

News Department

By R. M. Steamship America, April 1.

BOUEN, OR LONDON, March 24.

DAY OF HUMILIATION.

The Earl of Clancarty observed that the nation was placed in a critical position at the present moment, being on the very verge of war. The measures adopted by the Government to meet that state of things were all that could be desired, and the enthusiasm of the forces, naval and military, was never greater. However, there was one circumstance overlooked, which to him was a cause of regret and surprise—namely, that no step had as yet been taken for the purpose of supplicating the divine blessing on our arms (hear). He therefore wished to ask the noble earl if he contemplated the setting apart of a day for public devotion in connection with the present warlike crisis? (hear).

The Earl of Aberdeen replied that, though war was imminent, it had not yet taken place; therefore, any such proceeding at the present moment would be premature.

MARCH 30.

RUSSIAN FLEET IN THE BLACK SEA.

The Earl of Malmesbury inquired if it was true that Russian vessels had quitted Sebastopol for the purpose of conveying troops to the garrisons on the coast of Circassia; and, whether while they were so doing, the French and English fleets had remained at anchor at Beicos Bay?

The Earl of Clarendon was not in a position to say if the rumour were true or false; but he would say that the information which he had officially received rather contradicted than supported the truth of such a rumour, so far as it related to Circassia. He had received a telegraphic message that Russian ships of war had left Sebastopol, but had not gone to Circassia. The steam-vessels of the English and French fleets had made a cruise in the Black Sea, but had returned without having seen a single Russian vessel.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

The Earl of Malmesbury asked if any convention had been signed by France, Turkey, and England; and, if so, whether it would be laid upon the table of the Eastern Question, or such a convention had been signed by England, but, owing to an oversight, had been only provisionally signed by France. When completed there would be no objection whatever to its production.

ENGLAND AGAINST RUSSIA.

DECLARATION.

It is with deep regret that her Majesty announces the failure of her anxious and protracted endeavours to preserve for her people and for Europe the blessings of peace.

The unprovoked aggression of the Emperor of Russia against the Sublime Porte has been persisted in with such disregard of consequences that, after the rejection by the Emperor of Russia of terms which the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of the French, and the King of Prussia, as well as her Majesty, considered just and inevitable, Her Majesty is compelled by a sense of what is due to the honour of her Crown, to the interests of her People, and to the independence of the States of Europe, to come forward in defence of an ally whose territory is invaded, and whose dignity and independence are assailed. Her Majesty, in justification of the course she is about to pursue, refers to the transactions in which her Majesty has been engaged.

The Emperor of Russia had some cause of complaint against the Sultan with reference to the settlement, which his Highness had sanctioned, of the conflicting claims of the Greek and Latin Churches to the holy places of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. To the complaint of the Emperor of Russia on this head justice was done, and her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople had the satisfaction of promoting an arrangement to which no exception was taken by the Russian Government.

But while the Russian Government repeatedly assured the Government of Her Majesty that the mission of Prince Menchikoff to Constantinople was exclusively directed to the settlement of the question of the holy places at Jerusalem, Prince Menchikoff himself pressed upon the Porte other demands of a far more serious and important character, the nature of which he in the first instance endeavoured, as far as possible, to conceal from her Majesty's Ambassador. And these demands, thus slyly concealed, affected,

not the privileges of the Greek Church at Jerusalem but the position of many millions of Turkish subjects in their relation to their Sovereign the Sultan. These demands were rejected by the spontaneous decision of the Sublime Porte. Two assurances had been given to her Majesty—one, that the mission of Prince Menchikoff only regarded the holy places; the other, that his mission would be of a conciliatory character. In both respects her Majesty's just expectations were disappointed.

Demands were made which, in the opinion of the Sultan, extended to the substitution of the Emperor of Russia's authority for his own over a large portion of his subjects, and those demands were enforced by a threat; and when her Majesty learned that, on announcing the termination of his mission, Prince Menchikoff declared that the refusal of his demands would impose upon the Imperial Government the necessity of seeking a guarantee by its own power, her Majesty thought proper that her fleet should leave Malta, and, in co-operation with that of his Majesty the Emperor of the French, take up its station in the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles.

So long as the negotiation bore an amicable character her Majesty refrained from any demonstration of force. But, when in addition to the assemblage of large military forces on the frontier of Turkey, the Ambassador of Russia intimated that serious consequences would ensue from the refusal of the Sultan to comply with unwarrantable demands, her Majesty deemed it right, in conjunction with the Emperor of the French, to give an unquestionable proof of her determination to support the sovereign rights of the Sultan.

The Russian Government has maintained that the determination of the Emperor to occupy the Principalities was taken in consequence of the advance of the fleets of England and France. But the menace of invasion of the Turkish territory was conveyed in Count Neesselrode's note to Rechid Pacha of the 19th (31st) May, and re-stated in his despatch to Baron Brunow of the 20th May (1st June), which announced the determination of the Emperor of Russia to order his troops to occupy the Principalities if the Porte did not within a week comply with the demands.

