

of Europe without largely satisfying the claims of Greece; and great as those claims might be, if that were the case, it was surely unwise in Greece to waste its treasure and its blood.

If, on the other hand, as her Majesty's government believed, the end of this struggle would not be a partition of the Ottoman empire, but that the wisdom and experience of all the powers and governments would come to the conclusion that the existence and strengthening of the Ottoman government was necessary to the peace of Europe, and without it long and sanguinary and intermitting struggles must inevitably take place, it was equally clear to us that when the settlement occurred, all those rebellious tributary principalities that have lavished their best blood and embarrassed their finances for generations would necessarily be but scurvily treated, and that Greece even under this alternative would find that she was wise in following the advice of England and not mixing in a fray so fatal.

Well, my lords and gentlemen, has not the event proved the justice and accuracy of that view? At this moment, though Greece has not interfered, fortunately for herself—though she has not lavished the blood of her citizens and wasted her treasure, under the Treaty of Berlin she has the opportunity of obtaining a greater increase of territory than will be obtained by any of the rebellious principalities that have lavished their blood and wasted their resources in this fierce contest. I should like to see that view answered by those who accuse us of misleading Greece.

We gave to her the best advice; fortunately for Greece she followed it and I will hope that following it with discretion and moderation she will not lose the opportunity we have secured for her in the advantages she may yet reap.

I would make one more remark on this subject which will

soon occupy the attention of many who are here present. It has been said we have misled and deserted Greece because we were the power which took steps that Greece should be heard before the Congress.

Why did we do that?

Because we have ever expressed our opinion that in the elevation of the Greek race—not merely the subjects of the King of Greece—one of the best chances of the improvement of society under the Ottoman rule would be found, and that it was expedient that the rights of the Greek race should be advocated by that portion of it which enjoyed an independent political existence; and all this time, too, let it be recollected that my noble friend was unceasing in his efforts to obtain such a settlement of the claims, or rather, I should say, the desires of Greece with the Porte as would conduce greatly to the advantage of that kingdom. And not without success.

The proposition of Lord Salisbury for the rectification of the frontiers of Greece really includes all that moderate and sensible men could desire; and that was the plan that ultimately was adopted by the Congress and which Greece might avail herself of if there be prudence and moderation in her councils. Let me here make one remark—which indeed is one that applies to other most interesting portions of this great question; it refers to the personal character of the Sultan. From the first the Sultan of Turkey has expressed his desire to deal with Greece in a spirit of friendliness and conciliation. He has been perfectly aware that in the union of the Turkish and Greek races the only balance could be obtained and secured against the Pan-Slavic monopoly which was fast invading the whole of his dominions. Therefore there was every disposition on his part to meet the proposals

of the English government with favor, and he did meet them with favor. Remember the position of that prince. It is almost unprecedented. No prince probably that ever lived has gone through such a series of catastrophes. One of his predecessors commits suicide; his immediate predecessor is subject to a visitation more awful even than suicide. The moment he ascends the throne his ministers are assassinated. A conspiracy breaks out in his own palace, and then he learns that his kingdom is invaded; his armies, however valiant, are defeated, and that the enemy is at his gates; yet with all these trials and during all this period he has never swerved in the expression and I believe the feeling of a desire to deal with Greece in a spirit of friendship. Well, what happened?—what was the last expression of feeling on his part? He is apparently a man whose every impulse is good; however great the difficulties he has to encounter, however evil the influences that may sometimes control him his impulses are good; and where impulses are good there is always hope. He is not a tyrant—he is not dissolute—he is not a bigot or corrupt. What was his last decision?

When my noble friend, not encouraged, I must say by Greece but still continuing his efforts, endeavored to bring to some practical result this question of the frontiers the Sultan said that what he was prepared to do he wished should be looked on as an act of grace on his part, and of the sense of the friendliness of Greece in not attacking him during his troubles; but as a Congress was now to meet he should like to hear the result of the wisdom of the Congress on the subject.

The Congress has now spoken; and though it declared that it did not feel justified in compelling the Sultan to adopt the steps it might think advantageous even for its own interests

the Congress expressed an opinion which I doubt not the Sultan is prepared to consider in the spirit of conciliation he has so often displayed.

And this is the moment when a party for factious purposes, and a party unhappily not limited to England, is egging on Greece to violent courses! I may perhaps have touched at too much length on this topic; but the attacks made on her Majesty's government are nothing compared with the public mischief that may occur if misconception exists on this point.

There is one other point on which I would make a remark, and that is with regard to the Convention of Constantinople of the 4th of June. When I study the catalogue of congratulatory regrets with attention this appears to be the ground on which a great assault is to be made on the government. It is said that we have increased and dangerously increased our responsibilities by that Convention. In the first place I deny that we have increased our responsibilities by that Convention. I maintain that by that Convention we have lessened our responsibilities. Suppose now for example the settlement of Europe had not included the Convention of Constantinople and the occupation of the Isle of Cyprus? Suppose it had been limited to the mere Treaty of Berlin, what under all probable circumstances might then have occurred? In ten, fifteen, it might be in twenty years the power and resources of Russia having revived some quarrel would again have occurred, Bulgarian or otherwise, and in all probability the armies of Russia would have been assailing the Ottoman dominions both in Europe and Asia and enveloping and enclosing the city of Constantinople and its all-powerful position.

