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ENGLAND AND THE WAR.

THE Russian armies have crossed the Balkans at every point at once. They have occupied Adrianople, and the Turks are concentrating their whole forces at the capital. This position, which could always be supplied by sea, and whither Asia Minor could send successive reinforcements of hardy soldiers, would probably hold out far longer than Sebastopol, for it could in the same way arm its bastions with naval guns, and without infinite trouble it would be impossible for the Russians to bring so far siege pieces able to silence the heavy metal borrowed from the iron-clads. But it is doubtful whether the Turkish government is energetic enough for a defence of the heroic kind, and we may well believe that the cosmopolitan and disunited population of the capital would not lend itself to a resistance which would require considerable fortitude, and perfect concord of opinion. On what conditions will the Russians make peace?

It is not difficult to guess the answer; indeed the terms have been already indicated with much precision in a publication which seems to be inspired at once by the ideas of the Slav party at Moscow, and by those of the Court of St. Petersburg. The independence of Servia and Roumania is to be recognised. The Bulgarians are to have an autonomous government with a Christian prince, under the suzerainty of the Porte. The territory of Montenegro is to be enlarged. Bosnia is to be placed in more or less immediate dependence on Austria. In Asia the Russians will claim at least the places actually conquered; for they cannot, say they, be justly condemned to re-take Kars every twenty years. Proposals will also be made for the free passage of the Dardanelles, and for the handing over of Crete to Greece, notwithstanding that hitherto Greece has spent more eloquence than powder, and has done more talking than fighting. Evidently Russia will ask nothing important

in Europe. She cannot annex Roumania which has contributed so much to the success of her arms, and, without the annexation of the Principalities, how can she plant her foot beyond the Danube? Besides, the whole Germanic race would rise in indignation at the passing into Slavonic hands of its blue Danube.

With what eyes will the great Powers regard these terms of peace? First of all, Germany can find nothing to object to in them. From the beginning she has never ceased to urge Russia onwards, and has supported her at every moment. And why? We must first take count of the personal sentiments of the Emperor William, who is anxious to discharge punctually his debt of 1870. Next there comes the general interest of Germany with which Prince Bismarck concerns himself. The further advances Russia makes in Asia, the less strength she has applicable to Europe, and the greater is her need for the support of Germany. The annexation of uncivilised countries such as Khanates of yesterday and the Armenian districts of to-day is no accession of strength for Russia, any more than the possession of Algeria has been an accession of strength to France. It is rather a cause of weakness, and the acquisition of a vulnerable point. It costs money, it costs men, and, as the war of 1870 has proved, it has not even the advantage of forming good troops and good officers, for the habit of fighting with a very inferior enemy induces forgetfulness of the tactics necessary for contending with an equal. Chess players know that nothing is worse for skill than to play often against "muffs." It is certain, therefore, that Germany will give unqualified support to the conditions of peace which Russia demands.

The position of Austria is more complicated, for the simple reason that this geographical expression — Austria — comprehends three nationalities whose interests are different and often conflicting. The Magyars are ardently, and indeed violently, anti-Russian, because they fear—not without reason—that the creation of new Slav states in the Balkan peninsula will give to the Slav element a great predominance in the basin of the Danube, and will consequently deprive them of the hegemony which they hold in that region, and which they owe not to their number, for they are greatly in the minority, but partly to their energy and political aptitude, partly to the division of the various Slavonic groups. It is, however, manifest that neither Count Andrassy nor even M. Tisza will lend himself to the Turcophile passion of his countrymen. The Austrian Slavs—the most numerous of the three nationalities—ardently desire the emancipation of their brethren in the Balkans, and Prague illuminates for the victories of the Russians just as Pesth does for the victories of the Turks. But the Slavs, who fill the army and the civil service, have, it is true,

