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Foreign.

LORD CASTLEREAGH'S SPEECH,

(CONCLUDED.)

The allies were satisfied that if the war should not prove fatal to that body, although peace might be restored yet should be restored only for a short period, and would presently terminate in a renewal of hostilities. He would not call for the approbation of that house of the course which had been pursued, if he were not prepared therefore to avow that the allies made the dissolution and extinction of that army the main object of their policy. Many of them had fallen in the field by the bravery and skill with which they had been encountered. But after that signal defeat of the French army, the allies would have been justly chargeable with their resurrection if they had not followed up the blow, and extinguished, as far as it was possible, the power so dangerous to all. Still, however, it was necessary to be vigilent. If the governments of Europe were to allow themselves to be lulled into security by supposing that the French army had ceased to exist because it had ceased to appear on the parade, they would soon witness a revival of that scourge which had so long desolated the world. He had no hesitation therefore, nay, he prided himself in avowing that it was distinctly declared to Louis XVIII, that if he did not dissolve the French army, the allies must charge themselves with that indispensible task. In order to give effect to this representation, three hundred thousand men were assembled on the Loire with the intention of denouncing the armistice on a particular day, if arrangements were not made by the local authorities of France to dissolve that army, the existence of which was incompatible with the general repose.

Under these circumstances, he put it to the feelings of every Englishman, whether our further interference was not only natural and just but whether it was not imperiously demanded by the state in which this requisition left the King. What right had we to call in the King to dissolve what was called the Royal Army, if after having done so, we meant to leave him to their mercy? Were we not bound to defend him from them in their disbanded as well as in their collected state—in their character of conspirators as well as in their character of soldiers? He for one, had never been disposed to depreciate the abilities of Bonaparte: but the comparison of the danger arising to society from the talents of that individual, and from the disposition of the French army itself, was as the comparison between a drop of water and the sea. If the moral, or rather immoral, principle woven into the constitution of the French army, had been suffered to exist, the confinement of Bonaparte in the place to which he had been sent was almost an unimportant consideration, for such an army would not find it difficult to discover some man capable of leading it with courage and ability. The simple question for the allies to consider was whether moral and civil principle should govern the world, or whether it should be ruled by a military despotism, interweaving itself by degrees into all the states of Europe. Let those who were for pushing to an extreme the opinion of popular authority, reflect on what this military despotism had been founded. It had grown out of that state of social disorganization which modern philosophy and modern Whiggism tended to produce. It had been the sad refuge from the evils of anarchy. Fortunately the rashness and intemperance by which it was characterised had prevented its perpetuation. Every effort to that effect, however, had been made by its great leader. In France, under Bonaparte, every thing had been rendered subordinate to the army. One of the last acts of Bonaparte was to call on the Prefects of France to deliver to him descriptive lists of the females, their property, &c. in their respective districts, evidently intending to sacrifice them to the lust and rapidity of that army by which, operated upon by so powerful a stimulus, he vainly hoped to maintain himself on the throne of France and to carry desolation into the surrounding States. So far was the interference of the Allied Powers to put down the French army from being unpopular in France, that he had never talked with a single well-informed man in that country who had not spoken of the tyranny, of the military despotism as that from which it was desirable to escape.—Even those who had run through the whole course of the revolution denounced the military system as a monster in government which triumphed over the law, and which rendered the state a mere instrument for the gratification of its own detestable wishes. Not only were the steps taken by the allies to guard against the return of this military despotism gratefully acknowledged in France, but a strong and very general solicitude was shown that they would take into their protection the civil constitution of that country—a step which, according to the established relation between nations, it was impossible to take.

