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THE
PRESENT POLITICAL CRISIS IN PORTUGAL,

SUBMITTED TO

THE IMPARTIAL AND ENLIGHTENED PUBLIC OF GREAT BRITAIN.

25-10
From the following lines a pretty correct opinion may be formed of the present political state of Portugal, and their perusal is recommended to the upright and impartial, as a ready means of passing judgment upon the causes which gave rise to the existing crisis. Truth is the only object which the writer has in view, and hence he will endeavour to represent things as they really happened. It is far from his inclination, and sincerely does he regret being compelled occasionally to speak in strong language, and in a direct manner, of certain persons, but in the extraordinary circumstances in which Portugal is placed, this disagreeable part of his task could not be avoided. Individualities were always repugnant to the writer's feelings; and if he is now induced to have recourse to them, he begs it to be understood that when he mentions the names of persons, it is only in reference to their acts in public life, or such others as have been intimately connected with them.

In the beginning of 1842 Costa Cabral, who then held the post of Minister of Justice, contrived a revolution for the overthrow of the Constitutional Code of 1838, at that time the fundamental law of the land. This revolution has been the principal origin of all those misfortunes which have since afflicted Portugal.

Costa Cabral's ambition led him to aspire to the portfolio of the Interior—one of power, influence, and patronage. In order to gain his end, and, at the same time, acquire greater strength, he joined the parties most influential about the Court, which hereafter will be designated under the name of Court party. He organized secret societies, of which he had the supreme direction, and some of which might be termed military, on account of being composed for the most part of officers of rank, sub-alterns, and non-commissioned officers, at the same time employing similar means as regarded the establishment of civil political clubs.

One of their first expedients was to set aside the existing constitution, substituting it nominally by the Charter of 1826, as they had thus the hope of obtaining, amongst other things, the powerful support of a high personage, who, by virtue of the former code, could never be appointed as Commander-in-chief.

No sooner said than done—the people of Portugal were in fact set at nought. In this change the principal actors were Costa Cabral and the Duke da Terceira, at that time military governor of Lisbon. During this eventful period the latter remained at Lisbon, while the Minister of Justice, Costa Cabral, proceeded on to Oporto, giving out that he was only going there on private business. After his arrival, however, the revolution took place under his guidance, and, contrary to the Queen's commands, he persisted in carrying it on. In the interval a new ministry was formed at Lisbon, of which the Duke da Terceira became President, and Costa Cabral excluded.

On the 10th of February, 1842, the new Ministry proclaimed the Charter of 1826—at the same time ordaining the convocation of the Cortes, with the view that they might introduce into the national institutions such modifications as should be required.

Costa Cabral returned to Lisbon, greatly disappointed and annoyed at not having been named a Minister under the wing of the Duke da Terceira, who acted in concert with him in overturning the Constitution in force, when actually their party threatened a fresh outbreak, and by this means Costa Cabral forced his way into the ministry, and was appointed to the department of the Interior.

After some time the elections for Deputies took place, and on this occasion scarcely was there any kind of bribery or falsification that the Government did not resort to. Many acts of violence were committed, the consequence of all which was that a Chamber met, composed of Costa Cabral's creatures, almost all of whom were public functionaries, and many others objectionable on account of

their previous conduct. Through Costa Cabral's influence this Chamber declined the introduction of any reforms into the Charter, whereby the Queen's promise was forfeited which she had solemnly made to the nation, in her decree of February 10th, above-mentioned, a proceeding so highly offensive, that, when forbearance was no longer possible, it gave rise to the revolution at Torres Novas, in February, 1844.

Costa Cabral and his brother José endeavoured to strengthen their party and promote their own personal interests during the whole period of their fatal administration. They increased the number of their adherents by turning out of situations persons who had dared to express their disapprobation of what was passing, replacing them with others on whose instrumentality they could rely. They created new offices for the admission of their own tools, in various ways increasing the public expenditure, with the view of satisfying the ambition, or lucre, of those who had served them in the elections, and of whose services they might again stand in need. They also conferred appointments, titles, and honours upon individuals who had in these and other respects assisted them in their plans; while it was a notorious and scandalous fact, that in order to promote their own pecuniary interest, and that of their friends, many things within the gift of the Government, even including church livings, were often sold to the highest bidder. A league was formed with the jobbers, through whose intervention the tempting contracts with the Government were made, in consequence of which the Treasury was surcharged, and, in several instances, the ministers and their agents pocketed large gains.

