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## AND CONCEPTION BAY JOURNAL.

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No. 2

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### BLOCKADE OF THE SPANISH COAST.

Lord BROUGHAM wished to call the attention of the house to certain orders which were supposed to have been issued by the Admiralty to certain cruisers on the coast of Spain, to prevent the access of any Sardinian or Dutch vessels, supposed to be carrying the munitions of war. He hoped that steps had not been taken which would tend not only to tarnish the character of the country, but involve it in a contest adverse to its best interests—which might compromise England with foreign powers, and shake the peace of Europe and of the whole world. If such instruction had been issued without the regular notification to all neutral states, he contended that such conduct was a gross outrage on, and infraction of, the law of nations. He was in their lordship's hands, and was unwilling to trouble them with a long speech, and would therefore wait to see what answer he got from her Majesty's government.

Viscount MELBOURNE declined to give any answer to the questions of the noble and learned lord.

Lord BROUGHAM said, that when a person declined to answer a question which was clear to the meanest capacity, there could be no reason for such conduct but one, and that was, that the answer must be wrong according to his interpretation of it. He had a right, then, to assume, that such instructions had been given, that no warning had been given to other powers, and that there was on legal opinion to be produced for such a gross violation of the law of nations.—They were, therefore, at war, but even though they were belligerents, they had no right to stop a neutral vessel, unless they had a competent force, and used it so that no ship should be safe in going to any port on the coast. Who ever heard of one nation, because it happened to wish well to one of two parties and was at war with neither, issuing an order to take all neutral vessels going to the assistance of one of the belligerents? Such conduct was without a precedent since the law of nations was used amongst civilized men. The instructions if issued ought to have been published to the neutral powers,—to Sardinia and Holland. The vessels of these countries were laden with stores—nobody dreaming that it could possibly enter into any one's head to issue such a wild order—and when they arrived at the coast of Spain, they were to be sent back—if they did not consent thus to frustrate the whole intention of their voyage they were to be captured. He (Lord B.) was glad he had come forward to arrest the progress of the government in this bad course which was calculated to endanger the peace of Europe. And he should deeply lament if satisfactory answers were not returned to the questions he had to put. He was not without apprehensions mischief might speedily happen in consequence of this order—for who knew what alliances existed between powers more powerful than Sardinia, or even Holland. Sardinia was a small power, but we had heard of defensive alliances, and one was not improbable here. What if it should turn out that Sardinia had put herself under the protection of a powerful state? What if Austria and Sardinia had entered into any defensive alliance? What if he knew such to be the fact? There was a defensive alliance which bound Austria to help Sardinia, and make common cause with Sardinia against any party with which Sardinia should be involved in war. Did he then go too far in saying this was a serious matter? It was possible that this alliance might have taken place since the instruction, but the date of the instruction would show that fact. He conceived that he had a right, unless strong reasons were shown to the contrary, to a production of these instruc-

tions, and should therefore move that a humble address be presented to her Majesty, praying her Majesty will be pleased to cause to be laid before the house a copy of instructions touching warnings to be given, or prohibitions to be issued, against the entrance of Spanish ports by the vessels of Sardinia, Holland or other neutral nations, and of any warning that may have been given to neutrals generally.

Viscount MELBOURNE said, he had declined to answer the questions put to him by the noble and learned lord, not because he was unable to do so or believed that any great inconvenience would arise from his doing so, but he submitted to the calm deliberation of their lordships, whether the noble and learned lord had made out any grounds for his motion, or advanced any reasons why their lordship should call for the production of the papers. He protested against the motion, as impolitic, inexpedient, and imprudent, because it might tend to excite a jealousy and suspicious against the government, for the time being, administering the affairs of this country.

The Earl of RIPLEY supported the motion. He contended, that such interference, which might risk a war with all the neutral powers in the world, was not warranted by the original quadrupartite treaty, whatever it might be by the additional articles, which were added long afterwards, and to which he (Lord Ripon) was no party. He observed that, from the speech of the noble viscount, it appeared certain,—first that the instruction were executed, and were sent to the naval officers on the coast of Spain; secondly, that they had the influence, and produced the effect intended; and, thirdly, that they had not been acted upon against any persons whatever.

The Earl of MINTO, in opposing the motion, said; he believed that this was the first time that such a demand had been made for such an object. There was nothing in the noble and learned lord's speech which was inconsistent with the faithful execution of the quadruple treaty, and the additional articles, to both of which the noble and learned lord had himself been a party. His lordship, after alluding to the report that one of the officers of the navy had communicated the information on which the motion was made, described such conduct as a gross breach of that confidence and trust which ought to exist between the officers of the service and the government, and said he hoped he should never hear again of such a proceeding. Since he had been at the head of the department, he had made as little distinction as possible in the selection of officers, with regard to their political opinions, but if such conduct were repeated, it must necessarily lead to the employment of officers of the same political opinions as the government.

Lord BROUGHAM denied that he had had any communication whatever with any naval officer on the subject, and said that the person alluded to served on shore, and had nothing to do with the sea.

