



Abstract of European Documents.

CONCLUDED.

No. 29. Sir Charles Stuart to Mr. Canning, dated Paris, February 10. This letter is the report of a conversation between the writer and M. de Chateaubriand, on the receipt of Mr. Canning's letter of February 3, (see No. 25.)

M. de Chateaubriand admitted the construction put upon the King's speech by Mr. Canning, corresponded with the doubts expressed at home about it. M. de Chateaubriand does not hesitate to admit that, "in order to give stability to any modification of the present system in Spain, & to afford sufficient assurance to France to justify her discontinuing her warlike preparation, the King of Spain must be a party, and consent to such modification." The French government will not only be satisfied with the opening which any act (such as the establishment of a second Chamber) may offer, to complete, through the intervention of Great Britain, the system which is necessary for the constitutional government of Spain; but, without waiting for any further proofs of the sincerity of the Spanish government, they will consider any such act as affording reasonable grounds for suspending their armaments, and replacing the relations between the two countries upon the same footing usual in time of peace; tho' since he cannot suppose that we consider mere fair assurances to be sufficient, we must not be surprised if preparations for war are, in the mean time, carried on without intermission. M. de Chateaubriand did not enter into any detail respecting the nature of the acts to which he alluded; but I understood him to refer to the project of allowing the King the nomination of Counsellors of State, and giving them a deliberative power, upon a similar principle with that of the American Senate; to which might be added, a regulation fixing the amount of the qualification required to render a candidate eligible to the second or representative chamber.

No. 30. Sir William A'Court to Mr. Canning, dated Madrid, Feb. 13. Announcing the receipt by the French Minister at Madrid of his last despatches from France, directing him to demand his passports, &c. One of these despatches states that, after the fruitless efforts made by the representatives of the continental powers, as well as by Sir William A'Court and Lord Fitzroy Somerset, (the last of whom, it must be observed, had not left Paris seven days, and was not even arrived at Madrid when the French despatch was written,) to engage the Spanish government to listen to the suggestion of reason, and to adopt a line of greater moderation, no other course remains to the government of his most Christian Majesty, than that of recalling its Minister from Madrid; and that this is the only step left for the maintenance of peace; that the Duke of Angouleme is upon the point of placing himself at the head of 100,000 men upon the frontier; and that if the King of Spain, released from his present thralldom, and placed at the head of his army, shall be allowed to advance to the banks of the Bidassoa, in order to treat with him, a firm and durable peace may be established between the two countries; and the ancient intimate connexion between France and Spain restored; and the fleets, armies, and resources of France be placed from that moment entirely at the disposal of his Catholic Majesty: that France does not pretend to dictate to Spain the precise modifications she ought to adopt in her constitution; but, in order not to expose herself to the charge of having intentionally left her wishes unexplained, she declares that she will not renew her relations of amity with this country until a system be established with the consent of, and in concert with the King, assuring alike the liberties of the nation and the just privileges of the Monarch; and until a general act of amnesty be passed in favor of every individual persecuted for political offence, from the promulgation of the constitution, in 1812, down to the present period.

No. 31. The same to the same, dated Madrid, Feb. 4. This note announces the receipt of the war speech of the French King, which Sir W. A'Court read to M. de San Miguel; and some parts of it, by his own desire, a second time. The speech having been concluded, he broke out into exclamations against the French government; expressing his conviction that a war was inevitable. He said that Spain would never admit that the Constitution emanated from the King, nor recognize any other sovereignty than that of the people; that a manifesto was preparing, in which his Majesty would speak his sentiments to Europe, and that these sentiments would be found in unison with the answer which he had lately delivered to the Cortes—that Spain was prepared to repel force by force—and that France would find that the war would be a much more serious undertaking than she seemed at present to imagine it would be.

No. 32. The same to the same, dated Madrid, Feb. 7. The first part of this letter is a request for further instructions; and the latter part is the report of another conversation with San Miguel, held on that day. We must extract a part of it.