Never was such a state of social degradation—of national humiliation witnessed. The Government had taken upon themselves the responsibility of enacting laws through the medium of decrees, one of the most offensive of which was that of the 1st of August, 1844, in virtue of which they placed at their own disposal the fate of judges, public professors, military officers, and civil functionaries, by arrogating to themselves the power of prosecuting them without the previous existing legal formalities. At the same time, the public expenses went on swelling, as well as the Government debts and loans; and, to crown all, with the view of meeting these unnecessary contingencies, a most absurd, vexatious, and anti-national plan of taxation was resorted to, and, with the view of supporting this abominable machinery, financial projects of the most disastrous kind ushered forth.

Effectually to uphold this new order of things, it was wished that the Chamber, which was to be elected in 1845, should be more subservient than the preceding one; that is, more exclusively composed of persons of their own party. Here, however, a difficulty occurred, as public opinion had denounced the misgovernment of the Cabrals, and loudly declared that the most suitable means of getting rid of them would be to appeal to the elections.

Senhor José Cabral, the Minister of Justice, a violent character, who had formerly been dismissed by Dom Pedro from his situation of District Magistrate, in consequence of dilapidations and irregularities committed during the exercise of power, undertook the removal of all difficulties, and, with an eye to the future, among other expedients caused the names of such voters as did not belong to his party to be struck out of the electoral lists, in each district assembly, and more especially in Lisbon, where he gave the right of voting to minors, to the houseless, and to all kinds of rabble. He caused peremptory orders to issue for the armed force to be employed in the electoral assemblies, whenever any disposition was evinced in opposition to the ruling power. So well were these arrangements made, and measures taken, that besides other revolting scenes, during the elections for 1845, in the parish of St Paul's, one of the richest in the city of Lisbon, even the scavengers of the streets were permitted to vote, while some of the oldest householders, and most powerful landed proprietors, found themselves excluded in many of the electoral circles.

These irregularities were not confined to Lisbon; they equally extended to the provinces, so well mounted was the moving power. In some places the blood of opposition electors was seen to flow, in consequence of wounds received from the soldiery, or shots fired at them, even within the precincts of churches, in which the assemblies are usually held—outrages actually committed at Alvaraens, in the province of Minho, as well as at Porto de Moz, in Estremadura. From all these manœuvres resulted another Chamber, calling themselves the representatives of the people, but, with few exceptions, in reality, delegates under orders, and individuals ready to do any kind of work assigned to them. This Chamber afterwards approved of all the electioneering acts—all the government projects, and arbitrary measures.

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At the sight of these abuses, these outrages, and these violations of law and good faith, as well as the oppressive acts of taxation and administration, the public indignation rose to an uncontrollable height. So great was the exasperation of the people, and of all the influential classes, that eventually it broke forth in the memorable revolution of Minho, a revolution, or rather an outbreak, arising from general displeasure, and actually commenced by the women, who in numbers, often as many as four hundred in a group, fearlessly and patriotically braved the anger of the bayoneted soldiery, after despising the threats of the controlling authorities. Instances were then witnessed, as the contest grew warmer, of bold and only half-armed peasants going out to attack disciplined troops; and this same spirit, which first showed itself in Minho, soon extended to the whole kingdom. When it reached the gates of Lisbon, Costa Cabral, who, together with his colleagues, thought himself lost, was dismissed, and the Duke de Palmella being sent for, a new administration was formed.

