field, you will certainly get among them a certain number of men who will do things that the nation itself will be ashamed of. I am not depending on them. It is enough for me to have the story which the Germans

themselves avow, admit, defend, proclaim. The burning and massacring, the shooting down of harmless people—why? Because, according to the Germans, they fired on German soldiers. What business had German soldiers there at all? Belgium was acting in pursuance of a most sacred right, the right to defend your own home.

But they were not in uniform when they shot. If a burglar broke into the Kaiser's Palace at Potsdam, destroyed his furniture, shot down his servants, ruined his art treasures, especially those he made himself, burned his precious manuscripts, do you think he would wait until he got into uniform before he shot him down? They were dealing with those who had broken into their households. But their perfidy has already failed. They entered Belgium to save time. The time has gone. They have not gained time, but they have lost their good name.

But Belgium was not the only little nation that has been attacked in this war, and I make no excuse for referring to the case of the other little nation—the case of Servia. The history of Servia is not unblotted. What history in the category of nations is unblotted? The first nation that is without sin, let her cast a stone at Servia. A nation trained in a horrible school, but she won her freedom with her tenacious valour, and she has maintained it by the same courage. If any Servians were mixed up in the assassination of the Grand Duke they ought to be punished. Servia admits that; the Servian Government had nothing to do with it. Not even Austria claimed that. The Servian Prime Minister is one of the most capable and honoured men in Europe. Servia was willing to punish any one of

her subjects who had been proved to have any complicity in that assassination. What more could you expect? What were the Austrian demands? Servia sympathized with her fellow countrymen in Bosnia. That was one of her crimes. She must do so no more. Her newspapers were saying nasty things about Austria. They must do so no longer. That is the Austrian spirit. You had it in Zabern. How dare you criticize a Customs official? And if you laugh it is a capital offence. The colonel threatened to shoot them if they repeated it.

Servian newspapers must not criticize Austria. I wonder what would have happened had we taken the same line about German newspapers. Servia said: 'Very well, we will give orders to the newspapers that they must not criticize Austria in future, neither Austria, nor Hungary, nor anything that is theirs.' Who can doubt the valour of Servia, when she undertook to tackle her newspaper editors? She promised not to sympathize with Bosnia, promised to write no critical articles about Austria. She would have no public meetings at which anything unkind was said about Austria.

That was not enough. She must dismiss from her Army officers whom Austria should subsequently name. But these officers had just emerged from a war where they were adding lustre to the Servian arms—gallant, brave, efficient. I wonder whether it was their guilt or their efficiency that prompted Austria's action. But, mark, the officers were not named. Servia was to undertake in advance to dismiss them from the Army; the names to be sent on subsequently. Can you name a country in the world that would have stood that?

Supposing Austria or Germany had issued an

ultimatum of that kind to this country. 'You must dismiss from your Army and from your Navy all those officers whom we shall subsequently name!' Well, I think I could name them now. Lord Kitchener would go; Sir John French would be sent about his business; General Smith-Dorrien would be no more; and I am sure that Sir John Jellicoe would go. And there is another gallant old warrior who would go—Lord Roberts.

It was a difficult situation. Here was a demand made upon her by a great military Power who could put five or six men in the field for every one she could; and that Power supported by the greatest military Power in the world. How did Servia behave? It is not what happens to you in life that matters; it is the way in which you face it. And Servia faced the situation with dignity. She said to Austria, 'If any officers of mine have been guilty and are proved to be guilty, I will dismiss them.' Austria said, 'That is not good enough for me.' It was not guilt she was after, but capacity.

Then came Russia's turn. Russia has a special regard for Servia. She has a special interest in Servia. Russians have shed their blood for Servian independence many a time. Servia is a member of her family, and she cannot see Servia maltreated. Austria knew that. Germany knew that, and Germany turned round to Russia and said: 'Here, I insist that you shall stand by with your arms folded whilst Austria is strangling to death your little brother.' What answer did the Russian Slav give? He gave the only answer that becomes a man. He turned to Austria and said: 'You lay hands on that little fellow and I will

tear your ramshackle empire limb from limb. And he is doing it.

That is the story of the little nations. The world owes much to little nations—and to little men. This theory of bigness—you must have a big empire and a big nation, and a big man—well, long legs have their advantage in a retreat. Frederick the Great chose his warriors for their height, and that tradition has become a policy in Germany. Germany applies that ideal to nations; she will only allow six-feet-two nations to stand in the ranks. But all the world owes much to the little five feet high nations. The greatest art of the world was the work of little nations. The most enduring literature of the world came from little nations. The greatest literature of England came from her when she was a nation of the size of Belgium fighting a great Empire. The heroic deeds that thrill humanity through generations were the deeds of little nations fighting for their freedom. Ah, yes, and the salvation of mankind came through a little nation. God has chosen little nations as the vessels by which He carries the choicest wines to the lips of humanity, to rejoice their hearts, to exalt their vision, to stimulate and to strengthen their faith; and if we had stood by when two little nations were being crushed and broken by the brutal hands of barbarism our shame would have rung down the everlasting ages.

