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FOREIGN POLICY

OF

MR. CANNING.

A
BRIEF EXPOSITION
OF
THE FOREIGN POLICY
OF
MR. CANNING,
AS CONTRASTED
WITH THAT OF
THE EXISTING ADMINISTRATION.

LONDON:

J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXXX.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

BRIEF EXPOSITION,

&c.



IN a pamphlet which has been lately published, professing to give “ An authentic Account of Mr. “ Canning’s Policy towards Portugal,” there is recorded the following very remarkable observation, which he is reported to have made a few days before his death :—“ I have laboured hard for the “ last few years to place the country in the high “ station which she now holds—two years of “ the Duke of Wellington’s Government will undo “ all that I have done.”

The pamphlet concludes with asking, whether (the two years having expired) “ the prophecy “ had been falsified by the event ?”

To this most important question the author makes no reply, although the observations by which the query is preceded clearly show that,

in his opinion, the prophecy of the dying statesman has been completely fulfilled.

It is our intention to supply, at length, that at which the author has only thought proper to hint; and, taking the prophetic words of Mr. Canning for our text, to show, in the first place, that the Duke of Wellington, by effecting a complete revolution in the relative position of this country towards the nations of the continent, has “undone all the “good” which Mr. Canning had accomplished;—secondly, that that revolution is pregnant with a most disastrous future to this country.

We are well aware that we shall have some difficulty in fixing the attention of the public, on account of the little interest which is taken in foreign affairs by the mass of the people of England. A general apathy indeed prevails respecting them; they are thought of infinitely less importance than domestic concerns; so that if the internal policy of the Government be good, it is considered more than a sufficient set-off for any mis-management of its external relations. It appears to us, however, that this is a most fatal error. The mis-management of foreign policy is sure, sooner or later, to affect internal prosperity; and very frequently, as in the event of war, cripples the resources, and affects the prosperity of the nation, for a longer period and to a greater degree than any mistaken measure of internal legislation. A Government, therefore, which adopts a wise

system of domestic administration, does not thereby redeem itself for great faults in the conduct of foreign relations. But, even if it did, we maintain that it is far better to have ministers who are deficient in foresight and prudence with respect to internal, than with respect to external policy, and for this reason—that on matters of internal policy each man may become as good a judge as his neighbour. On questions relating to the Corn Laws, Reform in Parliament, the Currency, Free Trade, or the Catholics, the Government are in possession of no exclusive information which would give a preponderance to their opinions over those of others, who have employed their talents in examining and considering these subjects. Further, no measure of importance can be taken by the ministers without the approbation of the legislature, obtained after long discussion. The ministers, therefore, are always in this respect under the control of Parliament; and although they may persuade it to sanction a mischievous enactment, yet they cannot by themselves alone, without that sanction, produce the mischief. Thus the chances are very considerable against the passing of any law which is likely to be injurious to the community.

Far different is it with foreign affairs. With respect to them, the Government have, for the most part, exclusive information, which they can withhold altogether from the public, or else dribble

out in garbled extracts only calculated to *make* the case which they desire to establish ; and, if before the period arrives when it is judged safe to give this tardy and imperfect information, any doubts are expressed, in consequence of events which may have transpired, as to the wisdom of the course which they are pursuing, these doubts are met by a refusal to make disclosures which may mar the success of the negotiation ; and the evil, if evil it chance to be, is fastened upon the country past redemption, before even its nature is ascertained by the people.

We are far from saying that it is advisable, or if advisable, possible, to prevent a Government, if it chooses, from adopting such a mode of proceeding ; we fear that it is a defect which is inherent in the business ; for the ministers can alone be the judges of what may be properly disclosed ; it must therefore continue to be an affair of *confidence* ; and the only way that exists of neutralizing its bad consequences, is by each member of the legislature refusing to give his support to those, who are known to be guided in such matters by principles of which he does not approve ; and whose foresight and sagacity may have been shewn to be unequal to the direction of such infinitely momentous matters.

In stating these considerations, it is our earnest hope that they will be duly weighed, for we are sure that it is mainly owing to want of knowledge,

that the British public have not only often tolerated with patience the errors of misjudging politicians, but have neglected duly to appreciate the benefits which have arisen, from the sounder policy of more gifted statesmen. It is the design of the author of the following pages to throw some light upon foreign affairs, in order to arouse the public from their present state of indifference to this vital question, by giving them data, whereon they will do well to reflect, and that, with the utmost seriousness. Let them not suppose, that because the effects of a mistaken course of foreign policy are not immediately felt, that therefore the time will never come when they will suffer from its consequences: that time may be deferred, but it will come at last; we fear that it is even now near at hand, for the policy of the present Government fills us with the most dismal forebodings, and we cannot help looking forward with no ordinary dread to a general war, as the almost inevitable consequence of an obstinate perseverance in it.

To the end that our readers may not think that our fears are unfounded, or our conclusions rashly drawn, we will lay before them the reasons for our apprehensions, in order that they may be able to judge whether they are entertained on light or insufficient grounds.

Mr. Canning's proposition is divided into two parts: from the first division, it appears that, in his opinion, when he came into office, this country

held a station below what it was befitting her character to occupy : and further, that he had raised her from that degraded station, to one in all respects becoming the celebrity of her name and the greatness of her power. Now it is most certainly true that this opinion was fully justified by the circumstances ; but we are quite aware, that although the great majority of persons would acquiesce in its correctness, yet that many might be unable to state substantial reasons for their acquiescence. It may, therefore, not be an unprofitable expenditure of time to attempt to establish by argument these two important facts ; for those only can be competent to judge of the present state of affairs, who have a just conception of the political position in which, since the peace, the different states of Europe have stood towards each other.

All those, who of late years have turned their minds to the contemplation of political affairs, have not failed to remark one striking phenomenon in the present condition of the world ; *viz.*—the division of mankind into two opposite classes—the friends of absolute monarchy, and the lovers of popular institutions : so all powerful indeed is this distinction, that the respective parties seek allies among foreigners, whose principles may happen to be in accordance with their own, rather than amongst their fellow-subjects with whose sentiments their own are at variance.