It was now expected that the Government would try another tack, and as soon as the various offices were filled up by new men, the country became a little more tranquillised; and the half-armed people returned to their homes, relying upon the Queen's pledges and promises to adhere to the principles made known by the nation, viz., that the representative system should be a reality; that she would remove far away from her councils and government influence the people of the Cabralista faction; abolish certain decrees regarding those taxes most vexatious and burdensome to the people; curtail the public expenses; convene the Cortes and see that they were freely elected; and at the same time organise the National Guards.

In this sense, and in fulfilment of the royal word, various decrees were issued. Among the most important, and the one received with general satisfaction, was that of the 27th July, for the convocation of the Cortes, wherein the means of obviating frauds and acts of violence were set forth. Those edicts which abolished the most obnoxious of the taxes, and ordained the organization of the National Guards, were viewed in the same favourable light.

A few days previous to the elections, and at a moment when the country was in the enjoyment of perfect tranquillity, a grand *coup d'état* took the people by surprise. In the night between the 6th and 7th of last October, a new incident threw everything into combustion. This strange occurrence, owing to the effects produced by it, is known throughout Europe, but in a paper like this it should be briefly sketched.

At eight o'clock, in the night of the 6th of October, the Duke de Palmella was summoned to the Palace, where a number of those initiated in the conspiracy premeditated were already assembled, and among them several military officers. Everything being ready, the Duke was required to sign a decree for the dismissal of the War Minister, and in his stead for the appointment of the Marquess de Saldanha, a man well known for the versatility of his politics, and who, before he returned to Lisbon from Brussels, visited Paris, as it is credibly believed, with the view of receiving instructions from M. Guizot. This officer beforehand had offered to aid the Ministers, and be near them in case of need. After his appointment to the Ministry, the vacant places were filled up with individuals selected from Cabral's faction.

But to return to the Palace. The Duke was retained a prisoner there till the next day at noon, when the change was completed. A similar fate befel Count de Bomfim, the military commandant, and who had equally been called up to the Palace, where he was compelled to sign various orders, addressed to the commanders of the several corps forming the garrison of Lisbon, with the view of those officers being received as were engaged in the conspiracy, and the ends of the design thus advanced. Some officers who had gone there on duty, were in like manner kept prisoners at the Palace, in order to prevent them from divulging the machinations carrying on.

All these arrangements were made in the night time, and in the morning of the 7th the whole garrison of Lisbon, to the astonishment of the inhabitants, was seen under arms. The revolt thus commenced in the capital, which on the same day many persons left, in order to escape persecution and join those who might be disposed to rise up and counteract the effect of this outrageous *coup d'état*. On the same day a proclamation appeared in the name of the Queen, already prepared, in the same manner as other papers had been decided upon and arranged some time before the Duke de Palmella was called up to the Palace.

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In the new edict, the Government unblushingly avowed the revolution, just consummated, at the same time suspending the elections to the Cortes, previously convened. Before resistance on the part of Oporto was known, the constitutional guarantees were suspended, the Government assumed the exercise of absolute power, and political persecutions commenced. On the 9th of October the patriotic cry resounded at Oporto of legal resistance against this act of absolutism, and a Junta was formed and proclaimed in defence of the political state of things as they existed on the previous 6th of October. This cry was responded to throughout the kingdom wherever government troops were not stationed.

This feeling extended to all classes,—all—all expressed their utter abhorrence of the deed done. The popular party lost the action at Torres Vedras, and before that two regiments of the line at Val de Passos, the troops composing which passed over to the enemy when they ought to have fired. They also lost the fortress of Valença through the aid of the Spanish authorities, given to a Portuguese officer, who had betrayed the popular cause, by allowing armed troops belonging to the Lisbon Government to cross their territory to Valença.

Neither these disasters, which produced to the popular party the loss of a large portion of their troops, the undisguised support of Spain afforded to the Cabralists, nor the inhuman decree issued to shoot all persons taken with arms in their hands, discouraged the Constitutionals. They concentrated their forces at Oporto and its neighbourhood, as well as in several cities and towns in the provinces of Alemtejo and Algarve, leaving some troops at Beira. The Junta, with persevering activity, also commenced the organization of new regular troops, an undertaking in which they laboured day and night, and overcoming numerous difficulties, at the same time that the foreign periodical press accused them of inaction.

