

The Politician.

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From the London Morning Post.

THE TEST OF RUSSIA'S SINCERITY.

We confess we see for Russia no such hope in the future as to lead us to think she is not seriously in earnest in her wish for peace, on any terms that Europe may recognise as not unreasonable. If the allies do not suspend their preparations, she has no resources but to sign their terms of peace. Every day adds to their strength, and brings fresh means on their side into action. Can Russia increase her means correspondingly so as to meet them? How stands she for finance, for men, for means of transport, stores, and equipments? Her last loan hangs heavy, and is repudiated on most of the stock exchanges of Europe, notwithstanding the condition of paying principal and interest in bullion, at a fixed exchange, in more than one of the commercial cities of Europe; and it was only on Sunday last that we saw announced from St. Petersburg the intelligence that she had resorted to the expedient of a fresh issue of fifty-four millions of paper roubles, in eighteen series of three millions each, at a time when her existing government paper is at a very heavy discount of depreciation. As for men for her armies, she has already taken by successive rigid conscriptions nearly fifty per cent. of the adult males of her agricultural population. She has moved to the Crimea, or to the shores of the Black Sea, more than six hundred thousand of her trained soldiers, of whom not two hundred thousand survive, most of them in a condition of present want and despondency. For the movement of these masses, with their supplies and stores, all the cattle of agriculture, and other means of transport and conveyance, near the lines of march, will have been put in requisition; and once in the grips of the army, not one of these cattle will have been returned to agriculture works and services. How does this consist with the notion that Russia hopes to renew the campaign with increased means in the coming season? We speak not of the rumours of discontent and disorganisation from local distress, because we know the old Russians to be a proud people, and the aristocracy especially to be very loath to come down from the attitude of presumption and of arrogated superiority they were warranted in assuming in the proud days of Nicholas's ascendancy. That feeling may go far to keep up hope and induce submission to sacrifices. But Russia has discovered in the past two years the difference between making war beyond her frontier—recklessly ravaging and using up the resources of the countries invaded—and having to furnish every needful of war and of troop movement, stores, and equipment from her own local resources. Will this be changed for the better next year? Not a bit of it. There will only be points the more of Russia's own frontier, which she will have to defend by the exhaustion of her internal resources. Therefore, we say, peace is at present a necessity to Russia; and, if we do not remit our preparations on one hand, nor exact too much on the other, we may trust to her following up with sincerity her acceptance of the basis submitted to her by Austria.

But what is the next step to be taken to test this sincerity? Some talk foolishly of an armistice upon the Austrian terms, and a congress to settle what remains. What is the use of an armistice? Let Russia sign a preliminary treaty with the belligerents, and suspension of hostilities will necessarily follow. And what has a congress of European powers to do with the preliminaries of peace to be settled and agreed to by the belligerents themselves as a ground for suspending their hostilities? A congress without a signature of preliminaries would be an absurdity; and after signature it can only act for settlement of special points reserved in those preliminaries, and be composed of the representatives of those powers only who may be therein named.

A special and direct understanding between the belligerents themselves, in the shape of preliminaries, to be settled at the coming conference of Paris, is more necessary at present because of the ambiguous terms used by Austria in her communication made through Prince Esterhazy. What are the separate conditions which the 5th article refers to as to be brought forward by the allies? Until they are specified there can be no peace; and there are several that suggest themselves to our mind.

There is the retrocession of Kars and the adjustment of the frontier of Turkey in that direction on a basis which General Williams is well able to suggest. Then the relations of Russia with Prussia will need to be looked into, unless it be intended to concede to the former the right of direct as well as of indirect aggrandisement in that quarter. Europe may think this purely an English question, having reference to her Indian possessions; but this is a very narrow view to take of that question, and one that will not be participated by our hearty and faithful allies. It is true that we have just broken with Persia about a woman—a ridiculous cause of quarrel at such a time, even though Mr Murray be right in the high tone he took

about her. Right or wrong, however, in the particular case, the interests of the world require that Persia's condition should not be overlooked in the general settlement of pending disputes with Russia that is now about to be entered upon. Something also will need to be provided about the Pacific.

But it has been our aim only to contribute towards the better understanding of the questions at issue, not to draw instructions from our negotiators. Here, therefore, we leave the subject until we hear from authority what action is taken upon the fact of Russia's acceptance, pure and simple, of Austria's submitted basis.

From the London Times, Feb. 16.

ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES.

