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THE WAR QUESTION IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

SPEECH OF THE EARL OF MALMESBURY.

In the House of Lords, on Monday, April 18, the Earl of Malmesbury said—My lords, I must begin by thanking my noble friend for having given way; I hope your lordships, who have been twice disappointed when I had promised to make a statement as to the state of affairs on the Continent, will believe that the delay arose, not from any reluctance on my part to bring it before your lordships, but from the hope that by waiting three or four days longer I might be able more fully to give that information which you desire to obtain. Your lordship will easily bring to your memory the state of Europe at the commencement of this year; on the very first day of it we were alarmed by the direct intimation, conveyed by the language of the French Emperor to the Austrian Ambassador, that the relations between France and Austria were not in a satisfactory state; we should all desire. That belief on the part of the public was soon strengthened by several incidents, to which I need not now advert. While, however, the relations between France, Austria and Sardinia were in certainly an unsatisfactory, and, indeed, an alarming state, the relations of this country with the whole world were, on the contrary of the most satisfactory nature. My lords, I do not say this with any wish to obtain credit for her Majesty's government. I know that the question of peace or war is in higher hands than those of man, but it is remarkable that the position of this country with relation to all other, both great and small, of both hemispheres, was one of the most profound peace and tranquility. I say this because the events which have taken place found England in a position best suited, or, only by her power, but by the state of tranquility in which she was, to act as mediator and negotiator between the other States. My lords, as to the condition of Austria with regard to this country, I need not go very far to illustrate it.

Your lordships know that the feelings of England toward the Austrian people have been in toward very ancient allies, bound up in the history of this country, in many of our most glorious pages. We both belong to the same Teutonic race, and, from the geographical position of the two countries, no jealousy can arise between them. For all these reasons our sympathies are with the Austrian people. But there are other causes by which these sympathies are somewhat counteracted. The internal governments are entirely different; that of Austria is essentially despotic, ours is essentially free; and this has led to a different feeling toward the government. My lords, it appears to me that it is in Italy especially that the Austrian Government has given rise to this difference of feeling on the part of the English people. No man, or in this country, no man in it, I believe, can deny the undoubted right of Austria to her Italian possessions. It was handed to her by inheritance, by conquest and by treaty. I know of no other right by which her Majesty holds her Crown of Scotland, the Italian Provinces, or some of the colonial dependencies, than conquest and treaty. My lords, these possessions are secured to Austria by treaties which our ancestors have signed. These treaties have held sacred by every person interested in politics. They are a guarantee guaranteed by the honor of England, and most powerful by every government. But it is not on account of the possession of Lombardy that we have feelings of a less sympathetic character, but we have been called on to declare for the management of her own affairs, and in the employment of foreign administration she has been indeed by political reasons to interfere with the other States of Italy; and by doing so, has become unpopular in those countries, and, as far as the population is concerned, so in this. It is in private life a most dangerous and unpopular employment, that of a constable for the preservation of peace in towns of country. Austria has assumed that position in Italy. By keeping in order the Italian States, she has incurred a great deal of unpopularity, and has, in a great measure, weakened her own strength in her own part of the country. No doubt, if her policy changed in Italy, she would be able to draw more soldiers to her political importance in the rest of the peninsula.

With regard to Sardinia, the feeling of the country (I cannot express it more plainly) is, we are all of the same race—there are no sympathies of race or descent between the two countries, but the governments are almost identical, and there is such a resemblance that this country has always taken the greatest interest in the prosperity of Sardinia, and looked with admiration at her political reputation, and at her exertions to promote the cause of constitutional government in Italy. We have always admired the gallant little state, which has kept her liberties, and has made herself a living refutation of those assertions which have been constantly put forward, that constitutional government was impossible in Italy. When she was obliged to have recourse to arms, her friends carried our admiration. More lately she has taken a position that has astonished, (Hear,) slightly in one of example, that she ought to have set herself forward as a model; she seems to have a greater share of military prowess may be a result of constitutional government, but cannot be an object; she seems to have forgotten that every victory gained in no spirit of self-defence, but of aggression, is a fruitless victory. It is due the Italian difficulty has arisen, and for these reasons, we can understand the feelings of Northern Italy, and such as we can such as much regret. I have, my lords, stated the position of Austria and Sardinia, as it appeared to us, and with regard to the public opinion of Italy and of Europe. There remains one other great empire which did not look on with indifference. I need not say, my lords, I mean France. My lords, it is difficult for an Englishman, or an English minister, to understand by what process of reasoning, by what jurist of sound policy, the ruler of that prosperous country has been induced to interfere with other countries' internal affairs. Of all countries in Europe, France has the finest and most equal climate, the finest and most equal soil; she is capable of almost incalculable improvement in wealth, and has ample room for the development of her energies.