The Government of Lisbon, after the action of Torres Vedras, was induced to believe that the whole country would bend in submission to them, never reflecting that the opposition was general and not confined to a faction, and in this belief the tyranny of the men in power increased, and was carried so far that they shipped off the brave prisoners of war taken at Torres Vedras to the sickly climates of Africa, orders having been previously given to deprive them of their baggage and effects, guaranteed to them by the terms of the capitulation.

This act of a despotic government was preceded by others, more particularly that committed by Saldanha in the town of Torres Vedras, which he allowed to be plundered by his troops, and the inhabitants treated in the most brutal manner. Similar conduct was observed on the part of the Court general, Casal, who, in the town of Agrella, allowed quiet inhabitants to be assassinated in cold blood, after they had been plundered, and after tolerating acts of barbarity at Constantim and Villaran-dello, at Villa Nova allowed considerable robberies to be perpetrated, as well as in Braga, where, after Macdonell's guerrilla had withdrawn, he permitted a great number of defenceless persons to be assassinated. For atrocities of this kind the Court created him a Count, while the people nicknamed him "The Assassin of Agrella."

These flagrant acts exasperated the public mind more and more, tending at the same time to increase the popular forces. Through the exertions of the Oporto Junta, within a very short time a tolerably efficient force was organized, and at the close of March, in the current year, they were already in a position to send out an expedition from Oporto to Algarve. The news of the sailing of this armament struck awe and terror into the breasts of the Court party in the capital, as well as in the provinces, while the people on the other side of the Tagus, seeing this demonstration, were further roused; and the Court party, struck with the sentiments everywhere evinced by the inhabitants, began to tremble, and, driven to an agony of despair, beheld no other means of salvation than having recourse to foreign intervention. After some delay they acceded to the conditions under which the British functionary agreed to enter into the mediation.

A new administration was then named, composed of five individuals, four of whom are decided Cabralistas.

1. Senhor Bayard, Minister of Foreign Affairs, one of the conspirators in the night of the 6th of October, and who previously had told the Queen, in his official character, that the terms proposed by the representatives of the British Government, consistently with her dignity, could not be accepted.

2. Senhor Tavares Proença, Minister of the Interior,—by Costa Cabral created

a peer and counsellor of state, voting in his favour in each session, and more recently upholding the transportation of the Torres Vedras prisoners.

3. Baron Ponte da Barca, well known for his blind adhesion to Cabral's politics, and accused of being an accomplice in the assassination of Senhor Campos, a popular leader, after he had been made prisoner.

4. Count Tojal, Minister of Finance, who in the same department faithfully served the Cabrals during their obnoxious administration. It was in great measure owing to the ruinous financial schemes and oppressive plans of taxation, suggested by this gentleman, that the insurrection of May, 1846, broke out. It was he, also, who, without the sanction of the Cortes, recently authorized the Portuguese Agency in London to create a large number of new bonds, the issue of which cannot fail to be dishonourable to the Government of Portugal, and prejudicial to the British bondholders.

5. Senhor Duarte Leitaó, Minister of Justice. Perhaps the least objectionable on the list, but well known for his timidity and his hesitation in political matters.

Such are the men chosen to wield the destinies of Portugal during the present crisis! And can an administration composed of elements like these, although, as it is very generally supposed, approved of by the minister of Great Britain at Lisbon, ever inspire anything like confidence into the Portuguese popular party of the day, in the position in which they now stand?

Time will show whether the doubts and apprehensions of those men whom injuries have driven to the last resort of taking up arms, in their own defence, are grounded or not; but, in the meanwhile, and reverting to the subject of the mediation proffered, it should be added that two of the parties who have now entered upon the scene of action, viz., the resident British minister and Colonel Wylde, from their previous connections and present conduct, throughout Portugal, at the present moment, stand rather in the character of agents to Donna Maria's government than as representatives of Great Britain.

