STATE PAPERS.

GREAT BRITAIN AND AMERICA.

[Laid before Parliament.]

Dispatches from Mr. Secretary Canning to the hon. D. M. Erskine, dated Foreign office May 22, 1809.

SIR,

Your dispatches Nos. 19 and 20, of the 19th and 20th of April, have been received here this day, and laid before the king.

I have lost no time in receiving his majesty's commands, to signify to you his majesty's sentiments on the manner in which you have executed the instructions conveyed to you in my dispatches by Mr. Oakley.

It is much to be regretted, that in the execution of instructions upon the points of so much delicacy and importance, you should have thought yourself authorised to depart so widely, not only from their letter, but from their spirit.

With respect to the instructions relating to the Chesapeake, which from the subject of my dispatch No. 1. I have to remark, first, the total omission by you of a preliminary of the most material importance. 2dly, a departure from the terms of your instructions in the manner of conducting the Negociation; and 3dly, the admission by you, and so far as appears, with remonstrance or observation, of a Note containing expressions offensive to his majesty's dignity, such as no Minister of his Majesty ought to have submitted to receive, and to transmit to his Government.

1st. It is distinctly stated by me, as the condition of his Majesty's "no longer insisting upon the recal of the Proclamation of July 1807, as a preliminary to the adjustment of the differences arising from the affair of the Chesapeake," "that the ships of war of France shall, in point of fact, have been excluded from the ports of the United States, and such ships of that description as were in those ports, shall have been warned to depart."

Of this condition you appear to have taken no notice whatever. The Non-Intercourse bill operated only to the prospective exclusion; but as to the warning to be given to any ships of war of France, (if any such there were) in the ports of the United States, it no where appears that even a question was put by you on this subject, much less that you received any satisfactory assurance upon it.

2dly. But if this preliminary condition had been fulfilled, your instructions proceeded to state, that even then, "it would still be necessary that either the Proclamation should be withdrawn or its operation formally declared to be at an end," "though it would be sufficient that such withdrawal or declaration should be recorded in the same instrument, or at the same time with the terms of reparation."

So far from this indispensable condition having been obtained by you, Mr. Smith, in the answer returned by him to your note, studiously avoids any thing like a recognition of the principle on which alone the demand of a formal recall of the proclamation was to be waved; neither is the Proclamation itself withdrawn, or its operation declared to be at an end.

The obvious consequence of this omission is, that if the Non-Intercourse act, which is a temporary act, were to be suffered to expire, the proclamation might revive, and the inequality between the two belligerents be thereby restored.

It was obviously your duty, before you committed his Majesty's name by a written offer of reparation, to ascertain in what manner that offer would be received, and answered; and if you found that the express condition either of the withdrawing the Proclamation, or declaring its operation to be at an end, would not be complied with, to abstain from proceeding one single step in the negociation until you had referred home for further instructions.

That part of your instructions which directed that this arrangement, if not made the subjects of consideration, should be settled by the exchange of Ministerial Notes dated on the same day, and reciprocally delivered at the same time, was expressly intended to guard against the possibility of your committing yourself by a written proposal, in the uncertainty of what might be the nature of the answer to be returned to it.

His majesty will not suppose it that Mr. Smith's intended answer can have been communicated to you previously, and have obtained your approbation.

In the proposal for restoring the men taken from on board the Chesapeake, it was not intended that the condition of his majesty's right to reclaim them in a regular way from the American government, if either natural born subjects of his majesty, or deserters from his majesty's service, should have been omitted. I dwell, however, the less on this point, as his majesty's right, in this respect, is founded on public law, and does not require to be fortified by the recognition of any other government.

But I cannot forbear observing with regret that the bounty of his majesty, in the intended provision for the relations of the men killed on board of the Chesapeake, is not only stated by you without a single restriction, but is brought forward at once as a part of the reparation originally offered; and thus converted by you from an act of spontaneous generosity, into one of positive obligation.

3dly. In addition to the substance of Mr. Smith's note, which I have already mentioned, it remains for me to notice the expressions so full of disrespect to his majesty, with which that note concludes. And I am to signify to you the displeasure which his majesty feels, that any minister of his majesty should have shewn himself so far insensible of what is due to the dignity of his sovereign, as to have been contented to receive, and transmit, to be laid before his majesty, a note in which such expressions were contained.*

I am, &c.

GEORGE CANNING.

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* The following is the offensive passage in Mr. Smith's letter to which Mr. Canning alludes:——"I have it in express charge from the President to state that, while he forbears to insist on a further punishment of the offending officer (Admiral Berkley) he is not the less sensible of the justice and utility of such an example, nor the less persuaded that it would best comport with what is due from his Britannic majesty to his own honor.