The continental statesman, who undertakes the guidance of his country's affairs, and neglects to weigh well this important consideration, is wholly unfit to direct those affairs in the present times. But the British statesman, who either omits to ponder on it, or estimates it wrongly, is sure to degrade his country, while he runs the risk of convulsing the world.

The jacobinical principles which blazed forth at the French Revolution with such terrific violence, and which produced overpowering calamities, both to France and to Europe, have never ceased to have their admirers; but the calamities which they occasioned have had the good effect of preventing their professors from being desirous of pushing them to the same extravagant lengths, which marked the period of their earliest promulgation. The mass of the European public has learnt wisdom from experience; and even while the war yet raged, they had begun to look rather for the constitutional freedom of limited monarchy, than for the licentious liberty of republican anarchy.

This spirit of moderation was encouraged and confirmed by the continental monarchs, when, for the sake of effecting the overthrow of Napoleon, they promised to grant constitutions to their people. Of that blessing England had been for centuries possessed, although it is only since the Revolution in 1688 that our popular institutions have flourished as they do at the present time.

When Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington appeared as the representatives of Great Britain at the Congress of Vienna, it was almost universally expected that, being Englishmen, they would have been most sensibly alive to the advantages which nations derived from well-regulated liberty, and, consequently, that their voices would have been raised in defence of the just rights of the people ;—but these expectations were disappointed ; long cherished sympathies were broken ; and the map of Europe, *with the sanction of England*, was parcelled out, to suit the convenience of the three most powerful of the continental sovereigns. Thus did the British ministers, by consenting to injustice, and espousing the anti-popular side, contrive to make the name of this country, which the great majority of Europe had previously contemplated with delight, become the object of their decided aversion. They tarnished the glories of the field by their blunders in the Cabinet. The consequence of this pliability on the part of the British plenipotentiaries was, that the great sovereigns of Europe, not only not dreading the opposition, but feeling secure of the countenance of Great Britain, formed themselves into a league, for the preservation of monarchical prerogatives, in their utmost extent, from all kinds of popular encroachment.

It was only a few short months after the Congress of Vienna that the Holy Alliance was

created. Its members professed to set aside all projects of individual aggrandizement; and, under the specious pretence of consulting the common benefit of all the European nations, employed themselves in consolidating one universal edifice of absolute power. To this alliance, thus constituted, Lord Castlereagh, as foreign minister, linked both himself and his country. He professed the same sentiments with its members, and entered, or seemed to enter, into all their views; vainly hoping to acquire an influence over their actions, by acquiescence in those extravagant pretensions, which he ought, at all times, and under all circumstances, to have encountered with rebuke. For some few years matters were not pushed to extremity. When, however, the alliance, assuming to itself a corporate jurisdiction over the internal affairs of independent states, proposed to annihilate by force of arms the constitutional governments of Naples and Piedmont, the influence of England, if really exerted, was found to be gone; and the condemnation of such an attack, publicly expressed by her foreign secretary in deference to public opinion, was treated by the monarchs assembled at Troppau and Laybach with contemptuous indifference. Notwithstanding this rebuff, so completely was the British minister in the trammels of the Alliance, that he actually pledged his Government to send a representative in the following year to a Congress, which was to

be composed of the same monarchs, and had even determined himself to undertake the character. Death, however, prevented the accomplishment of his intention. But the Government were committed to its fulfilment. The Duke of Wellington was therefore named, in his stead, British Plenipotentiary at the Congress. Mr. Canning succeeded Lord Castlereagh in his official situations at home.

The invasion of Spain, to overthrow the new constitution, was the most prominent topic of discussion at the Congress. It was Mr. Canning's earnest wish to prevent that attack; but so little ascendancy had Great Britain, that the utmost which the Duke of Wellington, instructed by Mr. Canning, was enabled to obtain from our dear allies, was abstinence from a corporate declaration of war against Spain; the attack on the Spanish constitution being a project too precious to abandon. Mr. Canning deeply felt the degraded position of his country. Set at nought by the continental sovereigns, and hated by their subjects, Great Britain could find consolation neither in public sympathy nor in the exercise of an effective control over the destinies of the world. He, therefore, at once determined to withdraw the British Government from its unnatural intimacy with the Holy Alliance, and by placing Great Britain in her proper position, at the head of the moderate liberals of Europe, repressing equally the

two extremes, to regain the lost good-will of the people, and thereby that weight with their rulers, which Lord Castlereagh had unwisely sought to secure by the flattery of their prejudices, and subserviency to their wishes.

The language of Mr. Canning's dispatches to the Duke of Wellington, at Verona, and his subsequent urgent expostulations with France, against the invasion of the Peninsula; his public condemnation in Parliament of the "Areopagitical Spirit," manifested by the Holy Alliance,—and his indignant reprobation of the principles by which the French Government justified that invasion, soon taught the world that he had completely changed our system of foreign policy. His actions were in unison with his professions; and so soon as the time arrived for the recognition of the new Republican States of America, that measure was carried; whereby all the vaunted principles of unmitigated legitimacy were set at nought, and the Holy Alliance proclaimed to the world as being at issue with the British Government on all the vital principles which they had respectively adopted as the rules of their political conduct.

