

not endeavor to spread destruction around them and to form plans of aggrandisement and plunder on every side.

Men bred in the school of the house of Bourbon could not be expected to act otherwise. They could not have lived so long under their ancient masters without imbibing the restless ambition, the perfidy, and the insatiable spirit of the race. They have imitated the practice of their great prototype, and, through their whole career of mischiefs and of crimes, have done no more than servilely trace the steps of their own Louis XIV. If they have overrun countries and ravaged them, they have done it upon Bourbon principles; if they have ruined and dethroned sovereigns, it is entirely after the Bourbon manner; if they have even fraternized with the people of foreign countries and pretended to make their cause their own, they have only faithfully followed the Bourbon example. They have constantly had Louis, the Grand Monarque, in their eye. But it may be said that this example was long ago and that we ought not to refer to a period so distant.

True, it is a remote period applied to the man, but not so of the principle. The principle was never extinct; nor has its operation been suspended in France, except, perhaps, for a short interval during the administration of Cardinal Fleury; and my complaint against the Republic of France is, not that she has generated new crimes — not that she has promulgated new mischief — but that she has adopted and acted upon the principles which have been so fatal to Europe under the practice of the house of Bourbon.

It is said that wherever the French have gone they have introduced revolution — they have sought for the means of disturbing neighboring states and have not been content with mere conquest. What is this but adopting the ingenious scheme of Louis XIV? He was not content with merely over-

running a state. Whenever he came into a new territory, he established what he called his chamber of claims, a most convenient device by which he inquired whether the conquered country or province had any dormant or disputed claims—any cause of complaint—any unsettled demand upon any other state or province — upon which he might wage war upon such state, thereby discover again ground for new devastation, and gratify his ambition by new acquisitions. What have the republicans done more atrocious, more Jacobinical than this? Louis went to war with Holland. His pretext was that Holland had not treated him with sufficient respect. A very just and proper cause for war indeed!

This, sir, leads me to an example which I think seasonable, and worthy the attention of his Majesty's ministers. When our Charles II, as a short exception to the policy of his reign, made the triple alliance for the protection of Europe, and particularly of Holland, against the ambition of Louis XIV, what was the conduct of that great, virtuous, and most able statesman, M. de Witt, when the confederates came to deliberate upon the terms upon which they should treat with the French monarch? When it was said that he had made unprincipled conquests, and that he ought to be forced to surrender them all, what was the language of that great and wise man?

"No," said he; "I think we ought not to look back to the origin of the war so much as the means of putting an end to it. If you had united in time to prevent these conquests, well; but now that he has made them, he stands upon the ground of conquest, and we must agree to treat with him, not with reference to the origin of the conquest, but with regard to his present posture. He has those places, and some of them we must be content to give up as the means of peace;

for conquest will always successfully set up its claims to indemnification."

Such was the language of this minister, who was the ornament of his time; and such, in my mind, ought to be the language of statesmen with regard to the French at this day; and the same ought to have been said at the formation of the confederacy. It was true that the French had overrun Savoy; but they had overrun it upon Bourbon principles; and, having gained this and other conquests before the confederacy was formed, they ought to have treated with her rather for future security than for past correction.

States in possession, whether monarchical or republican, will claim indemnity in proportion to their success; and it will never so much be inquired by what right they gained possession as by what means they can be prevented from enlarging their depredations.

Such is the safe practice of the world; and such ought to have been the conduct of the powers when the reduction of Savoy made them coalesce. The right honorable gentleman may know more of the secret particulars of their overrunning Savoy than I do; but certainly, as they have come to my knowledge, it was a most Bourbon-like act.

A great and justly celebrated historian, I mean Mr. Hume, a writer certainly estimable in many particulars, but who is a childish lover of princes, talks of Louis XIV in very magnificent terms. But he says of him that though he managed his enterprises with great skill and bravery he was unfortunate in this, that he never got a good and fair pretence for war.

This he reckons among his misfortunes. Can we say more of the republican French? In seizing on Savoy I think they made use of the words "*convénances morales et physiques.*"¹

¹ "Conveniences moral and physical."