What is seen at broad noon-day, ay, and fearlessly canvassed, too, is, that the policy of the Lisbon Government has not changed—that the same system prevails—and that no regard is paid either to the rights or the wishes of the great body of the people. The same persecution against the popular party goes on now, it is even

more embittered. With so violent a hand are things now carried on, that it is reported that an Inquisitorial Court—a kind of star-chamber—exists in the police barracks of Carmo, in Lisbon, of which Dom Carlos Mascarenhas is the commander, where, whenever persons, suspected of being inimical to the views of Government, are brought, they are imprisoned, flogged, and tortured.

If the Ministry of Great Britain have not been able, or if they have not wished, that an end should be put to such brutal and execrable proceedings as those above sketched, at a time when the Court and the new Administration in the Portuguese capital almost for their very existence depended upon British mediation; if those, who profess to be interested in the welfare of Portugal, hitherto have never succeeded in inducing the ruling power to respect the rights of the nation, and see that the Popular party were heard and treated with that consideration to which, under all circumstances, they are entitled, how can it now be expected that a fair and impartial mediator, however powerful and influential he might be, would be able to obtain from the Court anything like a substantial guarantee that offers and promises of conciliation will be observed, in good faith, in case the Popular party should lay down their arms?

How could it be thought that Colonel Wylde was acting in the sense of a cordial conciliation, when, in unbecoming language, he threatened Sa da Bandeira and the popular forces with the armed interference of the British fleet stationed in the Tagus, and this at a moment when he himself was, in a friendly and polite manner, writing to the Lisbon Government, furnishing them with an account of a battle with their opponents, which he represented in rather an unfavourable light, thereby giving an advantage to the Court party, as they generally published his despatches?

And what explanation can now be given as to the urgency with which Colonel Wylde, when last at St Ubes and Oporto, insisted on the suspension of hostilities, at the same time that, under cover of the armistice, the Lisbon people were strengthening themselves and gaining time, as well as the British Government preparing the means of acting more effectually against the Popular party, in case they refused to accept the conditions proffered? Was there in this anything like impartiality or friendly feeling?

The Cabral party, or more properly speaking the Cabral faction, is composed only of courtiers, to whom the new and modern designation of Camarilla has

been given; of jobbers with whom the Costa Cabral Ministry managed all their money transactions, together with a host of hungry functionaries, aided and upheld by the secret military societies, to which allusion has already been made. From this description of men only does the Court party derive its strength. On the nation at large they have not the slightest hold.

Reverse the picture, and let us see who are the Popular, or rather the National party. The reasons why the National party are now up in arms have already been explained. Who are they? Look to their ranks and to their councils, and it will be seen that they consist of nobles, landed proprietors, merchants, and a considerable part of the army, all of the most enlightened and respectable class, cheered on by the people wherever they are not overawed by the presence of the Court soldiers. Here, then, we have, on the one side, the great national majority, while on the other we behold nothing but a faction—a despicable minority, abhorred for its tyranny, mistrusted on account of its dilapidations, and scorned because of its ignorance and grovelling propensities.

The great effort, indeed the only aim, of this faction is, and ever has been, to confound its own cause with that of the Queen. Her Majesty's name is always uppermost on their lips, and that name they invoke as a cloak to their designs, whereas the Queen's real and sincere friends are among the Popular party. There she would find men who have fought and bled for her; who have always upheld her rights and the dignity of her crown, and were ever foremost at the post of danger.

The Court party have also made every effort to induce a belief that the Oporto Junta entertained a wish, or a design, eventually to proclaim Dom Miguel, and as a proof of this it was alleged, that Royalists who served that Prince, had joined the national cause. The consequence, which it is thus attempted to draw from an incidental circumstance, rests upon no substantial basis whatever. The whole story is indeed a sheer calumny—a groundless surmise, as may be very easily proved.

