

war. Let us look at a few of the facts before forming our opinion upon his course. After Russia had made the demand upon Turkey, in 1853, in favor of the Greek Church, an International congress sat at Vienna, the result of which was the preparation of the "Vienna note," which contained almost the very terms to which the Turkish Government had privately assured the English ambassador they would agree. But, unfortunately, this note was first sent to St. Petersburg, and although the Russian Government accepted it without dissent, yet, when it was sent to Constantinople, the Porte would not accept it, perhaps because it came from Russia, perhaps because Turkey had secret assurance of assistance from France. Russia waited several weeks, proposed several methods of settling the difficulties, and, when all were refused, occupied the Principalities. Then the smouldering fires of war burst into a flame among the Western Powers. In England, Cabinet, Parliament and people were for war, John Bright and a few others against it. Hostilities commenced, and in the first campaign those three great victories were gained which shed such lustre upon the British and French arms.

But another fact remains to be noticed. Before Sebastopol was invested, another Congress of the Great Powers was held at Vienna. After much discussion, the Allies and Russia agreed on all points but one, "the occupation of the Black Sea." The Allies wished to restrict Russia to eight ships of war on that sea, Turkey to eight, France and England each to four. Prince Gortchakoff refused. His words were: "I cannot go to St. Petersburg with that clause in the Treaty. Do you think Russia will consent to have but eight ships of war on her own sea, while the Allies have sixteen; and will she give herself up, disarmed at the pleasure of the Napoleons and Palmerstons who can have an unlimited force on the Mediterranean?" The war went on. Sebastopol was taken and its fortifications destroyed. Russia was humbled, and in March, 1856, by the Treaty of Paris, agreed to the Black Sea terms, humiliating as they were. In the general rejoicing few thought of John Bright and the honest Friends who had opposed the war.

Many had, during its progress, styled him coward. But was he a coward? Is that man, can that man be a coward who rises in the British House of Commons to advocate what he believes is right, when almost the whole 658 members are hotly opposed to him? Did it not show a high type of bravery, that neither the opposition of his brother members nor the fear of giving offence to his constituents (who did afterwards reject him) could deter him from holding fast his principles?

But what came of it? Fourteen years rolled by, and in November, 1870, the British Government was notified from St. Petersburg that "Russia no longer consented to the Black Sea clause in the Treaty of Paris." The press and statesmen of Britain discussed the matter and decided that Russia was right, and that there was no necessity of protecting Turkey in the manner proposed; the very thing which Bright had pleaded in 1854. Russia was released, and to-day she is almost literally crowding the Black Sea ports with her iron-clads. This is the result of a struggle in which so much life and time and treasure were expended, and which few English statesmen of any note now attempt to justify. What a glorious rebuke can Mr. Bright give those who at that time so bitterly assailed him?

Just so in the American war. Had Lord Palmerston's Government shown that spirit of generous sympathy which Bright pointed out was just, those unpleasant feelings between the two great peoples, which it has cost so much to allay, would never have arisen.

Mr. Bright is certain to urge further reforms. He has already pronounced decidedly in favor of a non-sectarian school system, and strongly condemns the one introduced by Gladstone's Government. It is not a little strange that, in this the intelligent nineteenth century, the best School Bill yet introduced into the English Parliament, tends to favour one religious denomination above others?

Let us glance briefly at the political condition of England in 1843, when Bright entered public life. At that time Manchester, with a population of nearly 300,000, sent two members to Westminster, while 54 boroughs, with the same total population, sent 89;