My lords the French policy has been to unite Nice (?completely with the cause of Sardinia, and she expected that Sardinia would cede the right to interfere with what took place in Italy, and to give what she considered the electoral, moral and material benefits to that country. The war sets with great regret by her faithful ally, Great Britain. No one has supposed to capable for a moment assigning Austria to legitimate against the subjects of her empire. Such a course would be utterly foreign to our principles and our policy all over the world; it would be equally foreign to our policy to interfere to assist any foreign nation to emancipate itself; we accept revolutions when they are accomplished, and we treat the de facto and not de jure governments. It was, therefore, not easy for us to understand the policy which France seemed desirous to pursue and which we thought grave consequences might follow. My lords, this state of things grew worse every day, and by the end of February reached such an extent that Lord Cowley was sent to Vienna. Before he left Paris he came to a further understanding with the French as to their views on the Italian difficulty, and acquired the assurance of the Emperor of the particular people which they desired to reform and settle. He was received with the greatest kindness and cordiality by the Austrian government. My lords, Lord Cowley and Count Buol, the Austrian prime minister, discussed these points calmly, as became friends and polished men of the world. Lord Cowley believed that if negotiations had proceeded in the course in which they were first laid, and if Lord Cowley had been permitted to be the sole medium between Austria and France, it was not say certainly what would have been the result, but I believe the negotiations would have been further advanced, and we should have had greater hopes of peace than we have at present. (Hear hear.) I say so, because if only one mediator had been employed, Great Britain, through her ambassador, Lord Cowley, would have avoided those difficulties which have arisen from a more public mediation, which has brought many points more before the public eye.

But, my lords, when Lord Cowley returned to Paris, on the 10th of March, he found that some communications had been passed on between Russia and France, the result of which appeared to be that Russia had proposed that a congress should settle the affairs of Italy, and that it should be composed of the five great powers. This was stated to me first by the French ambassador in London. He told me such a congress would take place, and whether I approved of it; he said France entirely approved of it, and asked what England was intend to do. My lords, my conviction as to the best mode of settling this matter was what I have just expressed, but I felt if that should fail, a very heavy responsibility would fall on me if we refused the invitation the Russian Government gave us to enter a congress, and make a combined effort to settle the Italian difficulty. I did not feel justified in refusing, whatever my private opinion might be. I therefore did accept. But, my lords, before we received the Russian proposition, I thought it better, knowing as we did what the ideas of France were with regard to the particular points, and also Count Buol's views, I thought it better to anticipate the Russian Government and submit those points as the basis for the deliberation of the congress. That I did on the 30 of March. On the 12th Baron Brunow brought me the official proposition for a congress, which I accepted; and at the same time he agreed that it should, on the basis of the four points, be submitted to the Russian Government. My lords, the four points were these:

1. The means by which peace may be preserved between Austria and Sardinia.

2. The manner in which the evacuation of the Roman States by the Austrian and French troops might be most conveniently regulated.

3. Whether any, and if any, what reforms should be made in the internal administration of those Italian States.

4. The substitution for the treaties between Austria and the Italian Duchies of a confederation between the States for their internal and external protection.

