

The expectation of a rupture pervaded the public mind. The Russian Funds fell very heavily, under a war panic; partisans exulted in a diplomatic victory, and in the increase of what is called our *prestige*, the bane, in my opinion, of all upright politics. The Turk was encouraged in the humor of resistance. And this, as we now know, while his hands were so reddened with Bulgarian blood. Foreign capitals were amazed at the martial excitement in London. But the Government never spoke a word.

Silence in these circumstances was bad enough. But they were worse than silent. They caused the clang of preparation to be heard in the arsenals. They progressively increased the squadron to a fleet; and, moreover, I believe it is true that they mainly increased it, not by sending the class of ships which had large crews, available for landing considerable numbers of men, for the purpose of defending such persons as might be assailed; but those vast ironclads, with crews relatively small, which principally, and proudly, display the belligerent power of England. If this be not an accurate statement, let it be contradicted.*

And this ostentatious protection to Turkey, this wanton disturbance of Europe, was continued by our Ministry, with what I must call a strange perversity, for weeks and weeks. It was so continued, when a word of explanation as to the true cause of the dispatch of the fleet would have stopped all mischief, dissipated all alarm. I admit, that it would have also dissipated at the same time a little valueless popularity, too dearly bought.

All this time, so far as we can learn, the sequels in detail to the wholesale massacres in Bulgaria were proceeding. In the latter part of it, the fencing answers of the Ministry about Turkish misdeeds had begun. And during the latter part of it, also, the requests of members of Parliament for authentic information about the East were repeatedly refused, on the ground that the production of it would be injurious to the public service! Nay more, compliments were accepted, with the silence which not only might mean consent, but could mean nothing else, from more than one Peer in the House of Lords, and from two members of Parliament in the House of Commons, on the vigorous policy which our Government was pursuing in the East.

Such is the spectacle which, during the present spring and summer, we have exhibited to Europe.

* July 27. Mr. Disraeli stated that the Fleet then in Turkish waters consisted of twenty vessels: eleven ironclads, and nine unarmored ships of war.