no voice in the councils of the Government. As for the Germans, they are divided in Austria just as they are in Germany. Those whose inspiration is drawn from popular sentiment and instinct of race, are extremely hostile to the Russians, but others who are guided by the political views of the day and the policy of the Government will hear nothing of any project of opposition to Russia. The Government itself, which in fact is entirely master of the situation, exactly because of the divided inclination of its subjects, will in all probability remain faithful to the principle of the triple alliance, and will see in the Russian demands nothing of a nature to affect Austrian interests unfavourably. The alliance of the three emperors is in fact the salvation of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and has to be accepted as a necessity. To understand this it is enough to have been a close spectator of the fermenting disturbance and the constant possibilities of danger which the latent hostility of Russia quite recently kept up in the Slavonic populations of Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia, Hungary, Croatia, and Carinthia. The security afforded to Austria by its reconciliation with Russia was so thoroughly understood that the Austrian Funds rose considerably as soon as, by the good offices of the Emperor William, the sovereigns of the two remaining empires had shaken hands. It is too evident that Austria cannot separate her policy from that of Germany, for the hostility of the latter power would instantly menace her very existence. Nor is it at all probable that she could undertake in concert with England a war in favour of the Turks, which would bring upon her the combined forces of Germany, of Italy, and of Russia, between which powers an understanding has been believed to exist ever since the beginning of the Eastern crisis. Italy cannot do without the friendship of Germany, because the moment may come when she would have to defend herself against the clerical reaction with France at its back; and this danger has been seen too close and too recently for the Quirinal to forget it. What help could England bring to Austria in battles of which Bohemia and Galicia would be the scene? All the available troops of Great Britain would be wanted at Constantinople, and the English iron-clads could hardly sail to the defence of Vienna. It seems evident, therefore, that Austria has no interest in abandoning the triple alliance, which gives her safety and comparative repose, to enter into an English alliance which would profit her nothing.

Besides, the Russian conditions cannot much inconvenience her. The annexation of a portion of Armenia, the opening even of the Dardanelles, are no concerns of hers. The establishment of new Slavonic principalities beyond the Danube may be extremely disagreeable to the Hungarians, but Austria could receive from it nothing but advantage, for these states would accept Austrian protection far

more willingly than that of Russia, and the commerce of Austria would profit largely.

The annexation of Bosnia to Austria is a geographical and humanitarian necessity. Geographical, for it is absurd that Dalmatia, a narrow strip of coast studded with ports once important and now languishing, should be separated from the territory extending behind it by an arrangement which is fatal to herself, because her harbours, hemmed in by a line of custom-houses, receive hardly anything from the interior, and fatal to Bosnia, because her access to the sea is barred, and the founts of life, prosperity, and civilisation, which commerce would bring to her, are stopped. It is humanitarian also, for in Bosnia, to keep the peace between Moslem and Christian, there is need of an authority at once foreign and strong. In Bulgaria the question is simpler. The Moslems are Turks by race, and will emigrate and disappear little by little. In Bosnia the Moslems are Slavs of the same race as the Christians. They are numerous, they are holders of the land, and hence their territorial attachment is strong, and they are not likely to quit the district. Under these conditions, the problem of establishing an independent government is almost insoluble. Annexation to Austria means, for the country, order, justice, prosperity, roads, access to the sea, and reunion with that coast from which it should never have been severed.

The interest of Austria is then clearly this: to abide by the triple alliance; to permit the creation of autonomous principalities nominally vassals of the Porte, but soon to fall under Austrian influence; to place in Bosnia an Austrian archduke; and to establish a Zollverein between Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, in order to connect with the districts of the interior the Dalmatian ports of Zara, Sebenico, Spalatro, Ragusa, and Cattaro.

The attitude of Austria could only become warlike, if in addition to England she could count on France, and if she judged Russia sufficiently weakened to be only a slight assistance to Germany, which would then be one to three. The expressed intention of Prince Gortschakoff to make peace alone with Turkey produced a disagreeable impression on the cabinet of Vienna, and it is possible that the idea might have occurred to it of quitting the triple alliance for another, should France lend herself to the project.