It is an established and notorious fact that the Royalists recorded their formal adherence to the Junta, well knowing that they had proclaimed her Majesty Donna Maria, together with the constitutional Institutions in force previous to the 6th of October, principles which the Junta never did, or ever intended to change. As a further proof of the correctness of what is here stated, it may be added, that the National party continued to pursue and destroy the Guerillas, acting in the name of Dom Miguel, whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Against any such design the previous character and political opinions of the most influential leaders of the insurrection are a sufficient guarantee. Who could be so mad as to believe that, because Generals Povoas and Bernardino had joined the National standard, those who fought under it intended to proclaim Dom Miguel? Why, the very same thing might be said, or surmised, of the Court party, who subsequently to the 6th of October employed Dom Manoel de Portugal, who served Dom Miguel, and was by him made Viceroy of India! In like manner did she employ Souza Azevedo, who also served Dom Miguel, and published a memoir asserting his legitimate rights to the throne. Both these gentlemen acted as Ministers of the Crown. In the Court army a number of officers are at this moment serving who at one time fought for Dom Miguel. A great part of the naval officers, now wearing the Queen's uniform, formerly wore that of Dom Miguel, and fought against their countrymen on the opposite side, many of them having been admitted into the service by Sir Charles Napier. Consequently, the new calumny started, besides being groundless, is in reality preposterous.

The insurrection, spread throughout Portugal, therefore, is not the result of a military faction, but rather the rising of the whole nation, galled and goaded beyond further endurance. It is a demonstration on the part of the free and enlightened, holding in abhorrence that despotism and that corruption inherent in the Cabral faction, and of which its leaders may be considered as a true personification.

The earnest wish of the Portuguese nation—of those who now speak in its name—is to be governed under definite and permanent institutions, such as can and will insure to the people the enjoyment of real and constitutional freedom—institutions which shall not be changed to answer the insidious designs of a minister, or please a party—institutions which, while they prescribe a fair and equitable administration in the revenue, tend to secure the rights of person and of property, and at the same time encourage the development of the national resources. In a word, let the wounds of the nation be cured and public confidence restored by fair and equitable means.

The Portuguese have had a sad and fatal experience of the past, and hence it

can surprise no one that they should now be on their guard. It was no wanton desire of a change—no impulse of the moment, but real wrongs and long suffering, undressed and unheeded, which drove them to assume that attitude in which they now stand, and experience has taught them that this attitude they should not abandon until they receive satisfactory guarantees that hereafter the representative system shall not be a mockery, and that ministers are responsible for their own acts.

Duly to comprehend the real state of things in Portugal, it is necessary to bear in mind alike the past and the present; but more especially to scrutinise the character of the men who, for the last four years at least, have wielded the power and used the influence of the Government. Let this inquiry be impartially instituted and carefully conducted; let the popular party only be heard and their wishes made known; let honour and good faith preside over this inquiry, and it will be found that angry and ominous threats of external intervention are not the means calculated to allay the exasperation at this moment rankling in the breasts of Portuguese patriots, and restore that confidence which alone can work the salvation of the country. An awful responsibility rests somewhere. But let us take a nearer glance at passing events.

Colonel Wylde and the Marquess d'Hespaña submitted to the Oporto Junta the conditions under which they conveyed an assurance that the British Government were willing and ready to undertake a mediation between the National Party and the Lisbon Government, and which, beforehand, had been accepted by the latter. These conditions were,

“1st. A full and general amnesty for all political offences committed since the beginning of the month of October last, and the immediate recall of all persons who, since that period, had been constrained to leave Portugal from political motives.

“2nd. The immediate revocation of all decrees promulgated since the beginning of October last, which are in conflict with or in opposition to the established laws and constitution of the kingdom.

“3rd. A convocation of the Cortes, as soon as the elections, about to take place immediately, shall be terminated.

“4th. The immediate nomination of a Ministry composed of personages who do not belong to the party of the Cabrals, and are not members of the Junta of Oporto.”

These conditions the Junta accepted, but required secure guarantees for their due fulfilment, and consequently proposed the means, in their opinion, best calculated to insure, in the spirit of good faith, the observance of the terms proffered.