These were the conditions we proposed for acceptance, with the distinct understanding that the congress should not have any power over which would interfere with the existing territorial arrangement of Italy. Now, my lords, those four points were received and cordially by all the powers, on the basis of the congress; but there were some collateral question which arose. The two collateral questions were, the composition of the congress, and the disarmament of the three powers antagonistic to each other. Your lordships will observe that the question of disarmament involved great difficulty, which such relation should be preserved between Austria and Sardinia. With regard to the question of disarmament, a difference arose. It was proposed by some that the disarmament should be only accepted in principle, and the details considered in the congress as the first question; by others it was considered a much preferable that an effective and real disarmament should precede the congress, that it should be entered into entirely on political grounds and with peaceful aspect. Now, my lords, I have no hesitation in saying that, in the opinion of her Majesty's government, a previous disarmament was preferable; and it seems consistent with sound policy and common sense that persons who were to negotiate and who would have to discuss many difficult questions, should not enter the council chamber armed, and should not have the power, in the event of any disagreement, to have recourse to arms, but should leave the means of violence taken from them before they entered on the discussion. This point was discussed, and is not yet settled. The question of the composition of the congress was, after some discussion, arranged. Your lordships will recollect that the Russian Government proposed that the five great powers should all be represented in congress. This has been the custom of Europe for many years; they have always discussed the great public law of Europe, and there did not appear to either of us that there was any reason why we should depart from the usual custom, and call in any of the other powers.

But, my lords, at the same time it appeared that, as we were going to discuss the Italian question, it was only right that the Italians should, in some form or other, be heard before the congress, and it seemed there would be a great advantage if the Italian nation should be represented, to hear what we proposed, and let Europe know what it had to suggest. We proposed that should be united, and be admitted to be heard whenever we should wish to hear them during our deliberations. This proposal was founded on the course taken under similar circumstances in the congress of 1830. At that time there was a dispute between Belgium and Holland, and the important step of dividing the two and making a new kingdom of Belgium was to be settled in London. At that time, though Holland and Belgium were the principal parties in this negotiation, they were not received into the congress or conference as principals. They were allowed to attend through their representatives in London who were at first called commissioners, but afterward ministers. It appears to me there would be nothing derogatory to the Italian States if they took precedence the congress in that status. There was another proceeding which took place at Laybach in 1821, where three of the great powers—Russia, Austria and Austria—came to certain decisions with regard to Italian affairs. They then invited the Italian States to sit with them, and to take some share in the discussion, though not as principals. But Sardinia, when this proposition was made to her, claimed a right, as one of the antagonists, to be allowed to have a seat in the congress. The whole of the great powers resisted that proposition, and agreed that it would be very inconvenient to admit the Italian representative. It was, however, decided, and that if Sardinia's claim to sit in the congress as a principal, because she was interested in Italian affairs and the peace of Europe, was admitted, she should claim as she made by Switzerland, by the smaller German States, and in fact by any State that might consider itself and be affected by a war on the confines of Italy.

It is therefore determined by all the five powers that Sardinia, together with the other Italian States, should be invited to attend the congress to send representatives or delegates to inform the congress of her wishes, and to lay before it the proposals she would desire to have carried out. That determination took place while the discussions regarding the armament on the disarmament were proceeding. With regard to the question of disarmament, Austria put it forward with considerable tenacity that she could not be called on to act unless Sardinia previously disarmed. That appeared an unfair proposition to her Majesty's government. But, in order to meet Austria, we made this proposition, in order that there should be no delay in entering on the congress—that if Sardinia consented to disarm, we should, in conjunction with France, guarantee her the whole force of the two empires against any attack on the part of Austria. (Hear, hear.) Austria on the 19 of April, sent a very long declaration that she would not attack Sardinia. That fell to the ground because the French Government declined to give that guaranty, and Sardinia declined to enter into that negotiation at all. Therefore Sardinia was never asked to disarm at all, as we could not give her that guaranty. We then proposed to Austria, with which I will not worry your lordships, the case stands at present, in this form. Austria has expressed her willingness to agree to the principle of a disarmament, but they have not agreed as to the time for carrying the manner of that disarmament. Austria proposes an effective disarmament prior to an actual congress. France proposes the principle of a disarmament before the congress, the details of the disarmament to be settled after the meeting of the congress. My belief is that a congress is most incompetent to settle the details of a disarmament, and that the question of disarmament ought to be settled before the congress, by the military and naval officers before.