But Germany insists that this is an attack by a low civilization upon a higher. Well, as a matter of fact, the attack was begun by the civilization which calls itself the higher one. Now, I am no apologist for Russia. She has perpetrated deeds of which I have no doubt her best sons are ashamed.

But what Empire has not ? And Germany is the last Empire to point the finger of reproach at Russia. But Russia has made sacrifices for freedom—great sacrifices. You remember the cry of Bulgaria when she was torn by the most insensate tyranny that Europe has ever seen. Who listened to the cry ? The only answer of the higher civilization was that the liberty of Bulgarian peasants was not worth the life of a single Pomeranian soldier. But the rude barbarians of the North—they sent their sons by the thousands to die for Bulgarian freedom.

What about England ? You go to Greece, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, and France, and all these lands, gentlemen, could point out to you places where the sons of Britain have died for the freedom of these countries. France has made sacrifices for the freedom of other lands than her own. Can you name a single country in the world for the freedom of which the modern Prussian has ever sacrificed a single life ? The test of our faith, the highest standard of civilization is the readiness to sacrifice for others.

I would not say a word about the German people to disparage them. They are a great people ; they have great qualities of head, of hand, and of heart. I believe, in spite of recent events, there is as great a store of kindness in the German peasant as in any peasant in the world. But he has been drilled into a false idea of civilization,—efficiency, capability. It is a hard civilization ; it is a selfish civilization ; it is a material civilization. They could not comprehend the action of Britain at the present moment. They say so. 'France', they say, 'we can understand. She is out for vengeance, she is out for

territory—Alsace Lorraine. Russia, she is fighting for mastery, she wants Galicia.' They can understand vengeance, they can understand you fighting for mastery, they can understand you fighting for greed of territory ; they cannot understand a great Empire pledging its resources, pledging its might, pledging the lives of its children, pledging its very existence, to protect a little nation that seeks for its defence. God made man in His own image—high of purpose, in the region of the spirit. German civilization would re-create him in the image of a Diesler machine—precise, accurate, powerful, with no room for the soul to operate. That is the 'higher' civilization.

What is their demand ? Have you read the Kaiser's speeches ? If you have not a copy, I advise you to buy it; they will soon be out of print, and you won't have any more of the same sort again. They are full of the clatter and bluster of German militarists—the mailed fist, the shining armour. Poor old mailed fist—its knuckles are getting a little bruised. Poor shining armour—the shine is being knocked out of it. But there is the same swagger and boastfulness running through the whole of the speeches. You saw that remarkable speech which appeared in the *British Weekly* this week. It is a very remarkable product, as an illustration of the spirit we have got to fight. It is his speech to his soldiers on the way to the front :—

Remember that the German people are the chosen of God. On me, on me as German Emperor, the Spirit of God has descended. I am His weapon, His sword, and His vizard ! Woe to the disobedient ! Death to cowards and unbelievers !

There has been nothing like it since the days of Mahomet.

Lunacy is always distressing, but sometimes it is dangerous, and when you get it manifested in the head of the State, and it has become the policy of a great Empire, it is about time when that should be ruthlessly put away. I do not believe he meant all these speeches. It was simply the martial straddle which he had acquired; but there were men around him who meant every word of it. This was their religion. Treaties? They tangled the feet of Germany in her advance. Cut them with the sword. Little nations? They hinder the advance of Germany. Trample them in the mire under the German heel. The Russian Slav? He challenges the supremacy of Germany and Europe. Hurl your legions at him and massacre him. Britain? She is a constant menace to the predominancy of Germany in the world. Wrest the trident out of her hands. Ah! more than that. The new philosophy of Germany is to destroy Christianity. Sickly sentimentalism about sacrifice for others—poor pap for German digestion. We will have a new diet. We will force it on the world. It will be made in Germany. A diet of blood and iron. What remains? Treaties have gone; the honour of nations gone; liberty gone. What is left? Germany—Germany is left—*Deutschland über Alles*. That is all that is left.

That is what we are fighting, that claim to predominancy of a civilization, a material one, a hard one, a civilization which if once it rules and sways the world, liberty goes, democracy vanishes, and unless Britain comes to the rescue, and her sons, it will be a dark day for humanity. We are not

fighting the German people. The German people are just as much under the heel of this Prussian military caste, and more so, thank God, than any other nation in Europe. It will be a day of rejoicing for the German peasant and artisan and trader when the military caste is broken. You know his pretensions. He gives himself the airs of a demi-god. Walking the pavements —civilians and their wives swept into the gutter; they have no right to stand in the way of the great Prussian junker. Men, women, nations —they have all got to go. He thinks all he has got to say is, 'We are in a hurry.' That is the answer he gave to Belgium. 'Rapidity of action is Germany's greatest asset,' which means 'I am in a hurry. Clear out of my way'.