The sovereigns were enraged at this proceeding. Previously to its consummation, they had, somewhat boastingly, talked of consequences; but when the deed was actually done, the British nation was too strong in the mutual confidence

which existed between the Government and the people, and the sentiments of Mr. Canning were too well appreciated throughout Europe, for these sovereigns to venture to do more than express their regret in civil terms; and lament a step which it was no longer in their power to avert. On the other hand, the ultra ministers in the Cabinet who had prognosticated war, and a total loss of our influence on the continent, were as mistaken in their calculations with regard to its probable effects as the Holy Alliance was moderated in its tone of bluster and defiance. So far indeed from losing our influence, that Alliance, which in its very essence was opposed to every British feeling, and had before been gradually sinking into insignificance under the withering effects of Mr. Canning's censure, now received a blow, which, instead of making its members cling to each other, served but to induce them individually to seek the confidence and co-operation of the British Government. Austria joined herself with England in superintending the negotiations between Portugal and Brazil, for the establishment of the independence of the latter: France and Russia respectively solicited Mr. Canning to take the Greek question into his management, as affording the best chance of its satisfactory settlement: while France singly sought our counsel, as to the best means of withdrawing her troops from the occupation of the Peninsula.

On the death of the Emperor Alexander, the Russian Government were more than ever desirous of cultivating the friendship of England, to the exclusion of its continental allies, and England took the leading part in all that related to the affairs of Greece.

Further, when the Portuguese Constitution was brought from Brazil, by Sir Charles Stuart (an event peculiarly calculated to excite the indignation of some of those Governments), Mr. Canning was entirely successful in preventing any overt attempts at its subversion, and Russia openly rebuked the doctrine which Austria put forth, that sovereigns had not a right to give constitutions to their subjects. True it was, that the reckless fatuity of the court of Spain, encouraged by the French ambassador (who represented not his own Government but the bigoted faction of which he was a member) employed Portuguese deserters to destroy the constitutional Charter of Don Pedro, but this defiance of Great Britain by the invasion of the Portuguese territories only afforded Mr. Canning an opportunity of increasing the admiration and respect for England, which at that time almost everywhere prevailed, by electrifying Europe with a display of the promptness and decision which was evinced in sending a British force to protect the independence of her ally.

Thus, when Mr. Canning died, he left this country in a glorious position—beloved by the

great mass of the population of Europe—British influence all powerful in Portugal—the feelings of ancient rivalry towards this country extinguished in France amongst all, except the infatuated members of that party, known by the name of the Congregation—the Russian Emperor content to restrain his ambitious designs on Turkey for the sake of British co-operation in settling the affairs of Greece, and Austria abounding in professions of friendship and a desire to cement a good understanding with England.

Added to all this, in the new States of Spanish America the name of Britain operated, as a charm, to ensure respect and security for its possessor.

In short, England may be fairly said to have been restored to that high station from which she had fallen. She had regained her just influence in the councils of princes, because the grand principle on which Mr. Canning's system of foreign policy was founded was to side with neither extreme, but in his dealings with neighbouring nations to act with impartial justice towards the two parties into which they were divided.

Having thus not only explained what Mr. Canning meant, when he said that "he had laboured hard to place Great Britain in the high station which she then held," but also having shown that he formed but a correct estimate of the respective situations in which he found and left her, we now come to the second division of

our subject, wherein we are to prove that his anticipations respecting the effects of the course of policy which the Duke of Wellington would probably pursue have been fully justified by the event.

The administration, which Mr. Canning had constructed, and which a man of his admitted superiority was perhaps alone capable of keeping together, fell to pieces in about four months after it had lost its chief.

During the period of its existence the foreign policy was not conducted with vigour; and England, in some degree, lost that commanding station which perhaps it required all the energy of Mr. Canning's master-spirit to maintain.

Prince Metternich's rejoicings at the death of the man who had deprived him of that supremacy in European counsels which he had so long held, are said to have been almost indecent. Still, however, nothing occurred during those few months which was not capable of being easily repaired, though the machinations of the Austrian minister to defeat the consummation of Mr. Canning's plans for the settlement of Eastern Europe met with a success of which, perhaps, the shortsighted Prince has been the first, and the most repentant lamenter. Prince Metternich was impressed with an idea (*how acquired it is not for us to guess*), that the British Cabinet were embarrassed by the Greek Treaty, and would be too

glad to get rid of it. He represented to the Turkish ministers that the Powers who were parties to the Treaty were divided amongst themselves, and that the Porte had only to be firm in refusing to accede to its stipulations to effect the dissolution of the Alliance. The counsel was too acceptable to the unyielding disposition of the Sultan to be rejected; and, notwithstanding the annihilation of his fleet at Navarino, he persevered in following the advice of Austria. The reception of the news of that splendid victory by the British ministers was unfortunately only calculated to confirm the Sultan's belief in the truth of the Internuntio's representations. Our Government hesitated when it ought to have decided, and did nothing at Constantinople to show that England was determined to fulfil the engagements into which she had advisedly entered. Such was the state of the Greek question, when the Duke of Wellington was called to the post of Premier, the settlement of which question, it must be admitted, had become more complicated than it was at the time of Mr. Canning's death; nevertheless, the one grand object of his Turkish policy, *viz.*, the maintenance of peace between Russia and Turkey, did not appear as likely to be defeated. If, however, there was a deficiency of skill in the following up of Mr. Canning's plans, it should not be forgotten that the want of his name was a difficulty, of no ordinary magnitude,

with which his immediate successors had to contend. To those who remember the veneration and awe which that name inspired throughout the European continent, it will be easy to estimate the loss which it must have been; especially since Prince Metternich, feeling himself freed from his fetters, again sought to restore that state of things in which his own influence had been predominant.

With respect to the affairs of Portugal, there was no serious charge which could be brought against the Goderich Cabinet. Don Miguel was on the eve of returning to Lisbon, and a wise and determined course of policy, consistent with the good faith and high character of this country, was open to the new Premier, if he had had the disposition to adopt one. But whatever may be said of the absence of skill and judgment in that Administration, in one, and that the most important particular, they walked in the footsteps of Mr. Canning. They sought to conciliate the public opinion of Europe, or, at least, took especial care to do nothing to disgust it: so that when the Duke of Wellington was appointed Premier, England was still revered and beloved.