That question being decided, the Congress would then be in a position to discuss all the subjects to be brought before them with little minds undisturbed by any question relating to the disarmament. (Hear.) Therefore I am very sorry that the question of disarmament has not been settled, and it being one without the settlement of which we cannot enter the congress—that the question of Italy has not been settled. (Hear.) Sardinia has been invited to disarm by Prussia and by us entirely on the same footing as Austria; and Austria has not consented to that disarmament, and has grounded her refusal on her exclusion as a principal from the Congress. It is to me a matter of considerable regret that Sardinia has not well imagine that I am not able to give your lordships a more satisfactory account of the negotiations. I feel all the responsibility and gravity of the situation; and your lordships must know that for our own sakes as individuals, and for our sakes as a public servant, we must have been anxious to effect the accomplishment of the views we entertained; but there is an object much greater than the credit of individuals or of governments, and that object is peace. (Hear, hear.) And my lords, when you consider, if unhappy war is to take place, what that war may be, you will, I think, agree with me that the responsibility of those men who have abused or neglected the occasion to avert it, is great indeed. (Cheers.)

I will not now go over the two chivalrous nations in distant lands, like that which we waged in conjunction with France against Russia in the Crimea. It may possibly happen which I fear can scarcely be settled in our time. (Hear, hear.) It will move persons who, without the slightest patriotism will find, I think they can turn to profit, in which it was the hope of promoting their own desperate objects. (Hear, hear.) It will include every possible contingent, Austria and Sardinia's allies of every country. The war sets with great regret by her faithful ally, Great Britain. No one has supposed to capable for a moment assigning Austria to legitimate against the subjects of her empire. Such a course would be utterly foreign to our principles and our policy all over the world; it would be equally foreign to our policy to interfere to assist any foreign nation to emancipate itself; we accept revolutions when they are accomplished, and we treat the de facto and not de jure governments. It was, therefore, not easy for us to understand the policy which France seemed desirous to pursue and which we thought grave consequences might follow. My lords, this state of things grew worse every day, and by the end of February reached such an extent that Lord Cowley was sent to Vienna. Before he left Paris he came to a further understanding with the French as to their views on the Italian difficulty, and acquired the assurance of the Emperor of the particular people which they desired to reform and settle. He was received with the greatest kindness and cordiality by the Austrian government. My lords, Lord Cowley and Count Buol, the Austrian prime minister, discussed these points calmly, as became friends and polished men of the world. Lord Cowley believed that if negotiations had proceeded in the course in which they were first laid, and if Lord Cowley had been permitted to be the sole medium between Austria and France, it was not say certainly what would have been the result, but I believe the negotiations would have been further advanced, and we should have had greater hopes of peace than we have at present. (Hear hear.) I say so, because if only one mediator had been employed, Great Britain, through her ambassador, Lord Cowley, would have avoided those difficulties which have arisen from a more public mediation, which has brought many points more before the public eye.

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NEW YORK DRY GOODS MARKET.

New York, April 29.—The distributing trade has been light this week; the near buyers have had very little call as yet for spring or summer wear goods, and the bulk of this demand is yet to come in. As the spring season in this climate promises to be a very brief one this year, the consumption of medium weight fabrics will be somewhat lighter than usual. A few second orders are being filled for the fall trade, and there is a little inquiry from the near-by jobbers for novelties to "sort up" with, but the aspect of the market in general is very dull. The auction sales, however, drew out a good attendance of buyers looking for bargains, and there is a good deal of strength felt in the market for staple goods. There is considerable movement as yet in the stocks of woolens adapted to the fall clothing trade, and the foreign goods of this description are partly warehoused.

As soon as the weather becomes warm enough to induce a general replenishment of wardrobes in this climate, a considerable movement in everything appertaining to dress is looked for.