You know the type of motorist, the terror of the roads, with a 60-h.p. car. He thinks the roads are made for him, and anybody who impedes the action of his car by a single mile is knocked down. The Prussian junker is the road-hog of Europe. Small nationalities in his way hurled to the roadside, bleeding and broken; women and children crushed under the wheels of his cruel car. Britain ordered out of his road. All I can say is this: if the old British spirit is alive in British hearts, that bully will be torn from his seat. Were he to win it would be the greatest catastrophe that has befallen democracy since the days of the Holy Alliance and its ascendancy. They think we cannot beat them. It will not be easy. It will be a long job. It will be a terrible war. But in the end we shall march through terror to triumph. We shall need all our qualities, every quality that Britain and its people possess. Prudence in council, daring in action,

tenacity in purpose, courage in defeat, moderation in victory, in all things faith, and we shall win.

It has pleased them to believe and to preach the belief that we are a decadent nation. They proclaim it to the world, through their professors, that we are an unheroic nation skulking behind our mahogany counters, whilst we are egging on more gallant races to their destruction. This is a description given to us in Germany—'a timorous, craven nation, trusting to its fleet.' I think they are beginning to find their mistake out already. And there are half a million of young men of Britain who have already registered their vow to their King that they will cross the seas and hurl that insult against British courage against its perpetrators on the battlefields of France and of Germany. And we want half a million more. And we shall get them.

But Wales must continue doing her duty. That was a great telegram that you, my Lord (the Chairman), read from Glamorgan.[1] I should like to see a Welsh army in the field. I should like to see the race who faced the Normans for hundreds of years in their struggle for freedom, the race that helped to win the battle of Crécy, the race that fought for a generation under Glendower, against the greatest captain in Europe—I should like to see that race give a good taste of its quality in this struggle in Europe; and they are going to do it.

I envy you young people your youth. They have put up the age limit for the Army, but I march, I am sorry to say, a good many years even beyond that. But still our turn will come. It is a great opportunity. It only cŏmes once in

[1] 'Glamorgan has raised 20,000 men.'

many centuries to the children of men. For most generations sacrifice comes in drab weariness of spirit to men. It has come to-day to you; it has come to-day to us all, in the form of the glory and thrill of a great movement for liberty, that impels millions throughout Europe to the same end. It is a great war for the emancipation of Europe from the thraldom of a military caste, which has cast its shadow upon two generations of men, and which has now plunged the world into a welter of bloodshed. Some have already given their lives. There are some who have given more than their own lives. They have given the lives of those who are dear to them. I honour their courage, and may God be their comfort and their strength.

But their reward is at hand. Those who have fallen have consecrated deaths. They have taken their part in the making of a new Europe, a new world. I can see signs of its coming in the glare of the battlefield. The people will gain more by this struggle in all lands than they comprehend at the present moment. It is true they will be rid of the menace to their freedom. But that is not all. There is something infinitely greater and more enduring which is emerging already out of this great conflict; a new patriotism, richer, nobler, more exalted than the old. I see a new recognition amongst all classes, high and low, shedding themselves of selfishness; a new recognition that the honour of a country does not depend merely on the maintenance of its glory in the stricken field, but in protecting its homes from distress as well. It is a new patriotism, it is bringing a new outlook for all classes. A great

flood of luxury and of sloth which had submerged the land is receding, and a new Britain is appearing. We can see for the first time the fundamental things that matter in life and that have been obscured from our vision by the tropical growth of prosperity.

May I tell you, in a simple parable, what I think this war is doing for us? I know a valley in North Wales, between the mountains and the sea —a beautiful valley, snug, comfortable, sheltered by the mountains from all the bitter blasts. It was very enervating, and I remember how the boys were in the habit of climbing the hills above the village to have a glimpse of the great mountains in the distance, and to be stimulated and freshened by the breezes which came from the hill-tops, and by the great spectacle of that great valley.

We have been living in a sheltered valley for generations. We have been too comfortable, too indulgent, many, perhaps, too selfish. And the stern hand of fate has scourged us to an elevation where we can see the great everlasting things that matter for a nation; the great peaks of honour we had forgotten—duty and patriotism clad in glittering white; the great pinnacle of sacrifice pointing like a rugged finger to Heaven. We shall descend into the valleys again, but as long as the men and women of this generation last they will carry in their hearts the image of these great mountain peaks, whose foundations are unshaken though Europe rock and sway in the convulsions of a great war.



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