His management of our relations with Portugal has been so fully exposed in the pamphlet which we have mentioned, that on that score we have nothing to add. So far as we are at present informed, we do not believe that more wisdom has

been displayed in the conduct of those connected with Eastern Europe. On these points, therefore, we will only beg our readers to remember, that in Portugal our influence is gone: and that the attack on Turkey by Russia, which it was the anxious aim of Mr. Canning to avert, and which he not only succeeded in averting, during the five years he was in office, but left a fair prospect of preventing altogether, *has taken place*; and that the evil consequences which he dreaded, and which it appears, by a late declaration in Parliament, that the Duke of Wellington always expected, have occurred, *viz.*, the signal and total defeat of the Turks in the conflict.

We do not say that this is the consequence of the Duke of Wellington's policy; on that point we shall be better able to form an opinion when the promised papers are laid before Parliament. All that we, at present, would observe, is, that his Grace has not saved Turkey from falling into the jaws of Russia.

Important, however, as the condition both of Portugal and Turkey must necessarily be to this commercial nation, we have no hesitation in affirming that they sink into insignificance, when compared with the moral station which Great Britain ought to occupy amongst the nations which surround her.

That moral feeling which once existed in favour of Great Britain, and her Government, the Duke

of Wellington has contrived to array in hostility against her. His elevation was viewed with suspicion from the principles which he was known to have adopted. A devoted admirer of the Holy Alliance, and a notorious thwarter of Mr. Canning, his actions were watched with the utmost vigilance, and jealousy. At first, it was fondly hoped, as some of those who had acted with Mr. Canning still remained in the Cabinet, that his system was not to be abandoned. But the Duke of Wellington's denial that he had given any guarantees for its maintenance, and his positive assertion that he had not changed his principles, damped the expectations which some had been led to entertain. On the other hand, Lord Palmerston's manly declaration in Parliament, while yet a member of the Wellington Cabinet, that no Government deserved the confidence of the country that did not follow Mr. Canning's policy, was heard with joy in every part of the civilized world. This was followed, however, by the almost immediate retirement of that minister and his friends from the Cabinet, and the ostensible causes of that event, as divulged by Mr. Huskisson in the House of Commons, proclaimed to every reflecting mind that the head of the Administration desired nothing more than to be relieved from the constraint which his seceding colleagues imposed upon him. The individuals selected to supply their places confirmed the previous impressions; and the nomination

of the Earl of Aberdeen, the known admirer of Metternich, put an end to the doubts; whether past experience had not enlightened the mind of the Duke of Wellington. The very first speech delivered by the new foreign secretary betrayed the bias of his mind. He described the advocates of absolute power in Portugal, and the supporters of the usurper Miguel, as the "friends of England," and stigmatized the supporters of the constitution, by saying that there were amongst them "*not a few*, who were not only not the "friends of this country, but who were also not "friendly to good government in any country." But this was not all; Lord Holland having said that we had shaken off the trammels of the Holy Alliance, Lord Aberdeen, in answer, declared that he considered such "*an expression as a mere figure of speech, and a tale of sound and fury signifying nothing.*" So little was the new secretary able to understand Mr. Canning's system of policy, that he did not hesitate to proclaim his ignorance of the important fact, that by that system Great Britain had been released from the degrading thralldom, in which she had been held by that Alliance!

In a previous debate, Lord Ellenborough (a nobleman whom the Duke had introduced into his Government when he first came into office) declared that he "had never met with any man, nor "heard of any man, who attempted to explain

“ what the principles of Mr. Canning’s foreign
 “ policy were, as contrasted with those of his
 “ predecessors.”

When these debates went forth to the world, it became evident that Mr. Canning’s principles were no longer those of the British Cabinet, and that it had departed from his line of policy. One Cabinet Minister considered our emancipation from the “trammels of the Holy Alliance” as a tale of “sound and fury signifying nothing;” while another could see no difference between Mr. Canning’s principles and those which guided Lord Castlereagh. What possibility was there, then, that Mr. Canning’s system could be carried on, when those, whose business it was to do it, openly avowed their incapacity to comprehend it? It was clear, therefore, that whatever was to be the policy of the new Government, it could not be *the same* as Mr. Canning’s; some change was to be made in it; and since it was Mr. Canning’s aim to hold the balance exactly even between the two extreme parties, the change necessarily consisted, in the siding more than he did, with one or the other of the two extremes. The Duke of Wellington’s known predilections, and the contemptuous and unfriendly terms in which Lord Aberdeen spoke of “*not a few*” of the constitutional party in Portugal, forbade the idea that the alteration was on the popular side. If not, then, on that side, it must have been on the other; and

behold, the British Government once more espousing the cause of absolutism! The treatment of Portugal, and the business at Terceira, put an end to all doubt upon the subject, and the popular voice throughout Europe was again united in hatred of Great Britain. Since that period the conduct of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen, so far from tending to remove the impression of its bias to arbitrary principles, has only served to confirm it.

On the single debate on foreign policy in the House of Lords, which took place in the session of 1829, Lord Aberdeen triumphantly boasted of the "DISLIKE with which the British Government was probably looked upon by the disturbed spirits of Europe, who," he said, "long to be let slip to commence the work of destruction; *but by the Governments of Europe, by the friends of peace and national improvement, and the preservation of order throughout the world, the British Government was looked up to at the present moment with greater confidence than ever.*" Now here we find revived the self-same fatal error which pervaded all the views of Lord Castlereagh.

It was Mr. Canning's desire to make Great Britain respected by all parties, and "*disliked*" by none. But Lord Aberdeen positively speaks with satisfaction of the "*dislike*" with which the British Government was viewed by those whom he is

pleasèd to designate as "disturbed spirits;" that is, by all, who, envying the liberty and happiness of this country, desire a change, in order that they may have similar free institutions established in their own. Surely the noble lord could not have been aware, when he was using this irritating language, that he was provoking the vengeance of millions. But surely he cannot now remain ignorant, that this one unguarded sentence has added tens of thousands to the numbers of our enemies.