With respect to the great body of the French nation, whatever levity they might have exhibited, with whatever facility they might have lent themselves to different usurpations, it was the anxious desire of the allied powers not to pursue towards them a resentful or revengeful policy, but if possible to combine the system of security for Europe with such acts as would mark this great distinguishing character of their proceedings, namely, that their hostility was directed not against France as a nation, not against France in a royal sense, but against France in a revolutionary sense, and most essentially against France as the concentration of military jacobinism. Nor did the allies proceed on this principle alone. They acted on a very broad policy. If they had spoiled the game they had been playing by mixing it up with any ordinary question between state and state—if instead of endeavoring to re-include France in the pale of social nations they had attempted to degrade her—they would have combined all France against them, instead of having the great mass of the people on their side. There were some people who might have supposed that this was a favourable moment for depriving France of the encroachments which she had made under Louis XIVth, and making her return to her old limits. But however specious this supposition, the reasoning on which it was founded appeared to him to be extremely fallacious. If France had grown since the period alluded to, other states had also risen. The power of the British empire, for instance, had increased so much of late years, as to render the reduction of France less necessary. The power of Russia also had increased so much, that with every confidence in its moderate exercise, it rendered impolitic a reduction of that of France. And above all, nothing could have been more fatal to the policy and object of the great confederacy, which was to keep their general principle distinct from any petty arrangements between state and state. Having embarked with every thing wise and loyal in France, against a danger common to all Europe, it would have been most injurious had they made an indirect advantage of existing circumstances, and failed to preserve to France her character as a nation. From the King to the meanest peasant in the country, not a man but would have united against them had they pursued any other policy. What the confederates were especially charged with was, to tranquilize the world—not to carve out the different states according to their own notions; which, although they might be abstractly right, would, if indulged, lead them from that which was their great and important object. Coming to the consideration of the subject with this view of it, various lines of policy offered themselves for their adoption. There was the course of calling on France for a severe contribution of money, and there was the course of calling on her for an extensive dismemberment of territory. A false impression was, he believed, very prevalent on this part of the question. It was supposed by some that it would be more wise to have made a substantial demand on France for territory, leaving the French government in possession of all their resources, and it was imagined that of all cessions a pecuniary cession, was most revolting to the feelings of the French. He could assure the House that nothing could be less true than this proposition. With the exception of the natural repugnance which all men had to part with their money, there was hardly any indisposition in France to this measure. Indeed the state of the French finances admitted it. Out of the nature of its situation and the profligacy of its conduct, had grown this advantage. While all the rest of the world were straining their exertions, France had scarcely a burden; for as soon as they had created armies they turned them loose to prey on mankind. He believed, therefore, that France was in a state of greater financial affluence than any other country in Europe; and more especially with refereuce to the two neighbouring states, Prussia and Austria.

He would take this opportunity of saying, that under the existing circumstance of those two countries, it had not been deems prudent or wise by the British government to press the repayment of the Imperial loan. They really were not in a state at present to make the exertion which that repayment would require. In the last two campaigns, Prussia had expended 1200 millions of livres, or fifty millions sterling; and the expence of Austria had been still greater. In consequence the finances of those two countries had been so reduced that had his Majesty's government insisted on payment of the Imperial loan, they would actually have been unable to have put their armies on the peace establishmenet, and would have been put to other inconveniences, which in every point of view it was most desirable that we should, if possible, prevent them from enduring. As to the cession of territory by France, instead of the contribution of money, there was not a man in the kingdom, from the monarch to the lowest individual who did not entertain for such a proposition that which might justly be called a national repugnance. So abhorrent was it to the feelings of the whole French people that he really believed it would not have been in the power of the allies to persuade his most Christian Majesty to accede to such a stipulation. Besides, it ought to be considered that unless the demand for a cession of territory went far, it would be much wiser not to make it at all. On some parts of the multifarious questions before them there had of course been strong differences of opinion among the allied powers, but on that of the cession of French territory none. They all disavowed the right of treating France as a conquered nation in that respect, or of dismembering it with a view to alter its military character and resources as a nation. All that they held themselves, entitled to consider was, the more or less the modification of the frontier—but not one of the confederated powers imagined that it was within the functions of the Confederacy to dismember France itself. It should be considered that what was taken from France must have been given to some other nation. There was the two-fold danger of taking down one power, and of raising up another. Unless a third or half of her territory had been severed from France, no effect could have been produced. And did the house calculate on the wounded pride and honor that such a dismemberment would necessarily excite? Where was the Englishman who would not fight for any of the ancient possesions of our Crown? And he must say that he should not respect that Frenchman who did not feel that the state of his country before the Revolution was that in which his honour was bound up and that he could not allow the state to be diminished without a degradation worse than death. He therefore begged leave to contend, that in point of justice no proceeding of dismemberment could take place; and that in point of policy the very nature of the contest which was for the establishment of a general principle of security, rendered such a step unwise; and the last remedy to which Europe ought to look as a defence against the evils that surrounded her. There was another principle of action which should not pass unnoticed. Whatever it was wise to do at all, it was important should be done, not by any particular state, but by Europe as a whole. It was highly important that Europe, in its present allied state, should act as a body; and that nothing should occur to reduce that body to its original element. If a fragment only had been taken from France, and if that fragment had been delivered over to the power to whom from local circumstances, it would have proved the greatest advantage, the maintainance and defence of the acquisition would have necessarily devolved on that single power, and that at a period of the greatest agitation and difficulty.

