

BULWER-LYTTON

BEDWARD GEORGE EARLE LYTTON-BULWER, LORD LYTTON, British novelist, poet, playwright, and politician, was born at London, May 25, 1803, and died at Torquay, Devonshire, Jan. 18, 1873. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he entered Parliament in 1831, having married meanwhile an Irish beauty (Rosina Wheeler), against his mother's wishes, and from whom he separated in 1836, after bearing him a daughter and a son, the latter the politician, poet, and diplomatist, Earl Lytton. In 1838, Bulwer-Lytton was created a baronet and assumed, in accordance with his mother's will, the name of Lytton, and in 1866 rose to the peerage. While a Commoner, his versatile gifts manifested themselves as a speaker and statesman, for he had become, in 1853, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and had made at least two notable speeches, one, in 1855, on the Crimean War (here appended), and one, in 1859, on Lord Derby's Reform Bill of that year. His reputation had meanwhile been made in literary fields, in the production of plays such as "Money," "Richelieu," and "The Lady of Lyons," and in fiction in such popular novels as "Pelham," "Devereux," "Paul Clifford," "Eugene Aram," "Godolphin," "The Last Days of Pompeii," "Harold," "Night and Morning," "The Last of the Barons," "The Caxtons," "My Novel,"—to name but a few of his earlier and brilliant successes as a novelist and writer of plays. Prolific as he was, and writing with great rapidity, it is surprising how much of his work endures, and how widely varied were his themes in so many different departments of literary, social, and political activity. His later stories of note are: "What will He do with It?" "Kenelm Chillingly," "The Parisians," "The Coming Race," and "Pausanias." Among his miscellaneous works are his translation of Schiller's poems, the odes of Horace, "King Arthur," "The New Timon," and "The Last Tales of Miletus."

ON THE CRIMEAN WAR

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 4, 1855

SIR,—The right honorable gentleman the member for Manchester [Mr. Milner Gibson], toward the close of his able speech, summed up his strongest objections to the continuance of the war by asking how it would profit the country. In answer to that question let me remind the right honorable gentleman of the laudable earnestness with which, in a recent debate, he assured the House that he, and those with whom he concurred in the policy to be adopted for the restoration of peace, were no less anxious than we are for the due maintenance of the national honor.

(72)

I cordially believe him; and when he asks how the continuance of the war can profit the country, I answer, because the continuance of the war is as yet essential to the vindication of the national honor, and because the national honor is the bulwark of the national interests. For there is this distinction between individuals and nations: with the first a jealous tenacity of honor may be a mere sentiment, with the last it is a condition of power.

If you lower the honor of a man in the eyes of his equals, he may still say, "My fortune is not attacked, my estate is unimpaired, the laws still protect my rights and my person, I can still command my independence and bestow my beneficence upon those who require my aid;" but if you lower the honor of a nation in the eyes of other states, and especially a nation like England, which owes her position, not to her territories, but to her character; not to the amount of her armies, nor even to the pomp of her fleets, but to a general belief in her high spirit and indomitable will—her interests will be damaged in proportion to the disparagement of her name. You do not only deface her scutcheons, you strike down her shield. Her credit will be affected, her commerce will suffer at its source.

Take the awe from her flag, and you take the wealth from her merchants; in future negotiations her claims will be disputed, and she can never again interfere with effect against violence and wrong in behalf of liberty and right.

These are some of the consequences which might affect the interests of this country if other nations could say, even unjustly, that England had grown unmindful of her honor. But would they not say it with indisputable justice if, after encouraging Turkey to a war with her most powerful enemy, we could accept any terms of peace which Turkey herself

indignantly refuses to indorse? Honor, indeed, is a word on which many interpreters may differ, but at least all interpreters must agree upon this, that the essential of honor is fidelity to engagements. What are the engagements by which we have pledged ourselves to Turkey? Freedom from the aggressions of Russia. Is that all? No; reasonable guaranties that the aggression shall not be renewed. But would any subject of the Ottoman Empire think such engagements fulfilled by a peace that would not take from Russia a single one of her fortresses, a single one of her ships, by which she now holds Constantinople itself under the very mouth of her cannon?

Sir, both the members for Manchester have the merit of consistency in the cause they espouse. They were against this war from the first. But I cannot conceive how any government which led us into this war and is responsible for all it has cost us should now suddenly adopt the language of peace societies, and hold it as a crime if we push to success the enterprise which they commenced by a failure.