Now, although France maintains scrupulously her policy of reflection and even of self-effacement, this policy must not be taken too literally. France has become once more a power of the first order, and she is infinitely stronger than at the time when under Napoleon III. she was the arbiter of the destinies of the continent. She has an army more numerous, better exercised, disciplined, and

furnished, animated also by a far higher moral feeling. She is richer, too; her budget is fairly balanced. She has more than two milliards in coin at the Bank, and a metallic currency better supplied than that of all the other countries of the continent put together. The famous war-treasury of Prussia is nothing in comparison with this. The one thing which she lacks is good generals, and above all some one special chief, one head capable of managing everything, and to whom all would from the beginning be ready to pay blind obedience. Nothing is more essential than this at a period when armies are assembled in a week, and when a campaign is decided in a month. There is no time now for deliberating or for making war, as of old, by consultation.

Could England count on France to fight Russia? As a fact the French nation has all along been very indifferent to the Eastern Question. In the first place it had enough to do to escape the clerical absolutism which was within an ace of re-establishing its hold. Again, if democratic sentiment is on one side inclined to sympathize with the emancipation of the oppressed Rayahs, on the other side it has no sympathy with Russian autocracy. As may easily be seen, from the articles on foreign policy in the *Journal des Débats*, the Constitutionalists are anti-Russian and urge England to action. The *République Française*, the organ of M. Gambetta, speaks in the same sense. Only a short time ago the same party would have made advances to Russia in order to detach her from her German alliance; but, considering her now as definitely committed to Berlin influences, they have naturally turned against her. Yet the French people have often regretted the Crimean war, which cost them so much in men and money, and which made only the melancholy return of securing the throne for their master Napoleon III. How often have Frenchmen said, "You will not catch us pulling the chestnuts out of the fire again for our English friends"! Undoubtedly Russia is the natural ally of France. Situated at the two extremities of Europe, these two powers alone are in a position to make each other ample concessions. Napoleon I. and Charles X. both saw this. Both wished to make a Franco-Russian alliance the instrument for effecting a complete re-adjustment of the map of Europe. Napoleon's project failed, because he wished to take all and give nothing. The plan<sup>1</sup> of Charles X. was frustrated by the peace of Adrianople and the revolution of 1830. Such combinations cannot fail to emerge sooner or later, for they arise from the nature of things.

Meanwhile the wind does not blow from this quarter. It would appear that the idea of an alliance between France, Austria, and England has found favour in more places than one. It would even

(1) This plan was found in the secret archives of the Tuileries when they fell into the hands of the members of the Government of National Defence in 1871. We borrow

seem that the object of M. Gambetta's journey to Rome was to explore the ground, and to see whether in the case of common action on the part of London, Paris, and Vienna, Italy would not interfere with Austria, and would abstain from combining with Germany and Russia. King Victor Emanuel—it may be remembered—received Gambetta cordially, and it seems certain that he gave assurances of the neutrality of Italy.

The action of England may be thus stated: To achieve a solid result, she must manage to drag with her into war France, which is naturally little disposed to it. For this purpose she must promise her compensation, or look on quietly while she takes it, even were it such as made Lord John Russell recoil at the time of the Danish war. England would thus play the odious and abominable part of precipitating the whole of Europe into a general war, which would be the most terrible battle-royal of this century, and which, according to the side to which victory inclined, would imperil the existence either of Belgium or of Holland.

Happily, the French ministry is composed of prudent men, whose love of peace is sincere, first because peace is an excellent thing in itself, secondly because it is by means of peace that France secures grandeur and recovery. They are all animated by a common desire. M. de Freycinet, who has just introduced a bill for improving and completing the system of railways, is anxious to increase the power of his country by favouring the development of all its industrial resources. Every one is working and preparing for the Exhibition. M. Waddington is in every sense of the word a man of worth, a true servant of the public weal, devoted to his country, without forgetting the general interests of humanity, so that M. Fournier, who has just

the text from *Financial Opinion*, which declares it to be published for the first time. Its tenor, however, was already known:—

“Project for an eventual reorganisation of Europe presented to and adopted by the Council of King Charles X., September, 1829.