These were her reasons. A most Bourbon-like phrase. And I therefore contend that as we never scrupled to treat with the princes of the house of Bourbon on account of their rapacity, their thirst of conquest, their violation of treaties, their perfidy, and their restless spirit, so, I contend, we ought not to refuse to treat with their republican imitators.

Ministers could not pretend ignorance of the unprincipled manner in which the French had seized on Savoy. The Sardinian minister complained of the aggression, and yet no stir was made about it. The courts of Europe stood by and saw the outrage; and our ministers saw it. The right honorable gentleman will in vain, therefore, exert his powers to persuade me of the interest he takes in the preservation of the rights of nations, since, at the moment when an interference might have been made with effect, no step was taken, no remonstrance made, no mediation negotiated, to stop the career of conquest.

All the pretended and hypocritical sensibility "for the rights of nations, and for social order," with which we have since been stunned, cannot impose upon those who will take the trouble to look back to the period when this sensibility ought to have roused us into seasonable exertion. At that time, however, the right honorable gentleman makes it his boast that he was prevented, by a sense of neutrality, from taking any measures of precaution on the subject. I do not give the right honorable gentleman much credit for his spirit of neutrality on the occasion. It flowed from the sense of the country at the time, the great majority of which was clearly and decidedly against all interruptions being given to the French in their desire of regulating their own internal government.

But this neutrality, which respected only the internal rights

of the French, and from which the people of England would never have departed but for the impolitic and hypocritical cant which was set up to arouse their jealousy and alarm their fears, was very different from the great principle of political prudence which ought to have actuated the councils of the nation on seeing the first steps of France toward a career of external conquest.

My opinion is, that when the unfortunate King of France offered to us, in the letter delivered by M. Chauvelin and M. Talleyrand, and even entreated us to mediate between him and the allied powers of Austria and Prussia, they [ministers] ought to have accepted of the offer and exerted their influence to save Europe from the consequence of a system which was then beginning to manifest itself. It was at least a question of prudence; and as we had never refused to treat and to mediate with the old princes on account of their ambition or their perfidy we ought to have been equally ready now, when the same principles were acted upon by other men. I must doubt the sensibility which could be so cold and so indifferent at the proper moment for its activity.

I fear that there were at that moment the germs of ambition rising in the mind of the right honorable gentleman, and that he was beginning, like others, to entertain hopes that something might be obtained out of the coming confusion. What but such a sentiment could have prevented him from overlooking the fair occasion that was offered for preventing the calamities with which Europe was threatened? What but some such interested principle could have made him forego the truly honorable task by which his administration would have displayed its magnanimity and its power?

But for some such feeling, would not this country, both in wisdom and in dignity, have interfered, and, in conjunction with the others powers, have said to France:

“You ask for a mediation. We will mediate with candor and sincerity, but we will at the same time declare to you our apprehensions.

“We do not trust to your assertion of a determination to avoid all foreign conquest, and that you are desirous only of settling your own constitution, because your language is contradicted by experience and the evidence of facts. You are Frenchmen, and you cannot so soon have forgotten and thrown off the Bourbon principles in which you were educated.

“You have already imitated the bad practice of your princes. You have seized on Savoy without a color of right. But here we take our stand. Thus far you have gone, and we cannot help it; but you must go no farther.

“We will tell you distinctly what we shall consider as an attack on the balance and the security of Europe; and, as the condition of our interference, we will tell you also the securities that we think essential to the general repose.”

This ought to have been the language of his Majesty's ministers when their mediation was solicited; and something of this kind they evidently thought of when they sent the instructions to Petersburg which they have mentioned this night, but upon which they never acted.

Having not done so, I say they have no right to talk now about the violated rights of Europe, about the aggression of the French, and about the origin of the war in which this country was so suddenly afterward plunged. Instead of this, what did they do? They hung back; they avoided explanation; they gave the French no means of satisfying them; and I repeat my proposition — when there is a question of peace and war between two nations, that government feels itself in the wrong which refuses to state with clearness and precision what she should consider as a satisfaction and a pledge of peace.