"M. San Miguel observed, that, with respect to modifications, there was neither a man nor a party in Spain (were the Ministry to be changed a hundred times) who would venture to propose their adoption, till the time pointed out by the constitution; and that, had any hope been held out to me of an opposite nature, I might depend upon it they never would be realized. M. San Miguel's conversation was, nevertheless, less warlike than I had found it a day or two ago. He would not, he said, consider all hope of negotiation at an end, but still rely for a successful issue from the present difficulties, upon the friendship and good offices of England. He was convinced that she might, and that she would, prevent a war. "I told him that England had done, and would continue to do, every thing in her power to prevent matters from coming to such extremities; but my opinion was, that war was inevitable, if Spain were really determined to admit no modification in her present constitutional system. A long and desultory conversation followed, in the course of which, M. San Miguel put very prominently forward, the evident acknowledgment of the intention to establish a PERMANENT FRENCH INTEREST IN SPAIN, contained in certain passages of the King of France's Speech to the Chambers."

No. 33. Sir Charles Stuart to Mr. Canning, dated Paris, Feb. 21. Another conversation with M. de Chateaubriand. He thought the subject [of negotiation] might yet be taken into consideration, if the Spanish negotiators should engage at a future period to modify their constitution; and in the mean while, prove their good faith by restoring the King to his physical liberty, and allowing him to frequent the *Sitios*, and to go to watering places; by a general amnesty; by the establishment of laws to regulate the press, and by a change of Ministry; but that the military preparations of the French government must continue without intermission; and that their armies will be ready to take the field, if a change in the aspect of affairs does not contribute to remove the pressure and irritation which prevails on both sides, before the season for active operation shall arrive.

No. 34. Sir William A'Court to Mr. Canning, dated Madrid, Feb. 16. In this note it is said—there is but little hope of any of those further concessions which will be made, which would insure an amicable arrangement of the differences that exist between this country and France. Besides which, the putting forward by France of so extravagant a proposition, as that the King, restored to his full and absolute power, shall himself grant a charter to the nation, has singularly increased the difficulties of the question.—The principle upon which this proposition is founded is one to which it is evident the British government can never agree; and consequently, if such be the *sine qua non* of France, our intervention falls to the ground.

No. 35. The same to the same, Feb. 18. Sir W. A'Court says—My hopes have been grievously disappointed with respect to the amnesty; which I was confidently assured, would embrace every political offence, and every political offender. But neither by the committee nor in the Cortes, has the slightest allusion been made to so general a measure, notwithstanding the hopes that were held out. The amnesty voted is nothing more than an act of pardon for any "factious" who may lay down their arms before the 1st of April; without any retrospective operation in favor of those already in prison, or any allusion to those confined merely for political opinions. It is a mere act of policy, and by no means an act of grace; nor can it be expected to produce that favorable effect in France which might have been insured by a more general measure.

No. 36. The same to the same, Feb. 19, announcing the closing of the Extraordinary Cortes, the resignation of Ministers, &c.

No. 37. The same to the same, Feb. 20, announcing the re-appointment of the same Ministry.

No. 38. Sir Charles Stuart to Mr. Canning, dated Paris, March 6. He thinks the language of the French Cabinet more pacific, though they insist upon a direct negotiation between the Duke d'Angouleme and a Spanish Prince.

No. 39. Sir William A'Court to Mr. Canning, dated Madrid, Feb. 23. The writer mentions his having read the despatch of Mr. Canning, dated Feb. 9, and Sir Charles Stuart's of the day following (see No. 27 & 9.) to San Miguel.

"M. de San Miguel listened with the greatest attention; but as soon as I had concluded, observed, that the British government was laboring under a delusion, in opposing any sort of modification possible. It would be a much easier thing to overturn the whole constitutional system, and to re-establish absolute despotism, than to concede even the most insignificant of the points which have been pointed out as the most likely to conciliate."