“M. de Polignac presented this project during the war between Russia and Turkey.

“Continental alliance against England. Intimate alliance of Russia and France. A Christian kingdom at Constantinople.

“For France: Belgium. The Rhenish provinces to be erected into a kingdom under a Dutch prince.

“For Russia: the Moldo-Wallachian provinces and a third of Asia Minor (two million inhabitants), and more if necessary in the same territorial sense (*sens territorial*).

“For Austria: Servia and Bosnia.

“For Prussia: Holland and *la Saxe Royale*.

“For Saxony: the country between the Rhine and the Maine.

“The King of Holland to be placed on the throne of Constantinople, with the title of the King of Greece.

“The Turks to be driven into Asia and Africa and put under the rule of the Pacha of Egypt.”

The “project” bears this endorsement:—“The peace of Adrianople having been concluded before the opening of negotiations on this project, it was not presented to Russia.”

been designated ambassador at Constantinople, said of him recently, "I have never yet seen such honest worth arrive at such a degree of authority." It is hard to believe that a ministry so devoted to the public good could expose the convalescence of France, thus happily assured, to the doubtful chances of a general war, in order to defend a bad cause and to contribute to the maintenance in slavery of peoples in whose favour all Europe has spoken. Republican France in alliance with England for the purpose of sustaining the most detestable government of Europe, is a spectacle which we may hope to be spared. No vital interest engages her in the Eastern conflict. As a Mediterranean power, what she in common with Italy has to desire for the development of her commerce is to see the population of the Balkan peninsula growing in numbers, improving its agriculture, availing itself of the natural resources of its admirable country, that so it may furnish its contribution to the swelling capital of the exchange of nations. The Republicans have accused the men of May 16 of leading the country into war. It was one of their strongest grievances, nor did any other influence the electors more. Now that they have gained power, how could they plunge their country into the very condition which but a few days since they so vehemently condemned? An Italian journal, the *Secolo* of Milan, which holds the first rank among those which defend above all things and before all things the cause of peace and liberty, has accurately summed up in the following terms the sentiments of Italian and of French patriots: "The Eastern Question is simply a question of justice and humanity. What ought to prevail is not the interests of Turkey, nor of Russia, nor of Germany, nor of England. Our duty is to deliver the oppressed, to free the enslaved, to restrain the oppressor."

This rapid review of the interests and views of the Great Powers leads us to believe that if England makes war for the Turks she will be completely isolated, and that she will have against her throughout Europe the opinion of all friends of justice and liberty. Doubtless, as Lord Beaconsfield said a year ago, laying his hand not on his sword but on a money-chest, "England is rich enough to afford a war,"—which would give promotion to her officers. But who would suffer? It would be industry, commerce, and the working-classes. A war against the enfranchisement of the Eastern Christians would be at the same time a war against the workers of England and the Continent, already impoverished by the crisis which has lasted for three years. In the first place this war would be odious; in the second it could have no lasting result; in the third it could only injure the interest in which it was undertaken. It would be odious, for it would be made not against the Russians only, but against the Roumanians, the Servians, the Bulgarians, the Cretans, the Greeks;

that is to say, against all those peoples so long oppressed, in whose favour the whole of Liberal Europe has for half a century raised its voice. Recently, at Constantinople, Lord Salisbury earnestly demanded guarantees in favour of the Christians, and Lord Derby himself has declared that the reforming promises of the Porte were of no value. So that England would make war in direct opposition to those ideas of humanity and progress which she had just defended with so much persistence, that she was on the point of recalling her ambassador because his words were disregarded. Such a war would be as monstrous as that which she all but declared against the Northern States of the American Union which had just abolished slavery, and in favour of the Southern States which were bent on maintaining it.