I approach the arguments of the right honorable member for the University of Oxford [Mr. Gladstone] with a profound respect for his rare intellect and eloquence, and still more for that genuine earnestness which assures us that if he ever does diverge into sophistry and paradox it is not till he has religiously puzzled his conscience into a belief of their simplicity and truth.

The main argument on which the right honorable gentleman rests the vindication of the views he entertains is this: He says, "I supported the war at the commencement because then it was just; I would now close the war because its object may be attained by negotiation."

That is his proposition; I would state it fairly. But what

at the commencement was the object of the war, stripped of all diplomatic technicalities? The right honorable gentleman would not, I am sure, accept the definition of his ex-colleague, the right honorable member for Southwark [Sir William Molesworth], that one object of the war was to punish Russia for her insolence—a doctrine I would never have expected in so accomplished a philosopher as my right honorable friend, the pupil of Bentham and the editor of "Hobbes." Either in war or legislation, punishment is only a means which has for its object the prevention of further crime.

The right honorable gentleman the member for the University of Oxford will no doubt say to me, The object was the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire. But how did he describe that object in his speech at Manchester in September, 1853? He said then to that important audience (I quote his very words):

"Remember the independence and integrity of Turkey are not like the independence of England and France. It is a government full of anomaly, of difficulty, and distress."

This is the mode in which, simultaneously with those articles in the "Times" quoted by the right honorable member for Manchester [Mr. Gibson], on the very eve of a war that the right honorable member for the University of Oxford then believed to be just, and when he would naturally place the object in the most favorable light his convictions would permit before the people whose ardor it became his duty to rouse, whose pockets it was his office to tax—this is the laudatory mode in which the right honorable gentleman warmed the enthusiasm of his listeners to acknowledge the justice of his object; and is the statesman who at the onset could take so chilling a view of all the great human interests involved in

this struggle likely to offer us unprejudiced and effective counsels for securing to Turkey that independence and integrity in which he sees anomaly and distress and in which we see the safeguard to Europe?

The right honorable gentleman complains that the terms in which our object is to be sought are now unwisely extended. Who taught us to extend them? Who made not only the terms but the object itself indefinite? Was it not the head of the government of which the right honorable gentleman was so illustrious a member? Did not Lord Aberdeen, when repeatedly urged to state to what terms of peace he would apply the epithets "safe" and "honorable," as repeatedly answer, "That must depend on the fortune of war; and the terms will be very different if we receive them at Constantinople or impose them at St. Petersburg"?

Sir, if I may say so without presumption, I always discourage that language. I always held the doctrine that if we once went to war it should be for nothing more and nothing less than justice. [Mr. M. Gibson: "Hear, hear!"]

Ay, but do not let me dishonestly catch that cheer, for I must add, "and also for adequate securities that justice will be maintained." No redresses should induce us to ask for less—no conquests justify us in demanding more. But when the right honorable gentleman, being out of office, now also asserts that doctrine, why did he not refuse his sanction to the noble earl, who took the whole question out of the strict limits of abstract justice the moment he made the indefinite arbitration of military success the only principle to guide us in the objects and terms of peace?

And if the right honorable gentleman rigidly desired to limit our war to one of protection, how could he have consented to sit in a cabinet which at once changed its whole

character into a war of invasion? All the complications which now surround us—all the difficulties in the way of negotiation which now perplex even the right honorable gentleman's piercing intellect—date from the day you landed in the Crimea and laid siege to Sebastopol. I do not say your strategy was wrong; but, wrong or right, when you invaded the Crimea you inevitably altered the conditions on which to establish peace.

The right honorable gentleman was a party to that campaign, and he cannot now shrink from its logical consequences. Those consequences are the difficulties comprehended in the third article—the lie that your policy would give to your actions if you accepted the conditions proposed by Russia; for why did you besiege Sebastopol but because it was that fortress which secured to Russia her preponderance in the Black Sea, and its capture or dismantlement was the material guarantee you then and there pledged yourselves to obtain for the independence of Turkey and the security of Europe? And if the fortunes of war do not allow you yet to demand that Sebastopol be disfortified, they do authorize you to demand an equivalent in Russia's complete resignation of a fleet in the Black Sea; for at this moment not one Russian ship can venture to show itself in those waters.