No one, fundamentally acquainted with the state of things, and remembering the past, can accuse the members of the Oporto Junta of any disposition opposed to a reconciliation with the highest legal and recognised authority in the land; nor could it be argued that they asked for anything unreasonable, although it is not here wished to insinuate that what was then asked was not susceptible of some modification.

How could the Junta act otherwise, on taking into consideration the ambiguous terms proposed, apprehending, as they did, that those same conditions, through the bad faith of the Cabral party, might hereafter be variously interpreted? Without adequate guarantees, how could they surrender up the great interests of the nation, whom they represented and were defending? Who was there to answer for the fate and well-being of the patriotic men implicated? Where was the shield that was to guard them against future persecutions, instituted through any fragile plea it might be wished to devise, and carried on with the aid of bribed witnesses.

These conditions, abstractedly, are just, but in their application quite the reverse, as may be easily proved. For instance:—

The first condition does not secure to military officers the restitution of their respective ranks, neither does it comprise the titles and dignities, of which some parties were deprived, subsequently to the 6th of last October, in consequence of their having served the Constitutional cause. This is an omission, which could not fail to strike the most casual observer, in the existing state of things, and is such an omission conciliating? Is it just, or is it politic?

The condition contained in Article 2, in theory is very just, but in practice would be found quite the reverse. Among the decrees therein mentioned, those are

not included in virtue of which the Lisbon Government conferred rank, honours, and titles upon officers who fought against the National party, that is, the party who have done no more than offer such resistance against tyranny and oppression as the laws themselves warrant and general opinion sanctions—some of these decrees promulgated for the purpose of rewarding services of the most atrocious kind.

And is this fair dealing? Is this the way to reconcile two conflicting parties? Is not this leaving the door open to future misunderstandings—to disagreements and broils hereafter? Granting that in the undertaking upon which the British Government have entered, they proposed to act with fairness and the best possible good faith, can they, through their agents in Lisbon, exercise such a vigilance, such a controlling power as would prevent the infraction of stipulations which might be agreed upon between antagonists? Could they guard against violations which might lead to the destitution of rank, and indeed to other more serious consequences?

If the British Government declined acting in the mediation until the Lisbon authorities had accepted the conditions under which only they felt inclined to interfere, one must think that if at Oporto the agents employed wished to prove their impartiality to both sides, they were prepared to abandon the mediation from the moment the Junta refused to admit the terms proffered. But, as the case stands, the Junta actually did accept the terms, asking only for such real and effective guarantees as would insure stability to the proposed compact, and at the same time remove doubts and uncertainties.

And in doing this did not the Junta act with prudence, foresight, and a sincere wish that all causes of complaint hereafter might be obviated? In this case it even appears just that these guarantees should have been granted, without the slightest hesitation, if it was intended to carry the terms offered into due effect; or that the British Government would hold themselves answerable for the exact fulfilment of stipulations entered into under their mediation, it being understood that these stipulations should be properly defined.

The second Article is most important; but is the wording in which it is expressed either clear or definite? Most assuredly no.

In the first place, in what manner are the Cortes to be elected? Is this to be done as in 1845, of which a slight sketch has already been presented? What then happened, let it be borne in mind, actually was one of the principal causes that gave rise to the popular outbreak, which other incidents tended only to accelerate.

In the second, on what day are the elections to commence? and at what period are the Cortes to meet? And are these grave matters to be left to contingencies? These and other equally important points should, therefore, be previously cleared up.

Sufficient has been said to show that the wishes of the Junta were not extravagant or out of order; but let it now be asked whether, in furtherance of the mission which they undertook, the British agents made any declaration to the Junta that their government would guarantee the stipulations which might be agreed upon, according to their real intent and meaning. If this was not the spirit in which the British Government proposed to act, their interference amounted to an implied wish, on their part, that the persons upholding the Junta should deliver themselves up at discretion to the Lisbon faction, and abide by the consequences, whatever they may be.

Neither can it be said that, in reference to the present aspect of affairs in Portugal, the moral guarantee of the British Government can be made available. The barbarous treatment of the Torres Vedras prisoners has rendered the efficacy of any such guarantee extremely dubious.