But, it is said, the Russian Government is despotic, its administration is corrupt, Poland is oppressed. All this is beside the question, for there is no talk of handing over the Balkan peninsula to Russia. Is it right and just that the Christians of Turkey should be relieved of the exactions and iniquities of a government which England herself has declared detestable? Is it not certain, as England herself has said again and again, that the only means of thus relieving them is to sanction their autonomy? This, Englishmen cannot deny, for they have maintained it in speeches, in despatches, in diplomatic instructions. How could they now, when the reform which they have demanded is on the point of being obtained, take up arms to support those by whom this reform has been steadily refused? How could they sacrifice the gold and the blood of the English people to defeat a humane undertaking which they themselves for three years have, in concert with all Europe, been engaged in promoting?

Nor could even the most successful war bring about any durable result. Let us suppose that England is completely victorious. Let her have beaten the Russians, at the head of the Bashi Bazouks and the Circassians who burn women and assassinate children, side by side with all the barbarians of Asia Minor. Let her, at the same time, have crushed the Servians, the Roumanians, and the heroes of Montenegro. Let her iron-clads, in concert with those of the Sultan, have burned Eupatoria, Odessa, all the Russian seaports of the Black Sea, and even—as in 1854—those of Finland. Suppose that the Russian armies have been driven beyond the Danube, that the Germans have not come to the help of their allies, that the cruisers of the enemy have not destroyed a portion of the English merchant navy, thus favouring American competition by raising the premiums of insurance. Let England have found nothing to stop her, let the Emperor Alexander, like his father Nicholas, have been driven in one campaign to beg for peace, the conditions of which England is



free to dictate. What are those conditions to be? In the face of Europe, in the face of the nineteenth century, it is impossible to re-establish the Crescent at Bucharest or at Belgrade. The character of the *protégés* of England would make England herself shudder at the idea of handing over to them the provinces which have freed themselves from her detestable yoke. She could not increase the power of Turkey; she would not think of annexing to herself any portion of Russia whatever. Perhaps she would rigorously restore the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris. And what then? Economic forces would go on acting. The Turks are good soldiers; they have showed it once more, as they showed it of old. But their numbers and their resources are waning; they will soon have disappeared. It is a mistake to say that Plevna has shown the vitality of Turkey. To fight well is not to work well, or to govern well, or to create produce and capital; nor, when it becomes impossible to rob others, is there any other means of subsistence than work. When the evils of war have ceased, the Bulgarians will rebuild their villages, and, in spite of violence and exaction, will till their lands. They will multiply, they will grow rich, and in twenty years they will assert their independence more energetically than they have asserted it to-day. The Russian finances would be in a deplorable condition; the State might even be wholly or partially bankrupt. But that would not prevent the Russian people from setting foot once more on the upward path. It has already showed itself stronger than in 1854; in 1900 it will be stronger still. A quarter of a century hence, the situation would reappear, with the difference that the Turks would be less numerous, the Rayahs more impatient, the Russians more powerful. The result of an Anglo-Turkish victory would be as null and void as the result of the Crimean war.

Thirdly, the effect of the war would be simply injurious to the interest in which it was undertaken. I can understand well enough that Englishmen are not anxious to see Russia mistress of Constantinople, though I think the alleged dangers are much exaggerated. But what is the means of preventing her from coming there? So long as belief in the future of the Ottoman power was possible, the means lay in supporting this power. But illusions on this point must now be over. In spite of the bravery of the Turkish soldier, the Turkish Empire is steadily declining, and will not rise again. The decline is of old date, it is uninterrupted; it may be considered as a historic law, and politicians who care for facts only should not forget a fact so decisive as this. Another barrier must therefore be sought in the establishment of Christian States, as strong and as independent as possible, under the protection of Austria and England. It is certain that if these States did not need the support of Russia against the Turks they would have no desire