It was a fundamental maxim of France to be involved in war with the Low Countries, and whenever this was the case, the burden always fell upon the shoulders of this country. We had therefore taken care to secure the dominions of the King of the Netherlands as much as possible against any attack from France. By the precautionary measures, however, that were adopted there was every reason to hope and believe that France would not make any hostile attempt. We had 150,000 of the best troops in the world, under a man who was justly and universally admitted to be the greatest general in the world; and as France had created the danger, it was but right that she should pay the price for watching over her tranquility. On the whole, he had good reason to believe that the peace would prove secure, even though some shew of hostilities might be made by France in so long a space of the life of man as five years. It would by no means have been wise to have taken the line of fortresses from France, and annexed them to the countries to which they were contigious. Such a measure would have been of no advantage to those countries; it might have been resisted by the French government, and might have created more danger of a new war than the leaving of them in the possession of France, after the Allied troops should be withdrawn. It was the general opinion in France, that she never erred more than in extending her territory. The future state of Europe depended on kings being permanently settled in France, and they would be so by not suffering her government to be thrown backwards and forwards as it had been. The allies had preferred the government of the King, because it seemed to offer nothing that was likely to shake the peace of Europe.—It was therefore a deliberate purpose of the allies, when they concluded the treaty of the 20th of November, to do away all cause for jealousy, and they bound themselves to restore the fortresses, with the few exceptions specified in the treaty, at the end of five years. But they did not bind themselves to restore them to any but the King's lawful heirs and successors, so that if the present dynasty should by any means be subverted, we did not pledge ourselves to the folly and absurdity of giving them up to any person who might be at the head of the government at that time, but to look at what might take place, and judge whether it would be necessary to impose some new restrictions. We were pledged to support the king of France, but not to support any new revolutionary government.—He was satisfied that greater securities for the durability of the peace had been obtained by the course pursued in the late negotiations, than could have been obtained if France had pushed into concessions with a more violent hand. If the King had not ascended the throne on the principle that the virtual integrity of France should be preserved, he (lord Castlereagh) would have had the most serious doubts of the continuance of peace. He felt that in that case it would have been much endangered by the irritated feelings of the French nation. But while due attention had been paid to this consideration, the allies had not failed to require what they thought adequate securities for the future repose of Europe.—These, he trusted, it would be the opinion of the house they had obtained, when it was recollected that five fortresses of considerable local importance had been ceded by France to the King of the Netherlands, and that the destruction of one which was of some importance had been insisted upon. Had the arrangement made for the future repose of Europe stopped here, he should have thought it incomplete. In his opinion, however, the other condition which had been made, combined with those to which he had just referred, would place the balance of power in Europe on a better footing than it had obtained since the time of Joseph the Second. France was to pay to the allies seven hundred millions of livres. Out of this sum, three hundred million was to be expended for the erection of strong places to defend the Low Countries, which would thus be placed in a better state than they had been in for the last fifty years; and he had no hesitation in saying, it was a much better game for England to play, to support the King of the Netherlands in his own territories, than it would be to maintain his authority in places taken from France, which that nation might reclaim whenever she felt her military power sufficiently revived to enable her to venture on such an undertaking. He was anxious that the question should rest on this principle, that England should rather take upon herself to defend the Netherlands than to hold the strong places taken from France, some of which it must be difficult to maintain, and some (Lisle for instance,) it must be obvious to every person who looked at their military situation, would be rather an incumbrance than advantage.