I have, &c.

R. SMITH."

GRENVILLE'S SPEECH.

(CONCLUDED.)

In the first place, you had by your maritime superiority, and the great naval force you possessed in the Mediterranean, the means of landing at Trieste, and its neighborhood, such a force as might have contributed, to alter the fatal issue of the campaign. The fate of Austria was decided by a battle, and that battle was decided by Bonaparte's drawing that force from Marmont, which you could have prevented. You might have prevented General Marmont and Gen. Macdonald from sending him reinforcements. You might have kept them both in check. It might not have altered the fate of the war, but with a view to continental co-operation, or national honor, or the deliverance of Europe, or any other object, it would have been meritorious, compared with the wretched expedition which was sent to Portugal. I may be told, that, to have acted on the side of the Mediterranean, would have required large fleets and numerous armies, which would have been attended with enormous expences. True, but they might have produced some adequate effect. Let me ask, have you not incurred great expences by your miserable expedition, not in assisting, but in bringing loss and degradation on our allies, and scorn and shame on ourselves? Look to the North of Germany—Consider all that strikes the mind in that part of the continent—If his majesty's ministers are capable of reflection, let them reflect on the powerful diversion they might have effected by encouraging that spirit which actuated the North of Germany. Having failed to take advantage of that spirit—having destroyed the hopes of those brave people, who would have exerted themselves against the common foe—having done nothing in aid of the cause in which they were engaged—what must be the feelings of such men when they come down to Parliament to speak of services they have performed, by the demolition of some docks belonging to the enemy? As near to you as Walcheren, there was a spirit even among your own subjects, which you might have called into action.—There was the population of whole provinces ready to rise in arms—warlike provinces, consisting of men used to war—disbanded indeed, but as good soldiers as any who ever fought, and all of them ready to join the British standard. Here was where you ought to have held out encouragement—You neglected to do so, and you have sacrificed these men to the melancholy fate they have since endured—Had you done all this, still I am not of opinion it would have been available, so as to have decided the fate of the war favorably to this country, but if you had done it, is there a man who can doubt that the plans of Bonaparte would have been materially disconcerted—that his plans in Saxony would have been disconcerted, that upon the insurrection in the North of Germany he would not, instead of sending the national guards, have been obliged to have opposed it by disciplined troops.—This is what you might have done—now like a blighted ear comes what you have done—You had an hundred thousand men at your disposal; of these something more than twenty thousand were disposed of in Sicily. You had two armies of forty thousand men in addition to your naval force. One of these armies was destined to act in Portugal, and to march into the heart of Spain, and this expedition was sent out by the very men who had originally planned Sir John Moore's expedition. It had been ascertained that such a force was inadequate to produce any other effect than the loss of the brave lives who composed it. His majesty's ministers not only did not profit from the experience they had, but they so contrived, that every one of the errors to which they attributed to the failure of General Moore's army, should operate in a still greater degree in the army of lord Wellington. What were the defeats with regard to General Moore's expedition? In the first place, its operations were not concerted with the Spanish government. Shall we be told that the operations of this second campaign were better concerted.

[Here his Lordship entered into a minute detail of the different expeditions, of which he drew a melancholy portrait—As the disasters which befel these misguided and unfortunate Expeditions are already well known by most of our readers, we pass over this part of his speech and come to a conclusion.]

Be not offended, my lords, at what I state, but put it home to your hearts, and ask yourselves, whether, after the expedition of Sir John Moore, and after the expeditions of Lord Wellington, you can determine to encourage these ministers in the prosecution of measures so ruinous to the country? to the present awful situation of the country, let me entreat you to reflect that you have an important duty to discharge. If you execute it with apathy and indifference—if you meet only for the purpose of hearing the detail of the errors of ministers—consider that some portion of that blame which ought only to be imputed to them, will attach to you. My lords, the situation of the country being what I have stated, it has no quarter by which to direct its thoughts, and encourage its expectations, but the energies, the power, and virtue of Parliament. This is not a time to rest contented by covering with blind votes of confidence those errors of ministers which are so notorious, and productive of such irreparable evils. You cannot be blind to the events which are passing in Europe—every man is struck with horror at the recital of them—they cannot be aggravated by description, or enhanced by eloquence. In this dreadful hour, if not by parliament, how can the country be saved? How can it hope for deliverance?—Can it look to the government? The government is broken, distracted, incompetent, without energy, and incapable of maintaining its authority. The salvation of the country is only to be hoped for from your energy and patriotism. It is you who must step between your country and destruction. It is on these grounds I move an amendment, expressed in terms, that I think, will be, in some degree, satisfactory to the public. The first paragraph of this address contains the expressions of regret, on the part of the House upon the melancholy fate of Austria. In those expressions I perfectly agree. After mentioning the failure of Austria, and before we enter on any subject whatever, it appears to me to be our indispensable duty to speak to his majesty in such terms as are plain, clear, intelligible, and cannot be misunderstood. I therefore move, that instead of the words which follow, these should be substituted.