That these effects have been the result of the language and actions of our ministers, and that the change which we describe and deplore has really taken place, no unprejudiced person, who mixes with foreigners, can deny. To this fact the able pamphlet of Mr. Gally Knight bears the strongest testimony. In France, this hatred has sprung up in a most extraordinary degree, and in this in particular we have incontrovertible proof of how completely our situation has been reversed.

During Mr. Canning's administration there was one party in France which was blind and fanatical enough to desire war with this country. Small, nay almost contemptible in point of numbers, but by no means powerless, the French *congregationists* would have plunged their country into hostilities with England, not in the hope of gaining any specific advantage for their country, but from an abstract abhorrence of Mr. Canning's mode-

rated liberality, and of the constitutional charter which Don Pedro had given his subjects.

The Prince de Polignac belonged to the *congregationists*, and his feelings were not different from those with whom he was united by the bonds of party. By these men, the then French Government would probably have been driven into a war, had not Mr. Canning, in his speech, on sending troops to Portugal, deterred them from their purpose, by exposing to their astonished view the abyss, on the brink of which they were standing, and into which they were about to rush headlong with ignorant temerity. Had France, as they at one time wished, sent succours to Spain, to aid in the overthrow of the Portuguese constitution, and had England been (as she would have been) compelled to take part on the popular side against Spain and France, the war of principle would have been begun, the fearful consequences of which Mr. Canning has described with a sagacity which future generations may yet be apt to consider as almost prophetic.

This ultra party, however, *now*, instead of being anxious to embroil their country with England look to her mainly for support, while on the other hand the liberal party in France are to the full as anxious to commence a war with England, as the ultras were in Mr. Canning's time.

We think we have said sufficient to show

that, by the policy of the present Government, our relative position towards the two great parties in Europe is wholly different from that which it was when Mr. Canning died. It is evident, therefore, that the good which Mr. Canning effected has been undone by the Duke of Wellington.

The question that remains for consideration is, whether that good has been destroyed, and something better, or even equally good, supplied in its stead; or whether it has only been replaced by evil?

This question can alone be answered by inquiring, *first*, whether the present Government possesses the same influence with foreign powers which Mr. Canning did? *Second*, whether our future prospects are as bright and encouraging as at the time of Mr. Canning's death?

On the first consideration, we well know that many will look with indifference; influence over continental affairs they estimate as a thing of small importance, forgetting that on its possession, and judicious use, the peace of the world may depend. The other, however, will come home to every bosom, for it concerns the interests of all.

We have already shown the way in which Mr. Canning, with the consent and good-will of the great Continental Powers, took the lead in all the most important political transactions of his time. In every great question of the day, whatever it might happen to be, Spanish America, Brazil, or Greece, England was the Power that led the way, and

others were content to follow, from confidence that a solution of the difficulty would be found, which would be not partially but generally beneficial to all.

Nothing occurred from one end of Europe to the other injurious to the interests of England ; and with all this there never was a period when less jealousy of British greatness existed.

Now, so far from the British Government having lately had any control over the progress of events, most of those that have occurred have been in defiance of the recorded wishes of the British Cabinet, or else directly opposed to the acknowledged interests of the British nation.

The Russian conquest of Turkey, and the establishment of the complete independence of Greece, are specimens of the former, while the usurpation of Miguel affords an example of the latter.

Lord Aberdeen declared*, “ That, in his opinion, “ the existence of Turkey as an independent “ power—as a power of weight and of consider- “ able influence in the affairs of Europe—was “ essential to the preservation of that balance “ which it had always been the policy of this “ country to preserve. In his opinion, if any very “ material *diminution* of the power of Turkey “ took place, it would be felt by all the great

* July 17, 1828.

“ powers of Europe ; and if that were the case it
 “ would be our duty to preserve it as entire as
 “ possible.” And the Duke of Wellington de-
 clared* in the House of Lords, that the “ Ottoman
 “ Porte was the ancient ally of this country—that it
 “ formed an essential part of the balance of power
 “ of Europe—that the preservation of the Ottoman
 “ Porte had been an object of importance not
 “ merely to England but also to the whole of
 “ Europe—and that the change of possession which
 “ had taken place in the East of Europe rendered
 “ its existence as an independent and powerful
 “ state necessary to the well-being of this country.”

And yet, notwithstanding these declarations, we see that the talisman on which the existence of the Turkish Empire depended has been broken ; that its boasted impassable barrier, the Balkan, has been crossed ; and that the mighty Mahmoud, the last adult descendant of Othman, the most enlightened of barbarians, and the regenerator of his country, has been reduced to little better than a tributary vassal to the Autocrat of all the Russias. We find also that a large portion of its territory has been completely dismembered ; and that the Duke of Wellington, who had been the most persevering objector to the employment of force, even for the prevention of collision between the two belligerents, has consented to the Turco-Egyptian forces being driven out of the Morea by

* January 30, 1828.

a French army, and to the erection of Greece into an independent state!! The resumption by Russia of her belligerent rights in the Mediterranean, after it had been boastingly announced to Parliament, in the Speech from the throne, that she had consented to waive them, was a positive insult, and afforded no dubious evidence of the little deference which the Russian Government thought it necessary to pay to the feelings of this country.

That which, in reality, is no proof of our influence, but which doubtless our Government will make the most of, is the nomination of Prince Leopold to the sovereignty of Greece; a measure which, if it be the result of our exertions, we must take leave to say was one which it would have been far more judicious had we not exerted ourselves to carry; but if, on the other hand, as we have not the smallest doubt is the case, the nomination of His Royal Highness originated with the Russian Government, because it imagined the Prince more inclined to Russia than to England; if the French king acceded to it, in the hope of a marriage with a daughter of the Duke of Orleans; and if Great Britain was the only one of the three members of the tripartite alliance which hesitated whether she should, or should not oppose His Royal Highness's elevation; then that event cannot be considered as a proof of the preponderating influence of the present Administration.