It has been given out that the leaders of the National party, and principally the Count das Antas and Viscount Sa da Bandeira, would gladly have accepted the proposals offered, and that they would have tendered in their submission if they had not felt afraid of experiencing the resentment of their own party. There can be no hesitation in pronouncing this to be an atrocious calumny, no doubt invented for purposes the most insidious. There are letters in England from these two distinguished officers, addressed to the agent of the Junta here, which prove quite the contrary.

So long as the Court party entertained the least hope of being able to crush the popular movement, they never thought of soliciting British interference. No sooner, however, was that hope lost than they had recourse to foreign cabinets, asking assistance in order to overcome opposition and cause the refractory to bend to their

will. This is what Costa Cabral himself, as the representative of Portugal, has long been doing in Madrid. This step deeply implicates the Queen. What affectionate regard can the people entertain for her, after foreigners have been called in, in her Majesty's name, with the view of stripping the nation of its rights, and re-establishing an absolute sway? Can it be believed that this was spontaneously done by the Queen, when she herself, without external aid, might soon have restored tranquillity, as she has done in other critical moments, by naming a ministry having public opinion in its favour?

Lord Palmerston, on the 28th inst., from his place in Parliament, assured the liberal and honourable member, Mr Hume, "that the Government of her Majesty, in conjunction with those of France, Spain, and Portugal, were engaged in measures which had for their object the pacification of Portugal." Now, what necessity was there for these measures, when the Queen herself, by one single political act of her own, could have pacified everything? What plea—what motive then is there which can justify an armed foreign intervention in the internal dissensions of Portugal? What reason is there which now induces the British Ministers to change that policy of non-interference, not long ago so solemnly avowed in Parliament? Has not Europe already had examples enough of the fatal consequences of one nation meddling in the internal concerns of another?

Who could believe that the Government of a noble and free nation, like Great Britain, would wish to follow the example of the Despotic Powers, by becoming the principal instruments to subvert the Liberal institutions of Portugal, and by supporting a *régime* detested by the whole country? Who could believe this, after the declaration made in Parliament by the British ministers themselves, on the 28th of last February, as well as on the 3rd and 4th of May, avowing their intention not to interfere, a declaration thus deliberately repeated and confirmed, and one which the Liberal party in Portugal considered as being entitled to their fullest confidence? The example of interference now set clearly shows that the reliance to be placed upon the "moral guarantee" of the British Government is extremely slender.

In whatever light this subject is viewed, it must be evident that an armed interference, undertaken by foreigners, can never heal the wounds of Portugal, while it must bring numberless misfortunes upon the country. Those, in whose name the Junta speak, ask only for security in reference to the future, and that they may be allowed the enjoyment of those rights and social benefits which constitute the proudest boast of others. Their only aim is to shield themselves from tyranny and oppression. And who is it now that seeks to rivet their chains? Who is it that stands at the head of the league now forming against the future peace, tranquillity, and prosperity of Portugal?

With what astonishment and alarm will not the Portuguese behold Great Britain, their oldest ally, now assailing the rights and independence of that very same people among whom, when contending against the colossal power of Napoleon, she found support and co-operation! Never ought it to be forgotten that it was to the people she then appealed, for the Court was in Brazil, and the country in the hands of the French. Is this the return the Portuguese people had a right to expect?

And who shall answer for all the calamities likely to ensue? If the object of the Convention is the unconditional submission of the Portuguese people, it will be necessary to occupy the country in a military manner; but that occupation cannot last for ever. And when it ends, who can tell what may follow? But, in the meanwhile, commerce will suffer, and the future destinies of Portugal become endangered.

The final question now to be asked, and addressed to the good sense of the British public, is, whether it is the wish and the interest of a Government like that of Great Britain, professing to be founded upon liberal principles, to set the first example in the annals of Portugal of British subjects shedding the blood of their best friends and their oldest allies.

LONDON, MAY 31, 1847.

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Public of Great Britain.*

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