to exchange their liberty for Russian rule. As soon then as it is proved that the Ottoman power is broken, the interest of England is to replace it as quickly and fully as possible by a league of Christian States, which would become the allies of the Western Powers. If, on the other hand, England hinders their formation, and helps to keep Christian peoples under Moslem yoke, she will throw them into the arms of Russia. The result of war would therefore be to destroy the single barrier which, in the future, could defend Constantinople. The less is left to the Turks, and the more completely their subjects are freed, the better for the purposes that England has at heart.

The policy of the English Cabinet has produced a most deplorable effect on the Continent, has occasioned the severest judgments and provoked sneers of the bitterest and most disagreeable kind. It has always seemed as if England wished to succour the Turks and did not dare. The vacillations and inconsistencies of the English Cabinet arise simply from the fact that it sees clearly on the one hand the impossibility of pursuing the ancient policy of supporting Turkey at all hazards, and that on the other hand it dares not frankly adopt the new policy which bids it replace a worn-out and broken barrier by another whose elements have the future before them. Now there can be nothing worse than an attempt to pursue at once two inconsistent lines of conduct. Putting aside all humanitarian considerations, when it is once proved that the Turks have lost the art of governing their European provinces without the periodical provocation of European interference, the Turks should be put aside as completely as possible. Half measures will not do, we must be logical and apply vigorously the only possible remedy. Let Greece have all the territory where the Greek race predominates. Let autonomous Bulgaria have all which the Bulgarians inhabit. Let a new wall be built with new stones, since the old has crumbled. This is the true interest of England. The more territory remains subject to the vicious government of the Turks, the more centres of insurrection, and consequently the more excuses for interference, are kept up, the more hold also is given to Russia, for to her the Slavs, while oppressed, will always turn. None more than England should desire the complete transformation of Turkey, for the more radical that transformation is, the more influence will England and Austria exert.

The continental friends of England have been bitterly grieved at the tergiversation and the apparent weakness of the English cabinet. It might have stopped the war at its beginning, by insisting forcibly, if needful, on the acceptance of the reforms drawn up by the conference. On the day when England destroyed the Turkish fleet at Navarino, and helped to create Greece, she dealt the death-blow to the

Turkish empire. This path once entered on, should have been followed up. All last summer the cabinet kept affirming its neutrality, but its wishes were evidently for the Turks. Thus, on the one hand, it encouraged them to resistance, and on the other it seemed to lack courage to come to the aid of those who were encouraged to resistance, by its almost undisguised moral support. Inconsistent and pusillanimous policy! a policy which satisfies no one, and exposes England to the laughter of Europe. So disgusted—it is said—is the Sultan with this double-faced conduct that he is ready to throw himself into the arms of Russia, and it is perhaps to prevent this that the English cabinet has recently assumed a more decided attitude. But here again it is taking the wrong way to accomplish its end, unless that end is a general war. The demand for money made to Parliament by Lord Beaconsfield is the one thing likely to bring Russia to the walls of Constantinople. If the Turks felt themselves alone, they would make peace. If on the other hand they think they may count on England in case—as the Queen's speech hints—of the prolongation of the war, they will not yield. Unless therefore it is desired that the struggle should be indefinitely prolonged, the Russians will have to go and seek peace, if necessary, under the walls of Constantinople. Is it because he knows that this would rub the British public the wrong way, and augment the chances of the war party, that Lord Beaconsfield is willing to push matters to such an extremity? What, then, has England to fear from the conditions of peace which Russia demands? Is it the retention of Constantinople, or of Bulgaria? Obviously there is no question of this, for more reasons than one. Is it the Russian demand for the free passage of the Dardanelles? If so, where would be the danger? In twenty years Russia has not succeeded in creating a navy able to try the chances of battle with a single Turkish ship. How then could she be able to endanger the maritime supremacy of England? But perhaps the annexation of Kars and Erzeroum, beyond the sources of the Euphrates, will threaten the passage of the Isthmus of Suez? The danger here is again of the most fanciful character. But if it were not, its only consequence would be to force England to establish herself in Egypt. As to this point, Mr. Gladstone, in his answer to Mr. Dicey, has clearly proved two things. The first is that, until a future so far off as to defy calculation, Russia would not be able to endanger the passage of the Canal, and that if she did, there would still remain the Cape route, longer by a fortnight only. The second is that England has already so many responsibilities, and so many vulnerable points all over the world, that it would be folly, indeed madness, to increase the number. I am for my part thoroughly convinced that in our days the possession of colonies is a source of weakness rather than of strength to the mother-