It cannot, therefore, be pretended that we are so much considered by the Russian Government as we were at the time when the Greek Treaty was signed; while the threat to destroy the Russian fleet, if General Diebitch advanced beyond Adrianople, has left a wound, which will rankle in the bosom of every Russian statesman till the opportunity offers to avenge it.

As for Austria, nothing at present appears before the public by which we can judge of the sort of understanding between the two Governments; it is probable, from the respective opinions which they entertain, that they are on the best of terms. The English minister flattering himself with the notion that Austria is subservient to his views, and his Austrian Highness chuckling at again beholding the British Cabinet obsequiously following in his train.

As for Prussia, and the minor states of Germany and the north of Europe, the mass of their people look upon us with distrust; but our transactions with their Governments are so few, that it is difficult, at the same time that it would be useless, to define their exact position towards us. As for Spain, such is the sympathy which she feels for our ultra ministers, that the absolute Government of Ferdinand has actually fulfilled the stipulations of the convention obtained by Mr. Canning from the Government of the Cortes, the performance of which Mr. Canning was never able to

obtain. As for Portugal, the ties which bound her to this country are so completely severed, that it will be the work of years to reunite them.

As for France—but the state of our relations with our powerful neighbour must not be disposed of in a single sentence; it is big with the most fearful import, and it is on this part of our subject that we earnestly implore our readers to bestow their most serious attention :—they may be assured that on those relations depend the future destinies of the world.

That their just importance may be understood in all its bearings, it will be necessary to go back to take a brief review of the state of the internal condition of that country, from the accession to the throne of the present king.

At the death of Louis XVIII., M. de Villèle occupied the post of first Minister. For the last years of that monarch's life, he had held the reins of power, and had enjoyed the unlimited confidence of his royal master. Full of talent, and always ready with some expedient to suit the passing crisis, he had even at that period governed France for a longer space of time than any of his predecessors since the Restoration. During the reign of Louis, who was any thing but a Bigot, he was the most moderate of the ultra royalists, and was on more than one occasion forced by the more violent of that party into measures of which his own sagacity had taught him the imprudence.

When the near approach of the demise of Louis became evident to all around him, M. de Villèle busily employed himself to secure the good-will of the future monarch. For this purpose, he appears to have recommended measures which were favourable to the priesthood, but offensive to the people, so that, when the new reign commenced, he was strong in the favour of Charles X., and his power seemed, as far as depended on the monarch, more permanent than ever. In point of fact, it did continue undisturbed for the succeeding three years, so that, on the whole, he was Prime Minister of France nearly seven years.

During all this time he had omitted no opportunity that his powerful situation afforded him, of strengthening the party to which he belonged. But alas! his master was a bigot, and attached by ties which no prudential considerations could loosen to the Jesuits and the Congregation. M. de Villèle was well aware that, to retain his place, he must continue to retain the confidence of the king—a confidence that was only to be preserved by paying deference to his majesty's conscience, and favouring with no niggardly hand the ultra-apostolical party. Although this attention to the king's wishes prevented the immediate dismissal of M. de Villèle, yet, as it had the effect of drawing down upon him the popular indignation, it was unable to avert his ultimate fall. His encouragement of the Jesuits was so utterly distasteful to

the French people, that the minister became an object of hatred from one end of France to the other. On the first occasion that offered, this animosity was manifested: the Chambers were dissolved in 1827, and notwithstanding that no exertion had been spared by the Government to secure the re-election of deputies, who should be disposed to support it, and that those exertions were made by the strongest, and most lasting Government that France had seen, with a singularly-able man at the head of it, the result of the great majority of the elections was the rejection of the ministerial, and the return of the liberal candidate.

When this explosion of public feeling took place, either Charles X. or his minister thought proper not to attempt to oppose the tide of popular opinion. M. de Villèle quitted office, and a moderate liberal ministry was appointed in his room. On these men devolved the difficult task of pleasing at once the bigotry of the court, and the liberality of the deputies. Their endeavours were, however, by no means successful. The measures they proposed were too liberal for the one, and not enough so for the other; they were rejected by the lower Chamber, while the king and his courtiers were displeased. Still, however, the nation approved; and when Charles X. made a progress through his dominions, he was received with shouts of welcome, and every demonstration of respect and popularity. During the first

months of the following year* the ministry continued weak, but the nation was satisfied with its king.

Such was the political aspect of France, when the king promulgated the fatal "ordonnance" of the 8th of August, 1829, dismissing his ministers, and appointing the Prince de Polignac and M. de la Bourdonnaye to succeed them. France heard with dismay the dire decree—the whole kingdom was thrown into a state of the most violent agitation, and the great majority of the daily journals were filled with invectives against the new ministers, and with expressions of the utmost alarm at the nature of their designs. Their appointment was described as originating in the advice of the Duke of Wellington, and the abuse, which was levelled at the British Government, was only surpassed by that which was heaped upon that of which the Prince de Polignac was the head. Whether His Grace was really the direct adviser of the measure, it is impossible, for those unacquainted with the secrets of the Cabinet, to determine; but there can be no doubt, from the nature of things, that the mere fact of the existence of an administration in this country holding ultra principles, afforded that degree of support and encouragement to the King of France, without which he never could have had the courage to have made so desperate a plunge.

* 1829.

The cause of the tremendous outcry which was raised was never generally understood in this country. Why, it was asked, should these men be so unpopular, before they have declared their principles, as ministers, and before they have brought forward any measures? Was it just to condemn without hearing, and to find fault before any step had been taken with which fault could be found? But although such questions as these would have been applicable to any set of men, who might be appointed to office in this country, those who asked them appeared to forget the great difference between France, and England.