Sir, if I understand the true precepts of the Christian religion as set forth in the New Testament, I must be permitted to say that there is no such thing as a rule or doctrine by which we are directed or can be justified in waging a war for religion. The idea is subversive of the very foundations upon which it stands, which are those of peace and good will among men. Religion never was and never can be a justifiable cause of war; but it has been too often grossly used as the pretext and the apology for the most unprincipled wars.

I have already said, and I repeat it, that the conduct of the French to foreign nations cannot be justified. They have given great cause of offence, but certainly not to all countries alike. The right honorable gentlemen opposite to me have made an indiscriminate catalogue of all the countries which the French have offended, and, in their eagerness to throw odium on the nation, have taken no pains to investigate the sources of their several quarrels. I will not detain you, sir, by entering into the long detail which has been given of their aggressions and their violences; but let me mention Sardinia as one instance which has been strongly insisted upon. Did the French attack Sardinia when at peace with them? No such thing.

The King of Sardinia had accepted of a subsidy from Great Britain; and Sardinia was, to all intents and purposes, a belligerent power. Several other instances might be mentioned; but though perhaps, in the majority of instances, the French may be unjustifiable, is this the moment for us to dwell upon these enormities — to waste our time, and inflame our passions by criminating and recriminating upon each other? There is no end to such a war.

I have somewhere read—I think in Sir Walter Raleigh's "History of the World"—of a most bloody and fatal battle

which was fought by two opposite armies, in which almost all the combatants on both sides were killed, "because," says the historian, "though they had offensive weapons on both sides, they had none for defence."

So, in this war of words, if we are to use only offensive weapons, if we are to indulge only in invective and abuse, the contest must be eternal.

If this war of reproach and invective is to be countenanced, may not the French with equal reason complain of the outrages and horrors committed by the powers opposed to them? If we must not treat with the French on account of the iniquity of their former transactions, ought we not to be as scrupulous of connecting ourselves with other powers equally criminal? Surely, sir, if we must be thus rigid in scrutinizing the conduct of an enemy, we ought to be equally careful in not committing ourselves, our honor, and our safety, with an ally who has manifested the same want of respect for the rights of other nations.

Surely, if it is material to know the character of a power with whom you are about only to treat for peace, it is more material to know the character of allies with whom you are about to enter into the closest connection of friendship, and for whose exertions you are about to pay. Now, sir, what was the conduct of your own allies to Poland? Is there a single atrocity of the French, in Italy, in Switzerland, in Egypt, if you please, more unprincipled and inhuman than that of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, in Poland?

What has there been in the conduct of the French to foreign powers; what in the violation of solemn treaties; what in the plunder, devastation, and dismemberment of unoffending countries; what in the horrors and murders perpetrated upon the subdued victims of their rage in any district which

they have overrun,—worse than the conduct of those three great powers in the miserable, devoted, and trampled-on kingdom of Poland, and who have been, or are, our allies in this war for religion and social order and the rights of nations? “Oh! but you regretted the partition of Poland!”

Yes, regretted! you regretted the violence, and that is all you did. You united yourselves with the actors; you in fact, by your acquiescence, confirmed the atrocity. But they are your allies; and though they overran and divided Poland, there was nothing, perhaps, in the manner of doing it which stamped it with peculiar infamy and disgrace.

The hero of Poland [Suwaroff], perhaps, was merciful and mild! He was “as much superior to Bonaparte in bravery, and in the discipline which he maintained, as he was superior in virtue and humanity!” He was animated by the purest principles of Christianity and was restrained in his career by the benevolent precepts which it inculcates!

Was he?

Let unfortunate Warsaw, and the miserable inhabitants of the suburb of Praga in particular, tell! What do we understand to have been the conduct of this magnanimous hero, with whom, it seems, Bonaparte is not to be compared? He entered the suburb of Praga, the most populous suburb of Warsaw; and there he let his soldiery loose on the miserable, unarmed, and unresisting people. Men, women, and children, nay, infants at the breast, were doomed to one indiscriminate massacre! Thousands of them were inhumanly, wantonly butchered!

And for what?

Because they had dared to join in a wish to meliorate their own condition as a people, and to improve their constitution, which had been confessed by their own sovereign to be in

want of amendment. And such is the hero upon whom the cause of religion and social order is to repose.