country, and I think that Mr. Lowe is right in maintaining that even the loss of India would nowise diminish the power and greatness of England. I have always considered the voluntary cession of the Ionian Isles to Greece as one of the wisest as well as one of the most honourable acts of English policy. But in the case of Egypt there is, unfortunately for England, a logical and humanitarian necessity to which she will have sooner or later to submit. Fortunate are small countries such as Switzerland and Belgium, which, like worthy middle-class citizens, have nothing to do but to let their life flow on in peaceful obscurity. But great nations, like great men, have a mission to fulfil which they must accept as a duty. If they refuse it, they are punished. It is not for nothing that England has set the world the example of constitutional liberty, has scattered over the four quarters of the globe her swarms of Anglo-Saxon descent, and has undertaken to govern two hundred millions of subjects. Greatness has its obligations, *honores onera*. The country which has done so much for the civilisation of the whole human race cannot satisfy herself with growing rich, with heaping up gold in the hands of her magnates, and slumbering on the pillows of contented opulence. Instinctively the people will seek more work, and if the cravings for action be not satisfied it will turn to discontent and unwise exertion. Whence arises at this moment in England the secret disquiet, the pugnacious disposition which nothing justifies in the eyes of sensible and reflecting men? Simply because the people is experiencing an unsatisfied desire of expansion. If the present war comes to an end without further complications, by the acceptance in whole or in part of the conditions imposed by Russia, the bulk of the nation will thereupon experience a vague but deep sentiment of humiliation and loss of consequence which may be in the future the cause of actions very far from reasonable. Moreover, Egypt deserves to be enfranchised much more than Bulgaria, for, as Sir George Campbell and Mr. Dicey have shown irrefutably, the Fellahs are much more unhappy than the subjects of Turkey. I shall long remember the painful impression which I experienced when I saw on the banks of the Nile, on the most fertile soil of the world, the most laborious and sober of workers reduced to a state of utter poverty; and yet since then their condition has become even worse. I know no spectacle in the whole world more abominably revolting than that of the unfortunate Fellaheen despoiled under the bastinado of the fruit of their labour, even of their lands watered, from all time, with the sweat of their brows, and thus to pay interest to European financiers who have made capital out of the Khédive. I am afraid of speaking too strongly, and I would rather borrow expression for my ideas from the eloquent speech which Sir Charles Dilke has recently delivered at Chelsea:—

“As for Egypt, there was much to be said for the view that our route to India should not be in the hands of a Power so exposed to frequent war as Turkey. The alternatives were the independence of the Khédive or annexation to Great Britain; for it was clear that we had passed the point of tolerating its annexation by any other European Power. The independence of Egypt meant the continuation of the present infamous government of that country; the continuation of personal rule. That foreign despotism, brutal and corrupt, rested upon the slavery of the whole Egyptian people. In these days of danger the Khédive thought it prudent to put about the report that he had reformed. He had sent away his opera troupe; he no longer gambled in his own Government securities; he had made a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade. The wretched Fellaheen, once beaten by the Khédive's officers to extort from them illegal exactions, in addition to the grinding illegal tax, in the name of the Khédive, were now beaten for the same purpose by the same officers in the name of Mr. Goschen. That was the improvement. The Khédive had abolished the slave trade near the Mountains of the Moon at the very moment when he was converting the whole population of the fertile delta of Egypt into slaves.”