Well, what would be the probable conduct under these circumstances of the government of this country whoever the

ministers might be—whatever party might be in power? I fear there might be hesitation for a time—a want of decision—a want of firmness; but no one doubts that ultimately England would have said: “This will never do; we must prevent the conquest of Asia Minor; we must interfere in this matter and arrest the course of Russia.”

No one I am sure in this country who impartially considers this question can for a moment doubt what under any circumstances would have been the course of this country. Well, then, that being the case, I say it is extremely important that this country should take a step beforehand which should indicate what the policy of England would be; that you should not have your ministers meeting in a council chamber, hesitating and doubting, and considering contingencies and then acting at last, but acting perhaps too late.

I say therefore that the responsibilities of this country have not been increased; the responsibilities already existed, though I for one would never shrink from increasing the responsibilities of this country if they are responsibilities which ought to be undertaken. The responsibilities of this country are practically diminished by the course we have taken.

My lords and gentlemen, one of the results of my attending the Congress of Berlin has been to prove what I always suspected to be an absolute fact, that neither the Crimean war nor this horrible devastating war which has just terminated would have taken place if England had spoken with the necessary firmness. Russia has complaints to make against this country that neither in the case of the Crimean war nor on this occasion—and I do not shrink from my share of the responsibility in this matter—was the voice of England so clear and decided as to exercise a due share in the guidance

of European opinion. Well, gentlemen, suppose my noble friend and myself had come back with the Treaty of Berlin, and had not taken the step which is to be questioned within the next eight and forty hours, could we with any self-respect have met our countrymen when they asked, what securities have you made for the peace of Europe?—How far have you diminished the chance of perpetually recurring war on this question of the East by the Treaty of Berlin? Why they could say all we have gained by the Treaty of Berlin is probably the peace of a few years and at the end of that time the same phenomenon will arise and the ministers of England must patch up the affair as well as they could.

That was not the idea of public duty entertained by my noble friend and myself. We thought the time had come when we should take steps which would produce some order out of the anarchy and chaos that had so long prevailed. We asked ourselves, Was it absolutely a necessity that the fairest provinces of the world should be the most devastated and most ill-used, and for this reason that there is no security for life or property so long as that country is in perpetual fear of invasion and aggression?

It was under these circumstances that we recommended the course we have taken, and I believe that the consequence of that policy will tend to and even secure peace and order in a portion of the globe which hitherto has seldom been blessed by these celestial visitants. I hold that we have laid the foundation of a state of affairs which may open a new continent to the civilization of Europe, and that the welfare of the world and the wealth of the world may be increased by availing ourselves of that tranquillity and order which the more intimate connection of England with that country will now produce. But I am sorry to say that, though we taxed

our brains and our thought to establish a policy which might be beneficial to the country, we have not satisfied those who are our critics. I was astonished to learn that the Convention of the 4th of June has been described as an "insane" convention. It is a strong epithet. I do not myself pretend to be as competent a judge of insanity as my right honorable opponent [Mr. Gladstone]. I will not say to the right honorable gentleman "Naviget Anticyram,"¹ but I would put this issue to an English jury—Which do you believe most likely to enter into an insane convention, a body of English gentlemen, honored by the favor and the confidence of their fellow subjects, managing your affairs for five years, I hope with prudence and not altogether without success, or a sophisticated rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign an opponent and to glorify himself?

My lords and gentlemen, I leave the decision upon that convention to the Parliament and people of England. I believe that in that policy are deeply laid the seeds of future welfare, not merely to England, but to Europe and to Asia; and confident that the policy we have recommended is one that will be supported by the country, I and those that act with me can endure these attacks.

My lords and gentlemen, let me thank you once more for the manner in which you have welcomed me to-day. These are the rewards of public life that never pall—the sympathy of those who have known you long, who have worked with you long, who have the same opinions upon the policy that ought to be pursued in this great and ancient empire.

¹"Let him set sail for Anticyra." Anticyra was an island much frequented by hypochondriacs on account of the hellebore which grew there.

These are sentiments which no language can sufficiently appreciate—which are a consolation under all circumstances, and the highest reward that a public man can attain. The generous feeling that has prompted you to welcome my colleague and myself on our return to England will inspire and strengthen our efforts to serve our country; and it is not merely that in this welcome you encourage those who are doing their best for what they conceive to be the public interests, but to tell to Europe also that England is a grateful country, and knows how to appreciate the efforts of her public servants, who are resolved to maintain to their utmost the empire of Great Britain.