"He was fully aware that England asked no modifications on her own account. He knew that we wished to preserve to Spain her constitutional system; that our only object in trying to engage

her to yield upon certain points, was the conviction that, if a war did break out, we must be, sooner or later, involved in it ourselves. He knew very well that we should not declare in favor of Spain at first; but nobody could be so blind as not to see, that if the war was protracted, and other powers took part in it, England alone could not remain a passive spectator of what might be its results."

No. 40. The same to the same, dated March 5. The writer says—"A Spanish gentleman at Paris has written from Paris to ———, that the French government has declared that it will suspend hostilities if a general amnesty be granted, a verbal promise of modifications hereafter to be given, a change of ministers take place, and the King be permitted to go to the waters of Sacedon." This statement, Sir W. says, had not been confided to him by any advice from Sir Charles Stuart.

No. 41. The same to the same, March 9. This note is not important.

No. 42. Relates to the foregoing, and is likewise unimportant. He concludes by saying, that whatever hopes have been excited, (by the last conversation with Miguel,) are now entirely at an end.

No. 43. Mr. Canning to Sir Charles Stuart. This is a long and able letter, intended as the summing up of the whole negotiations; and, long as it is, it is too important to be abridged, or to be omitted. We therefore give it entire.

Mr. Secretary Canning to Sir C. Stuart. Foreign Office, March 31, 1823.

SIR: The hopes of an accommodation between France & Spain, which his Majesty has so long been encouraged to cherish, in despite of all unfavorable appearances, being now unhappily extinguished, I am commanded by his Majesty to address to your Excellency, for the purpose of being communicated to the French minister, the following explanation of the sentiments of your government upon the present posture of affairs between those two kingdoms.

The King has exhausted his endeavors to preserve the peace of Europe.

The question of an interference in the internal concerns of Spain, on account of the troubles and distractions which have for some time prevailed in that kingdom, was not one on which his Majesty could, for himself entertain a moment's hesitation. If his Majesty's plenipotentiary at Verona did not decline taking part in the deliberations of the allied cabinets upon that question, it was because his Majesty owed to his allies, upon that as soon as upon every other subject, a sincere declaration of his opinions; and because he hoped that a friendly and unreserved communication might tend to the preservation of general peace.

The nature of the apprehension which had induced the King of France to assemble an army, within his own frontier, upon the borders of Spain, had been indicated, in the first instance, by the designation of "Cordon Sanitaire." The change of that designation to that of an "Army of Observation" (which took place in the month of September last) did not appear to his Majesty to imply more, than that the defensive system, originally opposed to the contagion of physical diseases, would be continued against the possible inconveniences, moral or political, which might arise to France, from a civil contest raging in a country separated from the French territory only by a conventional line of demarcation. The dangers naturally incident to an unrestrained intercourse between two countries so situated towards each other; the dangers of political intrigue, or of occasional violation of territory, might sufficiently justify preparations of military defence.

Such was the state of things between France and Spain at the opening of the Congress at Verona. The propositions brought forward by the French plenipotentiary in the conferences of the Allied Cabinets, were founded on this state of things. Those propositions did not relate to any project of carrying attack into the heart of the Spanish monarchy, but were in the nature of inquiries—1st, what countenance France might expect to receive from the Allies, if she should find herself under the necessity of breaking off diplomatic intercourse with the Court of Madrid? And 2dly, what assistance, in supposed cases of outrage to be committed, or of violence to be menaced, by Spain? These cases were all contingent and precautionary. The answers of the three continental Powers were of a correspondent character.

The result of the discussions at Verona was, a determination of his Majesty's allies, the Emperors of Austria and Russia, and the King of Prussia, 1st, To make known to the Cabinet of Madrid, through their respective ministers at that Court, their sentiments upon the necessity of a change in the present system of the Spanish government; and, in the event of an unsatisfactory answer to that communication, to recal their respective Ministers, and to break off all diplomatic intercourse with Spain. 2dly, to make common cause with France against Spain in certain specified cases; cases, as has been already observed, altogether contingent and precautionary.