He would now say a few words on the subject of the saerifices of a pecuniary nature imposed upon France, in satisfaction of the views of the allies. Looking at the operation which these would have upon the French Government, he certainly considered what had been done in this respect was politically the most expedient course to neutralise, in the first instance, and ultimately to remedy that military spirit which had proved so fatal to the repose of Europe. If we drew from the French those resources which might sustain a military force, and applied it to the support of their own, kept there for the purposes of *surveillance*, we took the best means for preventing the recurrence of those evils against which it was the object of the allies to guard. This he thought the wisest policy that could be pursued to accomplish the end in view, and that which would be the least offensive, as it would be the least injurious to France herself. This persevered in for five years, he entertained sanguine hopes would establish the tranquility of France, and with it that of the rest of Europe. But he was aware that it was common for gentlemen to say the contributions which had been imposed, France could not and would not pay. In answer to this he had in the first place to state, that she had already made very considerable payments, and these under circumstances of peculiar difficulty and embarrassment; in the second, he would observe, she must pay them, or become bankrupt in national credit; and thirdly, it was to be remembered, that if she failed to do this, we should then stand in the same situation in which we had stood when in the opinion of some gentlemen we ought to have insisted upon other terms, founded upon permanent cessions of territory to be made by France.

It was now to be considered how the payments could be made by France, and what would be the effect of them on her trade and resources? In speaking of the arrangements which had been made, he wished it to be distinctly understood, that when he spoke of them as being wise, he did not give them that character, because he thought them ruinous to France. He protested against this doctrine altogether, as he was satisfied no arrangement could be wise, that carried ruin to one of the countries, between which it was concluded. He believed that if both parties had not an interest in carrying any treaty negociated, into effect, it must eventually fail. In miscalculating the point on which it could be acted upon with mutual benefit, the advantages contended for on either side were lost. He believed France could pay the contributions which had been demanded, and that she intended paying them.—France, he maintained, was as greatly interested in seeing that military spirit subside which had prevailed within her territories so long, as it was possible the rest of Europe could be. If at the end of five years she should find this to have been materially abated, and her civil energies increased in proportion, the change thus produced would be not less beneficial to her than it would prove to her neighbours. The contributions demanded could be met by the revenues of that country—by the sale of Crown lands, by the augmentation of her national debt, she might be enabled honorably to fulfil her engagements without bringing on the State any extraordinary calamity. France it had been stipulated should pay as an indemnity to the allies the sum of 700,000,000 livres (28 or 29,000,000*l.* sterling,) but this was comparatively speaking a very inconsiderable payment, when put by the side of the other expences which the late war had thrown upon her. In addition to this 29,000,000*l.* France had engaged to maintain an army of 150,000 men belonging to the allies for five years. The expence of each thousand men could not be estimated at less than 1,080,000 of livres per ann; this army therefore would cost France yearly the sum of 150,000,000. From this it would be seen, the sums which France would have to pay in five years, for the maintenance of this army, would be 750,000,000 of livres, making, with the 700,000,000 given to the allies as an indemnity, a total of 1,450,000 of livres.

By a convention concluded, the French government had engaged to pay 120 livres a man (about 5*l.*) on the whole force of 1,040,000 men, which had marched into France to conquer