The despatch to her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, authorising him in certain specified contingencies to send for the British fleet, was dated the 31st May, and the order sent direct from England to her Majesty's admiral to proceed in the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles was dated the 2nd of June. The determination to occupy the Principalities was, therefore, taken before the orders for the advance of the combined squadrons were given. The Sultan's Minister was informed that unless he signed within a week, and without the change of a word, the note proposed to the Porte by Prince Menchikoff on the eve of his departure from Constantinople, the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia would be occupied by Russian troops. The Sultan could not accede to so insulting a demand; but, when the actual occupation of the Principalities took place, the Sultan did not, as he might have done in the exercise of his undoubted right, declare war, but addressed a protest to his allies.

Her Majesty, in conjunction with the Sovereigns of Austria, France and Prussia, have made various attempts to meet any just demands of the Emperor of Russia without affecting the dignity and independence of the Sultan; and, had it been the sole object of Russia to obtain security for the enjoyment by the Christian subjects of the Porte of their privileges and immunities, she would have found it in the offers that have been made by the Sultan. But, as that security was not offered in the shape of a special and separate stipulation with Russia, it was rejected. Twice has this offer been made by the Sultan, and recommended by the Four Powers—once by a note originally prepared at Vienna and subsequently modified by the Porte—once by the proposal of bases of negotiation agreed upon at Constantinople on the 31st of December, and approved of at Vienna on the 14th of January, as offering to the two parties the means of arriving at an understanding in a becoming and honourable manner.

It is thus manifest that a right of Russia to interfere in the ordinary relations of Turkish subjects to their Sovereign, and not the happiness of Christian communities in Turkey, was the object sought for by the Russian Government, so such a demand the Sultan would not submit, and his Highness, in self-defence, declared war upon Russia, but her Majesty,

nevertheless, in conjunction with her allies, has not ceased her endeavours to restore peace between the contending parties.

The time has, however, now arrived when, the advice and remonstrances of the Four Powers having proved wholly ineffectual, and the military preparations of Russia becoming daily more extended, it is too obvious that the Emperor of Russia has entered upon a course of policy which, if unchecked, must lead to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire.

IN THIS CONJUNCTURE HER MAJESTY FEELS CALLED UPON, BY REASON FOR AN ALLY, THE INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF WHOSE EMPIRE HAVE BEEN RECOGNISED AS ESSENTIAL TO THE PEACE OF EUROPE, BY THE SYMPATHIES OF HER PEOPLE THE RIGHT AGAINST WRONG, BY A DESIRE TO AVERT FROM HER DOMINIONS MOST INJURIOUS CONSEQUENCES, AND TO SAVE EUROPE FROM THE PREPONDERANCE OF A POWER WHICH HAS VIOLATED THE FAITH OF TREATIES AND DEFIES THE ORDERS OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD, TO TAKE UP ARMS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE SULTAN.

Her Majesty is persuaded that in so acting she will have the cordial support of her people; and that the protest of zeal for the Christian religion will be in vain to cover an aggression undertaken in disregard of its holy precepts, and of its pure and best spirit.

Her Majesty humbly trusts that her efforts may be successful, and that, by the blessing of Providence, peace may be re-established on safe and solid foundations.

Westminster, March 28, 1854.

DECLARATION.

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, having been compelled to take up arms in support of an ally, is desirous of conducting the war as little onerous as possible to the Powers with whom she remains at peace.

To preserve the commerce of neutrals from all unnecessary obstruction, Her Majesty is willing to present, to waive a part of the belligerent rights pertaining to her by all nations.

It is impossible for her Majesty to forego the right of preventing neutrals from bearing the arms of war, and she must maintain the right of a belligerent to prevent neutrals from breaking any effective blockade which may be established with a view to force against the enemy's forts, harbours, or coasts.

But her Majesty will waive the right of seizing the enemy's property laden on board a neutral vessel, if it be contraband of war.

It is not her Majesty's intention to claim the confiscation of neutral property, not being contraband of war, found on board an enemy's ship, and her Majesty further declares that, being anxious to lessen as far as possible the evils of war, and to restrict operations to the regularly organised forces of the belligerents, it is her present intention to issue letters of marque for the commissioning of privateers.

Westminster, March 28, 1854.

On Thursday a deputation from the Dublin Protestant Association, headed by its president Dr. Grogan, Esq. M. P. waited on Sir H. Inglis, at his residence in Bedford square, and presented to him a dress on his retirement from public life, expressing their admiration, sympathy and respect, for the baronet's unswerving consistency of principle, truthfulness of character, and wise appreciation of a long career, of the true source of British power and eminence—the Protestant faith.

Lieutenant General Lord Raglan, G. C. B. who proceeds to take the command of her Majesty's forces in the East, will be invested with the full powers of a plenipotentiary and generalissimo, to enable him to act on any emergency on his own judgment, without being under the control of any ambassador, while on so important a mission.

DEATH OF THE DUKE OF PORTLAND.—We have announced the death of his Grace the Duke of Portland, which took place at his seat, Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire, on Tuesday afternoon. He was a nobleman, William Henry Cavendish Bentinck, Duke and Earl of Portland, Marquis of Titchfield, Viscount Woodstock, and Baron of Westchester, was born in 1768, and had consequently reached a patriarchal age. In 1795 he married the daughter and co-heiress of General Scott (whose name he assumed). The offspring of this marriage was the Marquis of Titchfield, now Duke of Portland.