If the right honorable gentleman is perplexed to determine what mode of limiting the Russian preponderance can be invented, one rule for his guidance at least he is bound to consider imperative—namely, that the mode of limitation must be one which shall not content England alone, but the ally to whom the faith of England was pledged by the cabinet which the right honorable gentleman adorned. It is strange to what double uses the right honorable gentleman can put an ally. When we wished to inquire into the causes of calam-

ities purely our own—calamities which the right honorable gentleman thinks were so exaggerated—an exaggeration that inquiry has not served to dispel—then we are told, “What are you doing? Take care! To inquire into the fate of an English army may offend and alienate our ally, France.”

But now, when the right honorable gentleman would have desired us to patch up a peace, he forgets altogether that we have an ally upon the face of the globe. He recommends us singly to creep out of the quarrel with Russia, and would leave us equally exposed to the charge of desertion by Turkey and of perfidy by France. But it has been insinuated, I know not on what authority, that France would have listened to these terms if we had advised it. If this be true, I thank our government for declining such a responsibility. For if, in that noble courtesy which has characterized the Emperor of the French in his intercourse with us, he had yielded to your insistence and consented to resume and complete negotiations based upon terms he had before refused, who amongst us can lay his hand on his heart and say that a peace which would have roused the indignation even of our commercial and comparatively pacific people might not so have mortified the pride of that nation of soldiers to which the name of Napoleon was the title-deed to empire, as to have shaken the stability of a throne which now seems essential to the safety and social order of the civilized globe?

“Oh,” says the right honorable gentleman the member for the University of Oxford, with a solecism in logic which I could never have expected from so acute a reasoner, “see how Russia has come down to terms which she before so contemptuously scouted. In February, 1853, she declared such and such terms were incompatible with her honor; she would

dictate terms to Turkey only at St. Petersburg, under the frown of the Czar, or at the headquarters of the Russian camp; and now see how mild and equitable Russia has become.”

Yes; but how was that change effected? By diplomacy and negotiations? By notes and protocols? No—these had been tried in vain; the result of these was the levying of armaments—the seizure of provinces—the massacre of Sinope. That change was effected by the sword—effected in those fields of Alma and Inkerman to which the right honorable gentleman so touchingly appealed—effected by those military successes inspired by the passion for fame and glory on which, as principles of action, his humanity is so bitterly sarcastic. The right honorable gentleman dwelt in a Christian spirit, which moved us all, on the gallant blood that had been shed by us, our allies, and even by our foes in this unhappy quarrel. But did it never occur to him that all the while he was speaking this question was irresistibly forcing itself on the minds of his English audience:

“And shall all this blood have been shed in vain? Was it merely to fertilize the soil of the Crimea with human bones? And shall we, who have buried two thirds of our army, still leave a fortress at Sebastopol and a Russian fleet in the Black Sea, eternally to menace the independence of that ally whom our heroes have perished to protect?”

And would not that blood have been shed in vain? Talk of recent negotiations effecting the object for which you commenced the war! Let us strip those negotiations of diplomatic quibbles and look at them like men of common sense. Do not let gentlemen be alarmed lest I should weary them with going at length over such hackneyed ground—two minutes will suffice.

The direct question involved is to terminate the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea; and with this is involved another question—to put an end to the probabilities of renewed war arising out of the position which Russia would henceforth occupy in those waters. Now, the first proposition of Russia is to open to all ships the passage of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. “That is the right thing,” says the right honorable member for Manchester.

Yes, so it would be if Russia had not the whole of that coast bristling with fortresses; but while these fortresses remain it is simply to say: Let Russia increase as she pleases the maritime forces she can direct against Turkey, sheltered by all the strongholds she has established on the coasts, and let France and England keep up, if they please, the perpetual surveillance of naval squadrons in a sea, as the note of a French minister well expresses it, “where they could find neither a port of refuge nor an arsenal of supply.”

This does not, on the one hand, diminish the preponderance of Russia; it only says you may, at great expense, and with great disadvantages, keep standing navies to guard against its abuse; and on the other hand, far from putting an end to the probabilities of war, it leaves the fleets of Russia perpetually threatening Turkey, and the fleets of England and France perpetually threatening Russia. And while such a position could hardly fail sooner or later to create jealousy between England and France, I can scarcely imagine any disease that would more rot away the independence of Turkey than this sort of chronic protection established in her own waters.