The Duke of WELLINGTON said, that any officer capable of such conduct as that imputed was not worthy of the service. He certainly was not disposed to inconvenience the government, but he contended that the article quoted by the noble earl (Minto) did not bind this country to give the aid of a naval force, as under a treaty of offence and defence, which might involve this country in war, but only for the purpose of transporting troops from one part of the country to another. He thought that the house ought to be furnished with the information sought by the noble and learned lord.

The Earl of MINTO stated, in reply to a question from the Duke of Wellington, that he had only given his own individual opinions, not those of the government, as to the obligation of the treaty. That treaty did not authorise us to in-

terfere in any quarrels between Spain and any other power, but if that power combined with Don Carlos in warlike operations, he did hold—he might be wrong, but still he held—that the treaty did compel us to take part. He did not, however, understand the treaty otherwise than as being confined to any contest between the Queen of Spain and Don Carlos.

The Duke of WELLINGTON remarked, that though this opinion might be only the noble lord's, yet the instructions did not embody his own opinions only, they were not sent without the authority of the Secretary of State. The noble lord might say what his own opinion was, but the opinion of ministers was stated in any instruction which might have been given.

Lord BROUGHAM ridiculed the explanation given by Earl Minto, and said that the noble lord was content, with his colleagues, to avail himself of a plank which the noble duke had now, as several times heretofore, thrown out to them.

The Duke of WELLINGTON said, that the noble viscount had admitted that his (the Duke of Wellington's) view of the treaty was the correct one; that the government was not bound to issue such instructions, and so far as he (the Duke of Wellington) understood the question, those instructions had not been acted upon, and were not likely to be. Under these circumstances, he confessed that his recommendation to their lordship was not to call for the production of the papers, her Majesty's ministers having declared that the production of them would be inconvenient and detrimental to the public service.

Lord BROUGHAM was not at all surprised at the recommendation given by the noble duke. From the first moment, though the case was so strong and irresistible, he had had an impression that at the eleventh hour, as upon all other occasions, the noble duke, who was the saviour of her Majesty's government—who had been the saviour or the present ministry over and over again—who had been to them a friend indeed, because a friend in need—whose friendship and generosity towards them had been exactly in proportion to the necessity which pressed upon them,—would, on grounds made more or less distinctly intelligible or unintelligible to those who were to follow him, come forward with his powerful assistance, to defeat the motion, and undo the good to the country which that motion would have accomplished.

An elaborate article has just appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, professedly written to prove that the Duke of Wellington was not beaten at Toulouse, for which his Grace must be truly thankful. The real design of the reviewer is the base one of reviving national animosities, by insulting, and, if possible, causing others to insult, a venerable warrior, who comes to offer the right hand of peace and good fellowship to his ancient adversaries. To insult a man who comes as the guest of England—to insult the veteran Soult, incontestably the most eminent for talents and great exploits, of all the distinguished foreigners now assembled in London for the purpose of gracing the approaching coronation—to insult an aged warrior, whose name is, in the mind of every British soldier who served in the Peninsula, as surely and closely associated with the recollection of hard-fought battles, as cracking

bullets are with the recollection of artillery. Yes, to insult this man while he is the national guest, to create heart-burnings, to revive ignoble prejudices, and perpetuate malice between two friendly people, is the object of the *Quarterly*.

Soult was the first marshal who attacked our army in the Peninsula war; Soult was the last man who resisted our army in that memorable contest; and that he was the most skilful, persevering, and formidable enemy we encountered during the long struggle, none can doubt. His troops were often discomfited, and the glory of England shone the brighter therefrom; but he himself was never quelled in spirit, his proud head never bowed in despair; he had the will, and he found the way, to give blow for blow to the last. That he was a magnanimous enemy is evinced by the monument he ordered to be erected to the memory of the heroic Sir John Moor. That he was a generous enemy to his prisoners one of my own family can vouch from personal experience, and so can many other persons. That he was a sturdy foe in battle, every British officer who served against him will acknowledge.

He comes now in his old age on a mission of peace and goodwill to this country, which has ever honoured a brave and noble opponent, respecting most at the board him who struck hardest in the field. Marshal Soult has been the gallant enemy of England in the field. He is now her guest. How will he be treated? Surely in the way that will most honour him and his host treated as one of the bravest and ablest soldiers in Europe should be treated. Grey haired, and covered with honourable wounds, he comes, nothing doubting that his greeting will be such as becomes the gallant, high-blooded people of England to offer him. He knows, none better, how sternly and strongly they throng together in battle; he will not learn that they bear no malice after, or the national character is changed.

It is said, nay, it is known, that the Duke of Wellington, with that proud delicacy which is more than life blood to a thorough English gentleman, has delayed the publication of the eleventh volume of his dispatches, because, while Soult is in the country, he would not let a word a sigh, escape him, calculated to wound his former opponent, or recal past asperities. He means to honour the soldier guest of England.

Shall this noble sentiment, or the malignant vulgarity of the