And such is the man whom we praise for his discipline and his virtue, and whom we hold out as our boast and our dependence; while the conduct of Bonaparte unfits him to be even treated with as an enemy?

But the behavior of the French toward Switzerland raises all the indignation of the right honorable gentleman and inflames his eloquence. I admire the indignation which he expresses, and I think he felt it, in speaking of this country, so dear and so congenial to every man who loves the sacred name of liberty. “He who loves liberty,” says the right honorable gentleman, “thought himself at home on the favored and happy mountains of Switzerland, where she seemed to have taken up her abode under a sort of implied compact, among all other states, that she should not be disturbed in this her chosen asylum.”

I admire the eloquence of the right honorable gentleman in speaking of this country of liberty and peace, to which every man would desire, once in his life at least, to make a pilgrimage! But who, let me ask him, first proposed to the Swiss people to depart from the neutrality which was their chief protection and to join the confederacy against the French?

I aver that a noble relation of mine [Lord Robert Fitzgerald], then the minister of England to the Swiss Cantons, was instructed in direct terms to propose to the Swiss, by an official note, to break from the safe line they had laid down for themselves, and to tell them “in such a contest neutrality was criminal.”

I know that noble lord too well, though I have not been in habits of intercourse with him of late, from the employments

in which he has been engaged, to suspect that he would have presented such a paper without the express instructions of his court, or that he would have gone beyond those instructions.

But was it only to Switzerland that this sort of language was held? What was our language also to Tuscany and Genoa? An honorable gentleman [Mr. Canning] has denied the authenticity of a pretended letter which has been circulated, and ascribed to Lord Harvey. He says it is all a fable and a forgery.

Be it so; but is it also a fable that Lord Harvey did speak in terms to the Grand Duke which he considered as offensive and insulting? I cannot tell, for I was not present; but was it not and is it not believed? Is it a fable that Lord Harvey went into the closet of the Grand Duke, laid his watch on the table, and demanded in a peremptory manner that he should, within a certain number of minutes (I think I have heard within a quarter of an hour), determine, aye or no, to dismiss the French minister and order him out of his dominions, with the menace that if he did not the English fleet should bombard Leghorn?

Will the honorable gentleman deny this also?

I certainly do not know it from my own knowledge; but I know that persons of the first credit, then at Florence, have stated these facts, and that they have never been contradicted. It is true that upon the Grand Duke's complaint of this indignity Lord Harvey was recalled; but was the principle recalled? was the mission recalled? Did not ministers persist in the demand which Lord Harvey had made, perhaps ungraciously? and was not the Grand Duke forced in consequence to dismiss the French minister? and did they not drive him to enter into an unwilling war with the republic?

It is true that he afterward made his peace, and that, having done so, he was treated severely and unjustly by the French; but what do I conclude from all this but that we have no right to be scrupulous, we who have violated the respect due to peaceable powers ourselves, in this war, which, more than any other that ever afflicted human nature, has been distinguished by the greatest number of disgusting and outrageous insults by the great to the smaller powers.

And I infer from this, also, that the instances not being confined to the French, but having been perpetrated by every one of the allies, and by England as much as by others, we have no right, either in personal character or from our own deportment, to refuse to treat with the French on this ground.

Need I speak of your conduct to Genoa also? Perhaps the note delivered by Mr. Drake was also a forgery. Perhaps the blockade of the port never took place.

It is impossible to deny the facts, which were so glaring at the time. It is a painful thing to me, sir, to be obliged to go back to these unfortunate periods of the history of this war and of the conduct of this country; but I am forced to the task by the use which has been made of the atrocities of the French as an argument against negotiation. I think I have said enough to prove that if the French have been guilty we have not been innocent. Nothing but determined incredulity can make us deaf and blind to our own acts, when we are so ready to yield an assent to all the reproaches which are thrown out on the enemy, and upon which reproaches we are gravely told to continue the war.

"But the French," it seems, "have behaved ill everywhere. They seized on Venice, which had preserved the most exact neutrality; or rather," as it is hinted, "had manifested symp-