The second proposition, which retains the *mare clausum*, not only leaves the preponderance of Russia exactly what it was before the war began, but, in granting to the Sultan the

power to summon his allies at any moment he may require them, exposes you to the fresh outbreak of hostilities whenever the Sultan might even needlessly take alarm; but with these differences between your present and future position: first, that Russia would then be strengthened and you might be unprepared; and next, that while, as I said before, now not one Russian flag can show itself on those waters, you might then, before you could enter the Straits, find that flag waving in triumph over the walls of the Seraglio.

And to prove that this is no imaginary danger just hear what is said upon the subject by the practical authority of Marshal Marmont, which was loosely referred to the other night by the noble lord the member for London [Lord John Russell], and remember the Marshal is speaking at a period when the force of Russia in those parts was far inferior to what it would be now if you acceded to her terms: “At Sebastopol Russia has twelve sail of the line, perfectly armed and equipped.” Let me here observe that the Marshal recommends that this number should be increased to thirty, and says that if Sebastopol were made the harbor of a powerful navy nothing could prevent Russia from imposing laws on the Mediterranean—

“In the immediate neighborhood a division of the army is cantoned; it could embark in two days and in three more reach Constantinople—the distance between Sebastopol and the Bosphorus being 180 miles, and a speedy passage almost a matter of certainty, owing to the prevalence of northerly winds and the constant current from the Euxine toward the Sea of Marmora. Thus, on the apprehension of interference from the allied fleet, that of Russia would pass and take up such a position as circumstances might dictate, while an army of 60,000 men would cross the Danube, pass the Balkan, and place itself at Adrianople; these movements

being effected with such promptitude and facility that no circumstances whatever could prevent their being carried into execution."

And now I put it to the candor of those distinguished advocates for the Russian proposals, whose sincerity I am sure is worthy of their character and talents, whether the obvious result of both these propositions for peace is not to keep your powers in the unrelaxing attitude of war—one of those powers always goaded on by cupidity and ambition, the other three always agitated by jealousy and suspicion? And is it on such a barrel of gunpowder as this that you would ask the world to fall asleep? But, say the honorable gentlemen, "The demand of the western powers on the third article is equally inadequate to effect the object."

Well, I think there they have very much proved their case, very much proved how fortunate it was that negotiations were broken off. However when a third point is to be raised again let us clear it of all difficulties and raise it not in a Congress of Vienna but within the walls of Sebastopol.

Sir, before I pass from this part of the subject let me respectfully address one suggestion to those earnest and distinguished reasoners who would make peace their paramount object. You desire peace as soon as possible; do you think you take the right way to obtain it? Do you think that when Russia can say, "Here are members of the very government who commenced the war declaring that our moderation has removed all ground for further hostilities; they are backed by the most conspicuous leaders of the popular party; the representatives of those great manufacturing interests which so often influence, and sometimes control, the councils of a commercial State;" do you think that Russia will not add

also: "These are signs that encourage us, the Russian Empire, to prosecute the war; they are signs that our enemy foresees the speedy exhaustion of its means, the relaxing ardor of its people, and must, after some bravado, accept the terms which are recommended in the National Assembly by experienced statesmen and popular tribunes"?

You are leading Russia to deceive herself, to deceive her subjects. You are encouraging her to hold out, and every speech you make in such a strain a Russian general might read to his troops, a Russian minister might translate to trembling merchants and beggared nobles, if he desired to animate them all to new exertions against your country. I do not wish to malign and misrepresent you. I respect the courage with which you avow unpopular opinions. I know you are patriots as sincere as we are. You have proved your attachment to the abstract principle of freedom; but do you reflect whether you make a right exercise of your powers if, when we are sending our sons and kinsmen to assist a cause which would at least secure weakness from oppression, and the free development of one nation from the brute force of another, you take the part of the enemy against your country? [Mr. M. Gibson: "No, no!"] "No, no?"

What means that denial? You take part with the enemy when you say he is in the right, and against your country when you say we are in the wrong. You transfer from our cause to his that consciousness of superior justice which gives ardor to the lukewarm, endurance to the hesitating, and by vindicating his quarrel you invigorate his arms.

If I now turn to the amendments before the House, I know not one that I can thoroughly approve; not, of course, that by the honorable member for the University of Oxford [Sir William Heathcote], not that of the honorable member for