"That we have seen, with the utmost sorrow and indignation, the accumulated failures and disasters of the last campaign, the unavailing waste of our national resources, and the loss of so many thousand of our brave troops, whose distinguished and heroic valor has been unprofitably sacrificed in our enterprizes, productive not of advantage but of lasting injury to the country.—Enterprizes marked only by a repetition of former errors; tardy and uncombined; incapable in their success of aiding our ally, in the critical moment of his fate, but exposing, in their failure, his majesty's councils to the scorn and derision of the enemy.

"That we therefore feel ourselves bound, with a view to the only atonement that now can be made to an injured people, to institute, without delay such rigorous and effectual enquiries and proceedings as duty impels us to adopt in a case where our country has been subjected to unexampled calamity and disgrace."

HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, April 20.

The Speaker laid before the House the following letter which was read:

WASHINGTON, April 19, 1810.

SIR,

After a tedious passage from New Orleans I arrived at Baltimore on the 16th inst. and reached this city the next day. My absence has been necessarily protracted by the selection of papers from a mass of twenty years accumulation, for the establishment of facts, to refute the multifarious and diversified calumnies by which I have been assailed.

I now present myself to the Representative body of the nation, the guardians of the public weal and the protectors of individual rights, to express my earnest desire that they may constitute some impartial tribunal which may be governed with strictness by the principles of the constitution and the laws of evidence, to investigate the conduct of my whole life, civil and military, whereby justice may be done and my unexampled persecution be terminated.

I aver my innocence of the foul offences which are imputed to me, and declare my ability to support it before any unprejudiced court. Through you, sir, I appeal to my country, and I claim that right which is not refused to the most profligate——the right of confronting my accusers. The Representatives of the People will not, I am persuaded, suffer a fellow citizen who has been devoted to the public service, more than twenty five years, and has nothing left him but conscious fidelity and attachment to his native country, to sue in vain for justice.

The enclosed letter to the Secretary of War was written anterior to the receipt of my notification of recall from the command on the Mississippi, and will evince my readiness and my desire for a full investigation of my conduct.

With perfect respect,

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JA: WILKINSON.

The Honorable J. B. Varnum, Esq.

COLUMBIA SPRING, Oct. 18, 1810.

SIR,

Having received information that certain imputations have been alledged against me by the late Captain George Peter and certain subalterns in office, which are calculated to affect my character as a military officer, it is my earnest desire that a court of enquiry should be ordered to examine into my conduct from the commencement of my military service, with injunctions to report an opinion. Or should my enemies have been hardy enough to prefer formal charges against me, which are deemed worthy of investigation, that an arrest may ensue and a general court martial be appointed for my trial.

In making this request I am moved by a consciousness of my integrity, by a sacred regard to my character, and the self-conviction that I have served my country with zeal and fidelity, and that I have never deceived it; disclaiming at the same time all advantages to be derived from any act or clause of limitation.

But as this has been the theatre of my command, generally, for eleven years past, as my companions in service and the evidence of my conduct, (many of whom have retired to the walks of private life,) are now in this country, it will be impossible for me to command at any distant point the testimony necessary to rebut the fictions of falsehoods of my enemies, or to illustrate my humble services as a public officer: I therefore hope the request may not be deemed an unreasonable one, that the enquiry or court martial should be held at some military post within this territory; the more particularly as the main body of the army is here, and a suitable court can be formed with more convenience to individuals who may compose it, and with less expence to the public.

A general officer to relieve me from command, and to preside at the enquiry will be the only person necessary to be ordered out; and, under the circumstances, I flatter myself no gentleman in commission will deem this duty a hardship.

With perfect respect,

I am, &c,

JA: WILKINSON.

The Honorable Secretary of War.

TORPEDOES.

New York, April 15, 1810.

To the Members of Congress who voted in favor of the Torpedo Bill.