Our institutions have had the sanction of ages, and are established on a solid foundation. The question is not with us, whether the Government will deliberately endeavour to overthrow the Constitution, as at present existing, but whether, it will wisely administer things as they are. But the question which every Frenchman asks himself, when a new minister is appointed, is, whether he is known to be a sincere friend to the liberties of the people, as regulated by the Charter, or whether he is desirous of restoring the ancient order of things, to destroy which seas of blood have flowed in every department of France, from the Channel to the Mediterranean, and from the Rhine to the Pyrenees. The king was known to entertain most exalted ideas of his own prerogative; the Prince de Polignac was a member of

the hated party of the Congregation; M. de la Bourdonnaye had shown himself a zealot, burning with unquenchable fury to restore to the king the full plenitude of his absolute rights. Men with such known dispositions were not to be trusted as ministers; and even the proposal by them of the most popular laws was only calculated to excite suspicion and fear.

From the moment of their appointment, up to the meeting of the Chambers, the clamour against them has never ceased. Associations have been formed in every direction, under the plea of opposing illegal taxation—associations which, if really formed with no other object than the one avowed, may nevertheless, at a convenient moment, be made to operate upon public affairs with a power which double their numbers, if *unorganized*, would never be able to exert.

The Chambers, whose meeting was delayed to an unusually late period, have met. They have declared, that “the concurrence of the political view of the administration with the wishes of the people is an indispensable condition of the regular administration of public affairs, and that their loyalty and fidelity obliged them to assert that that concurrence did not exist:”—the king has prorogued them to the first of September.

The crisis is therefore deferred; but we fear its delay will only serve to make it, when it does

come, more awful and alarming. Of what will be its final issue, we think there can be little doubt.

The king must make up his mind to one of two alternatives, either to submit to the declared wishes of the Chambers, or to govern without them.

If he adopts the latter, which is in fact the annihilation of the Charter, we believe there is but one opinion, that the result must be, that the nation will rise against him and his dynasty, and drive them for ever from the throne.

If, on the other hand, he resolves not to attempt to set up his own authority against that of the legislature, let us inquire what prospect there is of his being able to sustain his present ministers in office. Is there any reasonable hope that the majority of the present Chamber will be turned in favour of the Government? Is it likely that they will be conciliated by the prorogation? by having been brought to the capital to carry on the public business, and then sent back in mockery to their homes, without having advanced that public business in any manner whatever? We cannot answer these questions in the affirmative; and the accounts which each day's post brings of what is passing in France, tend to show that the breach is hourly getting wider between the throne, and the people.

If, then, the present Chamber is not likely to bend

to the wishes of the sovereign, what hope is there that if recourse be had to a dissolution, a more pliable assembly will be returned?

Is it probable that the Prince de Polignac will be able to effect that which M. de Villèle, in the zenith of his power, when the people were not so sensitively alive to their danger, has proved himself unable to accomplish?

We cannot believe that a dissolution would be productive of such effects so long as the present law of elections shall be in force. To alter it by royal ordonnance would be to infringe the charter; and a chamber elected under a law so promulgated would never be received by the nation as composed of their legitimate representatives.

What chance then is there that any favourable turn will take place in the dispositions of the Chamber towards the Polignac administration? We confess we see but one, and that of very little value. But it is one upon which that administration appear to have placed their chief reliance—we mean the expedition to Algiers, by the success of which the French ministers hope to gain the confidence of the people. We hardly can bring ourselves to think that the French nation are so vain-glorious, and fickle as to be made friendly towards those, whom they at present load with every species of contumely by the glory, however brilliant, which such an armament can acquire.

But if it fail of success, (and we fear that its success is by no means certain), or even if it be slow in securing it, what will then be the awful predicament in which the Prince de Polignac and his colleagues will find themselves?

Millions squandered without the consent of the legislature, whose pleasure they have not thought it worth while even to consult—an indignant people maddened by the disgrace of failure—sorrowing relations crying out for judgment on those, whose recklessness may have been the means of sacrificing perhaps thousands of inglorious victims. In such a fearful crisis, would the king and his advisers venture to convoke the legislature?—and yet the consequences of going on without it would perchance end in a catastrophe more dreadful than a dethronement. If assembled, the first step would assuredly be the impeachment of the First Minister. An exasperated people would, perhaps, only be appeased by blood, and Charles X. of France, like the first of his name in England, might be compelled, as the last hope for the salvation of the monarchy, to sign the death-warrant of a *far nearer*, and dearer friend than the faithful and unfortunate Strafford.

Such, we say, are no visionary notions of the probable consequences of defeat. And when we reflect on the nature of the enterprise—the parched and pestilential plains in which the operations

must be carried on—the reported strength of the fortifications—the season of the year, and the annoyance from hovering Arabs, we cannot feel sanguine that they will succeed. Take, however, what view of affairs we will, we can only bring ourselves to one conclusion; which is, that not many months will elapse before the liberal party in France will gain the upper hand—whether it be through the legitimate medium of the Chambers; or, in case of the king resolving to set their wishes at defiance, by means of the dethronement of the king himself. The organ of the French Government in England (*The Times Newspaper*), it will be observed, places the only chance of a different result, on the military glory to be gained at Algiers.

We have now fairly stated to our readers all the grounds on which our confident expectations of the triumph of the liberals is founded. To predict, with absolute certainty, that any political event will infallibly occur, would betoken presumption. That which we venture to assert is, that, from an attentive consideration of past events, it appears that in all human probability that triumph will, ere long, take place. Our readers will be the best judges whether the opinion has been hastily formed.

If they decide that it has not, then we pray them to weigh, with the most earnest solicitude, the consequence of the altered position in which we have been placed by the ultra policy of the

Duke of Wellington; and to consider how this alteration, which has already been effected, will bear upon the contingency which we anticipate.

Had Mr. Canning's system been persevered in, the ascendancy of the liberal party in France need not have been an object of regret, or dread to this country. It would in that case have been only the ascendancy of those, who, in common with others, regarded us with a friendly eye; but in the present posture of affairs it will be that of our bitterest enemies. For after his defeat, if defeated he be, how small would be the authority of the king!