His Majesty's Plenipotentiary declined

concurring in these measures, not only because he was unauthorised to pledge the faith of his government to any hypothetical engagement, but because his government had, from the month of April 1820, uniformly recommended to the powers of the alliance to abstain from all interference in the internal affairs of Spain; and because, having been, from the same period, entirely unacquainted with whatever transactions might have taken place between France and Spain, his government could not judge on what grounds the Cabinet of the Tuilleries meditated a possible discontinuance of diplomatic relations with the Court of Madrid, or on what grounds they apprehended an occurrence apparently so improbable, as a commencement of hostilities against France by Spain.

No proof was produced to his Majesty's Plenipotentiary of the existence of any design on the part of the Spanish government to invade the territory of France, of any attempt to introduce disaffection among her soldiery, or of any project to undermine her political institutions; and so long as the struggles and disturbances of Spain should be confined within the circle of her own territory, they could not be admitted by the British government to afford any plea for foreign interference. If the end of the last, and the beginning of the present century saw all Europe combined against France, it was not on account of the internal changes which France thought necessary for her own political and civil reformation, but because she attempted to propagate, first her principles, and afterwards her dominion, by the sword.

Impossible as it was for his Majesty to be party to the measures concerted at Verona with respect to Spain, his Majesty's Plenipotentiary declared, that the British Government could only endeavor, through his Majesty's Minister at the Court of the Catholic King, "to allay the ferment which those measures might occasion at Madrid, and to do all the good in his power."

Up to this period, no communication had taken place between his Majesty and the Court of Madrid, as to the discussions at Verona. But, about the time of the arrival of his Majesty's Plenipotentiary, on his return from Verona, at Paris, Spain expressed a desire for the "friendly interposition" of his Majesty, to avert the calamities of war. Spain distinctly limited this desire to the employment of such "good offices" on the part of Great Britain, as would not be inconsistent with the most strictly conceived system of neutrality." Nor has any period occurred, throughout the whole of the intercourse of the British government with Spain at which the Spanish government has been for one moment led, by that of Great Britain, to believe, that the policy of his Majesty, in a contest between France and Spain, would be other than neutral.

In pursuance of this request, and of his previous declaration at Verona, his Majesty's Plenipotentiary received instructions at Paris to make to the French government the offer of his Majesty's mediation. In making this offer, the British government deprecated, from motives of expediency as well as from considerations of justice, the employment towards Spain of a language of reproach or of intimidation. They represented as matter of no light moment the first breach, by whatever power, of that general pacific settlement which had been so recently established, and at the cost of so many sufferings and sacrifices to all nations. Nor did they disguise from the French government the anxiety with which they looked forward to all the possible issues of a new war in Europe, if once begun.

In addition to suggestions such as these, the British government endeavored to learn from the Cabinet of the Tuilleries the nature and amount of the specific grievances of which his most Christian Majesty complained against Spain; and of such specific measures of redress or conciliation on the part of Spain, as would arrest the progress of his most Christian Majesty's warlike preparations.

The French government declined the formal mediation of his Majesty; alleging, in substance, that the necessity of its warlike preparations was founded, not so much upon any direct cause of complaint against Spain which might be susceptible of accurate specification and of practicable adjustment, as upon the general position in which the two kingdoms found themselves placed towards each other; upon the effect which all that was passing, and had been for some time passing in Spain, produced upon the peace and tranquillity of his most Christian Majesty's dominions; upon the burdensomeness of that defensive armament which France had thought herself obliged to establish on her frontier towards Spain, and which it was alike inconvenient for her to maintain, or without some change of circumstances, which would justify such change of counsel to withdraw; upon a state of things, in short, which it was easier to understand than to define; but which, taken altogether, was so intolerable to France, that open hostility would be far preferable to it. War, would, at least, have a tendency to some conclusion; whereas the existing state of the relations between France and Spain might contin-

ue for an indefinite time, increasing every day the difficulties of Spain and propagating disquietude and alarm throughout the French army and nation.