GENTLEMEN,

Being informed that you have wished to see the experiments previous to the rising of Congress on the 23d inst. I beg leave to state to you my reasons why they could not be made in a satisfactory manner in so short a time as from the passing of the bill to the adjournment of your body this spring.—There are not many gentlemen who doubt that a Torpedo will blow up a ship of any size or strength, provided it can be got under her bottom. But many are of opinion that by means of booms, spars, ropes, chains or nets, a vessel may be so guarded, that a Torpedo or Torpedoes cannot be got under her. It is therefore interesting that those and other modes of defence, which may be discovered, should be put to the test of experiment: For this purpose time must be given to collect from the officers of the navy their several plans of defence, and if any embarrassing obstructions should be contrived, I must have time to see if I can devise means to destroy them or avoid them, in sending the Torpedoes under the bottom of the ship. As I cannot foresee all the obstacles which may be presented, or judge of the time necessary to overcome them, the experiments should be commenced in a satisfactory and systematic manner, so as to secure a fair investigation, and of necessary experiment of every plan of defence and attack. As such details may require a whole summer, and should have the advantage of good weather, I have proposed to the Secretary of the Navy the following mode of proceeding. *First*, that the investigations and experiments on obstructions, defence and attack be made in the harbor of New York, in which city I can have the aid of my own workmen to construct machinery. *Second*, that a committee be appointed of the following gentlemen: Messrs. Oliver Wolcot and Cadwalder Colden of this city, gentlemen of federal politics; Chancellor Livingston and Governor Lewis of this state, republicans; Colonel Williams of the Engineers, Mr. Garnet and Dr. Kemp, mathematicians; gentlemen of such high respectability and acknowledged talents, will penetrate to truth, and make a report which should satisfy all parties. That Commodore Rodgers and such officers of the navy as the Secretary of the Navy will please to name, and can with convenience, will attend the committee to state their modes of defence. That a circular letter be addressed to the principal officers of the navy, requesting from them memoirs and plans of the measures they would adopt, to defeat attacks with Torpedoes while vessels are at anchor or under sail. The objections being received, shall be examined before the committee, and such as require it shall be proved by experiment; if after the combinations of ropes, chains, booms, spars, nets, &c. have been investigated and experimented, it shall appear that I can defeat all such precautions, and send the Torpedoes under the bottom of the vessel, the report of the committee containing the plans, details, and experiments, should be satisfactory to Congress, as far as relates to such means of defence; and it will be unnecessary to repeat them on the meeting of Congress in autumn. At which time I propose that a vessel in the Potomoc be put under the direction of the opponents to the system, for them to load and strengthen in such manner as they may deem a most effectual resistance; that they anchor her and put out their nets or booms, or put her under weigh, back her, or fill her, at pleasure, and I believe I shall shew in all cases the Torpedo will go under her and that I shall not fail to blow her up. If I succeed to defeat all precautions before mentioned, it follows that a ship will have no other mode of defence than the fire from her cannon and small arms—her boats cannot defend her, for she cannot put out a sufficient number to contend with 30 or 40 torpedo boats. That the fire from her cannon and small arms cannot protect her has been proved by hundreds of instances of boarding vessels from boats, where the danger was much greater than it can be in harpooning, and by examples of valor in taking redoubts or fortifications by storm. If all other difficulties be surmounted the experiment of positive attack must be left to a time of actual war. You will perceive that to do justice to the experiments some months may be required, that consequently they could not be performed during the present session of Congress. It is justice due to your liberality, and a duty which I owe to the nation and to the arts that nothing be left undone which may lead to a fair investigation of the power of torpedoes. I have never wished the government to adopt them as a means of defence until their utility shall be proved by satisfactory experiment. My whole time and attention are now directed to ways and means to secure success. And I have the pleasure to inform you that every plan of booms, chains, nets, &c. which I have yet seen, instead of being obstructions, will by a new combination on my part, really facilitate my operations, and enable me to destroy a vessel with much less risk to my men than if she had no such tackle. I have thought proper to mention my having made such improvements, that gentlemen opposed to the system may exert themselves to devise means of defence, and I shall feel much obliged to those who will have the goodness to send me their objections or plans of defence by drawing or letter directed for me at New York. To this, I hope there can be no objection, as all plans of attack or defence which may be discovered must become public. I hope, gentlemen, to lay before you in autumn such a report on the experiment as will give you pleasure, and induce many good men who voted against the bill to become friends and advocates of the system.

ROBT. FULTON.

The subscriber

RESPECTFULLY informs the public, that he hath purchased the *Shoe Store* formerly kept by *Isaac Atkinson*, and hath now on hand a complete assortment of Shoes, (laid in this spring) which he will sell low for cash.

As he intends to keep a constant supply of the best and most fashionable Shoes, he flatters himself that he will meet with encouragement.

NICHOLAS VALLIANT

Easton, April 17, 1810.