It was a favourite maxim of Mr. Canning's, that "on a perfectly good understanding between the Governments of France and England, more than on any other political combination, the permanency of peace depended:" but how can we expect a perfectly good understanding to subsist between the two Governments, if the British Government be under the direction of the Duke of Wellington at the moment when that of France shall fall into the hands of the liberals? Even if the preservation of peace were the fondest desire of both, we could hardly expect that it could be maintained. But if, on the contrary, as we have every reason for believing, the sentiments of the leading members of that party have already been pronounced in the salons of the French capital, in favour of a war with this country; and if these sentiments, in consequence of our change of policy,

are in unison with the great mass of the people; whose warlike propensities and thirst for glory are supposed by the Prince de Polignac to be sufficiently powerful to turn them from the prosecution of their present designs to overthrow his ministry; can it be imagined that a pretence for war will long be wanting? Is there nothing that France would wish to acquire which Great Britain could not allow her to appropriate? Have not the Rhenish provinces on the western banks of the Rhine, which river formed the French boundary before the Battle of Waterloo, long been viewed with a covetous eye by the greater portion of the nation? Does not the discontented condition of the Belgic provinces present them in the light of a tempting prey to every ambitious Frenchman? How easy to send a few emissaries into the country to create disturbances, which might afford pretence for interference; and is not England bound by treaty to preserve the integrity of the present dominions of the House of Orange? Is the permanent occupation of Algiers, if conquered, that to which it would be the interest of Great Britain to submit? What advantages, in the event of a war, would such a harbour furnish to the French navy! would not the possession of the Morea be more agreeable to France than its being under the dominion of Leopold? and if Russia would consent to the conquest, what resistance

could the new sovereign make to the French arms, unless he should receive succours from England?

Each of these modes of aggrandisement would be highly agreeable to the French people. What, then, is there to hinder their rulers, if inclined, from making the attempt?—Nothing but the fear of a war with England. But, what if such a war should be, as we are assured that it would be, *that* into which they would wish to enter? And what if their wishes were backed by those of the people whom they governed? Could they seize a more favourable moment for the effort? By the great mass of the population of Europe, any attack on England would be viewed with exultation. The colossal Power of the north would probably be disposed to join in it; and, provided France consented to the complete annexation of Turkey to Russia, would requite the benefit by allowing, and perhaps aiding, France to annex to her dominions any territories in her neighbourhood for which she might have a fancy. If such are not the secret projects of the Russian Cabinet, why, we ask, is that celebrated diplomatist, the Russian ambassador at Paris, the General Pozzo di Borgo, exerting all his influence to effect the overthrow of the Prince de Polignac? Why is this, we ask, if it be not that the Russian Cabinet looks for an intimate union with the French liberals, when they shall attain power, in order that, so united, they

may set England at defiance? Why did Russia, when threatened by the British ambassador, tamely consent to stop the march of her victorious army at Adrianople, if it were not because she knew that she could resume it at a later period with equal certainty of success, when in all probability the opportunity would be more favourable? If such are not the designs of Russia, we are at a loss to conceive any adequate reason, for her absolute sovereign opposing the ultra-monarchical government of France, and allying herself to, and courting, the liberals who are hostile to the form of government which obtains in Russia.

If, then, we have in truth penetrated the real designs of Russia, and if we have correctly estimated the feelings of the French nation, we ask, whether it is on light or frivolous grounds that we assert that the revolution, which the Duke of Wellington has effected by the management of our foreign policy, is *pregnant with a most disastrous future?*

Let it not be argued that because it is not the interest of France to engage in hostilities with Great Britain, that, therefore, she will abstain from doing so.—The maxim on which much of modern philosophy is founded—that self-interest is the ruling principle of human action—is neither maintainable in theory, nor borne out by practice. Nations, as well as individuals, are subject to

human passions, and in the delirium of momentary excitement, the baser passions of our nature are apt to conquer the dictates of reason and reflection, and the immediate indulgence of a morbid appetite is often knowingly purchased by a load of future misery. True it may be that the French commerce would be annihilated, as well as, in all probability, the French navy. But the merchants of France are comparatively few, and every Frenchman would make it a point of honour to believe that their navy in the coming strife was destined to triumph over its foes. The prospect of an addition of territory, of regaining the laurels which they have lost, and perhaps, above all, the hope of humbling Great Britain whilst under the administration of the hero of Waterloo, and the conqueror of Paris, would be more than sufficient to banish all prudent thoughts from the bosom of every Frenchman.

The Duke of Wellington, then, by his mistaken measures, has brought us to the eve of a war. The judicious, straight-forward, and determined conduct of Mr. Canning, which excited the alarms of timorous minds, was in reality the safest, while the vacillating, and peaceable (as it is called) policy of the Duke of Wellington seems almost sure to involve us in the very evil, which we sincerely believe its author is ready to sacrifice almost anything to avert.

To ward off, then, the dreaded calamity, what can now be done? Nothing, we are convinced, but to change completely our foreign policy, and to return openly and avowedly to Mr. Canning's system. Can this be done by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen; and, if they are willing to attempt it, would there be a chance of their success? We fear not; their real sentiments are too well known to allow of the people of the Continent placing any reliance on their professions. With regard to them, as well as with regard to Prince Polignac and his colleagues, the cry of the European public is—

*Equo ne credite, Teucri,
Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes.*

If the task is to be undertaken, to do any good it must be undertaken by other men, and without loss of time.

There is not an individual who feels more grateful than we do, for the inestimable and transcendent benefits, which the services of the Duke of Wellington have conferred upon the country. There is no one who would more sincerely rejoice than we should, at seeing his Grace replaced, in his own sphere, as Commander-in-Chief, at the head of that army which he has so often led on to victory. In that post, his name would be a tower of strength, instead of, as now,

being a source of weakness : for we cannot shut our eyes to the truth, that the Parliament, when it meets after the recess, must make its option between the continuance of the Premiership of the Duke of Wellington and the imminent hazard of a *general war*.

April 20, 1830.

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LONDON :

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

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