DOMESTIC GOODS.—The stocks of fine cottons continue light, and holders' views consequently keep up, notwithstanding the unfavorable advices from Southwest, which indicate the prospect of a decline in this class of fabric, which would of course produce considerable speculation unless followed by a corresponding change in asking rates here. The decline in cotton which must go lower in the now probable event of a continental war, will also have manifestations a depreciation for reduction from the present prices of fabrics, in fine counts. Heavy sheetings are low enough and selling sales are quite active, and if the spring stock; some holders are not disposed to give way, expecting a stiffening in prices as soon as the demand comes in for such fabrics. The export trade is light except for China, for which market some considerable sales of drills have been negotiated, both from stock and in advance of production, for favorite export styles.

Woolens are quiet. There is no inquiry for spring goods, except a few novelties, but the stock is first hands is moderate, and will soon be wanted. The manufacturers began early in heavy goods, and are very excellent assortment; is in preparation; there is good choice in medium priced fabrics offering; the clothing houses are buying only in small lots as a general thing, but occasionally taking a larger line to secure the control of a desirable pattern.

Brown Sheetings and Shirtings.—The heavy shirtings are somewhat irregular in comparison at Sheetings; the outside figure is rather nominal. Medium sheetings are selling moderately at 7c. light are in fair request at 5½c; 36 inch heavy shirtings are dull, and will accumulate until the Southern demand comes in for fall; the export trade takes off some of this class of goods, but only a small portion of the production.

Bleached Sheetings and Shirtings.—The stock of fine bleached generally continues light; prices generally are unchanged, though some concessions are submitted to in order to effect large advance contracts. Yard wide fine shirtings and extra wide sheetings continue to lead the market in bleached goods; 3-4 are plenty and dull, and low 7-8 are only offered at a reduction.

Drills.—There have been some sales of the standard export styles for China, which have somewhat relieved the market; we quote at 8½c, 27 inch; browns are dull at 7½@8c; bleached selling in small lots at 8c.; blues at 10@10½c.

Ticks of Cottons.—Good cambrics and Silesias continue in demand at full prices, owing to the advanced cost of the Manchester fabric. Denims from 8@9½c. are in fair demand and light stock, and are quoted a shade higher in some instances; the better class of goods receives little attention. Ticks are dull, except some low grades.

Printing Cloths—The lower counts are in request, with a light supply to meet the demand; counts above 56x60 being neglected, and printers cannot get an advance by printing cloths bought at ruling prices. We quote 56x60 at 3½c; a large importation of low and medium cloths is talked of.

Lawns—The assortment of Portsmouth and Hoolley is kept up, and good sales are making at 11@12c for the former handkerchiefs. The printing of these goods this year has never been supposed, and the season thus far has been a very successful one.

Prints—Madders and Chromes, in small figured dark grounds, meet with inquiry; large light styles are crowded, and the large dark work which has thus far come forward, finding buyers, has been sailed up again. The season has been one of fair profit to printers who made their own fabrics, as well as to those who bought or contracted largely previous to the advance.

Challies—There is little inquiry with first hands as yet. The stock has been in hand for American Challies, solely from the overslaughing of the market with low foreign goods. The work done by the American companies this season has been very beautiful; the production has of course been limited by the extreme low prices.

Cloths, Cassimeres, Etc.—The fall clothing houses are buying small lots of low-priced black doeskins, dark mixed heavy cassimeres, etc., but the trade is as yet light.

In light goods there is an movement.

Philadelphia goods of all kinds are selling in small lots without urging. Kersey, as noticed in our last, are suffering under a speculative demand.

FOREIGN GOODS.—The movement has been chiefly through the auction rooms, which have had a heavy and a moderate list of lots; we render our acknowledgments to the public generally as usual, for favors in the public generally as usual, for favors, either in the city or country. We must give a call when we have anything to offer, and we will endeavor to do public generally as usual, for favors, either in the city or country. We must give a call when we have anything to offer, and we will endeavor to do our little assistance, as we hope our little assistance, as we hope our little assistance, as we hope