But, although his most Christian Majesty's Government declined on these grounds a formal mediation, they professed an earnest desire for peace, and accepted his Majesty's "good offices" with Spain for that object.

Contemplating all the mischiefs which war might inflict upon France, and through France ultimately perhaps upon Europe; and which it must inflict, more immediately and inevitably, upon Spain, whose internal animosities and agitations a foreign war could not but exasperate and prolong, the British government was deeply impressed with the necessity of peace for both kingdoms; and resolved, therefore, whether invested or not with the formal character of mediator, to make every effort, to avail itself of chance for the prevention of hostilities. The question was now becoming a question simply and entirely between Spain and France; and the only practical point of enquiry was not so much how the relations of those two governments had been brought into their present awkward complication, as how that complication could be solved, without recourse to arms, and an amicable adjustment produced, through mutual explanation and concession.

Nothing could have induced his Majesty to suggest to the Spanish nation a revision of its political institutions, as the price of his Majesty's friendship. But, Spaniards of all parties and descriptions admitted some modifications of the constitution of 1812, to be indispensably necessary; and if in such a crisis as that in which Spain now found herself, distracted at once by the miseries of civil war, and by the apprehension of foreign invasion, the adoption of modifications so admitted to be desirable in themselves might afford a prospect for composing her internal dissensions and might at the same time, furnish to the French government a motive for withdrawing from the menacing position which it had assumed towards Spain, the British government felt that no scruple or delicacy, or fear of misconstruction, ought to restrain them from avowing an earnest wish that the Spaniards could prevail upon themselves to consider of such modifications, or, at least to declare their disposition to consider of them hereafter.

It is useless now to discuss what might have been the result of his Majesty's anxious endeavors to bring about an accommodation between France and Spain, if nothing had occurred to interrupt their progress. Whatever might be the indisposition of the Spanish government to take the first step towards such an accommodation, it cannot be disguised, that the principles avowed and the pretensions forward by the French government, in the speech from the throne at the opening of the Chambers at Paris, created new obstacles to the success of friendly intervention. The communication of that speech to the British government was accompanied, indeed, with renewed assurances of the pacific disposition of France; and the French Minister adopted a construction of the passage most likely to create unfavorable impressions in Spain which, stripped it of a part of its objectionable character. But all the attempts of the British government to give effect at Madrid to such assurances and explanations proved unavailing. The hopes of success became gradually fainter, and have now vanished altogether.

It only remains to describe the conduct which it is his Majesty's desire and intention to observe, in a conflict between two nations, to each of whom his Majesty is bound by the ties of amity and alliance.

The repeated disavowal, by his most Christian Majesty's government, of all views of ambition and aggrandisement, forbids the suspicion of any design on the part of France to establish a permanent military occupation in Spain; or to force his Catholic Majesty, into any measure derogatory to the independence of his Crown, to his existing relations with other powers.

The repeated assurances which his Majesty has received of the determination of France to respect the dominions of his most Faithful Majesty, relieve his Majesty from any apprehensions of being called upon to fulfil the obligations of that intimate defensive connection which has so long subsisted between the crowns of G. Britain and Portugal.

With respect to the provinces in America, which have thrown off their allegiance to the crown of Spain, time and the course of events appear to have substantially decided their separation from the mother country, although the formal recognition of those provinces as independent states, by his Majesty, may be hastened or retarded by various external circumstances, as well as by the more or less satisfactory progress, in each state, towards a regular and settled form of government. Spain has long been apprised of his Majesty's opinions upon this subject. Disclaiming, in the most solemn manner, any intention of appropriating to himself the smallest portion of the late Spanish possessions in America, his Majesty is satisfied that no attempt would be made by France to bring under her dominion any