From the humanitarian point of view, what a benefit, what a conquest it would be! Mr. Stanley has returned, bringing from his wonderful expedition the news that the Congo is the grand route to the interior of Africa. Only a great power can prevent this discovery from opening the road to the introduction of the slave trade, and from letting loose all the calamities which follow thereon. Soon English missionaries will start in this direction. Other pioneers of civilisation will plant themselves on Lake Nyassa and Lake Tanganyika, and will advance northwards on the Zambesi by way of the Transvaal, now united to the Cape. If English capital and the English spirit of enterprise could penetrate freely into Egypt, a railway would soon unite the Mediterranean to the two great lakes which bear the names of Albert and Victoria, as if to show to whom they ought to belong one day or another. Thus slavery would be finally abolished, and the whole of Africa, traversed from side to side by the currents of civilisation, would for the first time form part of the human family. This immense and decisive conquest over barbarism would be accomplished without the loss of a drop of blood, and at a twentieth or a fiftieth of the cost in money which would be incurred in one year of a Russian war. The road to India would then be secured in a manner far other than that in which the most decisive victory over the Russian armies would secure it—a victory which would never prevent the eighty millions of Russians from becoming a hundred millions before a generation is past.

No doubt if England has her hands too full already, we should be willing to reserve for France this part of pioneer in the task of civilising Africa. Unfortunately, as her population does not increase, France cannot send swarms abroad, and besides, her position in the continent makes it necessary for her to keep all her children for home defence, and to avoid any scattering of her forces. The work

can only be accomplished by England. The adventurous spirit of her travellers, her merchants, and her missionaries, attracts her in this direction, and her insular position gives her full liberty of action. England has already too many interests in Egypt to be able to shirk the duty of extending thither her protection, and sooner or later it will inevitably be done.

I will now briefly sum up the points which I have endeavoured to prove. If England desires to make war with Russia she will be isolated, and therefore, even if victorious, she will obtain no solid result. If, on the other hand, she draws with her Austria and France, that means a general war, with all its horrors and with a great re-adjustment of the map of Europe, in one way or another involving anyhow loss of independence to the smaller free nations; and all this in order to prevent the annexation to Russia of some petty townships of no importance whatever to the general interest. This prospect is so abominable that it can hardly be really contemplated. The whole of Europe in coalition cannot hinder the march of the economic laws, in virtue of which the Turks little by little must make way for the Christians. In ten, twenty, or thirty years, the situation of to-day will reappear, with the difference that the Russians and the southern Slavs will have gained and the Turks have lost in number, while adversity and the natural desire of freedom will give new vigour to Panslavist ideas.

Since the power of Turkey is regularly and hopelessly declining, the evident interest of England is to substitute for a rotten and decomposing barrier another formed of young and promising material. The quicker, the completer the transformation, the better for English interests. Roumania, Servia, Montenegro, Greece, must be enlarged; Bosnia, Herzegovina, Bulgaria, must be enfranchised. If England and Austria would take these young states under their protection, they would be completely subject to the influence of the two powers. If they should be given back to Turkey, it is to Russia as a matter of necessity that they will look for deliverance.

Should Russia obtain by the treaty of peace the passage of the Dardanelles or a slice of territory in Armenia, and should England—most prematurely—consider the Isthmus of Suez menaced, as a consequence, the expedient which would be most efficacious, most economical, most in conformity with the general interests of humanity, would be, not war, but the establishment in Egypt, placed under English protection, of a garrison sufficient to defend on the spot the free navigation of the canal. There is therefore no conceivable circumstance which could oblige England to take up arms.

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