A few nights since Lord Palmerston addressed the House on the differences that have arisen with America. In answer to Mr Cobden's arguments he gave to the world a statement of the dispute, and appealed to his hearers for a justification which will hardly be withheld. With respect to the affairs of Central America he stated what is well known to be the fact, that the spirit of the treaty concluded was to prevent further acquisitions of territory by either of the contracting powers. As England has long possessed a colony of more or less importance on this coast, her ministers understood the treaty to refer to further settlements, and not to those already made. The United States took a different view, and demanded the immediate evacuation of the territory we had fancied secured to us. Here was a difficulty somewhat hard to be overcome; 'but,' says Lord Palmerston, 'we have offered to refer the matter to arbitration.' Whatever may be the general opinion as to the merits of this mode of decision, it at least shows good faith in the party that proposes it, and the declaration of Lord Palmerston was received with applause, by an assembly which, while jealous for its own country's dignity, is not unmindful of what is due to the spirit of peace. With equal frankness did the British premier point out the incidents of the second dispute. We are threatened with a suspension of international relations. The two branches of the Anglo-Saxon race will only correspond officially by means of a consul, or, at most, a secretary. Possibly no great harm may arise from a short cessation of diplomatic activity, but the cause of this mutual interdict, and not the thing itself, is of grave importance. Such an interruption is generally looked upon as approaching nearly to a state of hostility. In fact, in such a case everything has been done which usually precedes the first irrevocable blow—the great letting out of the waters of strife. The House then listened with attention to the words of the first minister. He stated that in the directions for the enlistment in Canada strict orders were given that nothing should be done to infringe the municipal regulations of the states or violate the laws of the union. He added, moreover, that when it was found this enlistment might cause offence to the American Government and people, orders were given for its cessation, and this before any remonstrance was received. When official representations were made, complaining of an illegal infringement of American law, the British government expressed its regret at once and with out reserve. Lord Palmerston thus explicitly stated that his government first did all that it could to avoid giving offence, and when charged with discourtesy promptly apologised. This declaration was received with cheers by the British house of commons. The temper of the government and the rational representatives was fully evinced at this sitting. The feeling of the public we believe we have expressed, and it fully coincides with that of the ministry and the commons. A sincere desire for peace, a wish to make any honorable concession, a regret that any act of ours should have caused a difficulty between the two countries, animates all classes and will determine their future conduct.

Turn now to America. From the Five Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico we believe no thinking American fails to perceive that, if his country be brought into hostilities with our own, the Central American affair and the recruiting office are not motives but pretexts. To the few, principally immigrants, or children of immigrants, who detest England and look forward to a struggle with satisfaction we shall not speak. But of the mass of Americans we would ask, whether their government can disturb the peace of the world in these disputes without incurring the just reprobation of every free nation? Can it be denied that these matters might be settled at once if it were the wish of one or two men at Washington to settle them? Can it be denied that even in the President's cabinet some moderate politicians are overcome by the recklessness of colleagues who wish to gain popularity at the expense of the nation's peace? We believe that the ministers of President Pierce are divided in their convictions and their motives of action. The following is said to be the state of parties. The Attorney-general, Mr Caleb Cushing, has been the leading spirit in these differences. He is said not to object to war, or at least to such an approach to it as may give him popularity and a reputation for high spirit throughout the States. As a law officer of the Government his language should have

been cautious and his conduct moderate: how far both have fallen short of such an ideal we may judge from the letters bearing signature that have appeared in print. Mr Cushing has much influence with the President, and they are probably bound together by an identity of political objects. It is stated that Mr Marcy, the Secretary of State, is opposed to the war-like demonstrations of his colleague and his chief. If the settlement of these disputes depended on him and the British Minister, matters would not long remain unarranged. The prolonged stay of Mr Crampton in Washington is said to be due to his moderation. Now, the present state of affairs seems to be, that Mr Marcy has so far yielded as to join in the despatch of a positive demand for Mr Crampton's recall. The President and Attorney General wished the demand to be categorical and so to necessitate a rupture, but Mr Marcy is said to have prevailed so far as to frame it in a manner which will allow of further correspondence. We have thus a proof of the temper which rules the men on whom the destinies of the two nations for the time depend.

From this description of affairs, which we believe to be correct, it is impossible not to draw a conclusion in favour of our own Government. We are the less reserved in doing so, because the worst that can be said against their own politicians always comes from the lips of Americans. It is no invention of the British press that senators and secretaries of state are ready to bring their nation to the brink of war, in order to prolong their own power or embarrass their successors. Even the phrase 'political capital,' which so well expresses what is gained by such courses, is not of English origin. The debate in the senate, which was in progress when the last steamer left, will probably be full of the usual invectives against England. The antipathies of the old and the enthusiasm of the younger speakers will both find vent in defiance to this country. The American public, we learn, is pretty well aware of what each speaker will say, and we are happy to believe that some of the most acrimonious will have but little weight. Yet it cannot be doubted that the accusations will be many, and the apologies few. We cannot, however, but think that such an exhibition will lessen the character of the American Senate by its strong contrast to the moderation and good sense of our own representatives. Even in the opinion of Americans, those men must sink who talk of war only thro' a belief that their words will be without effect, and who, perhaps, are only suffered so to declaim by the indifference of their countrymen; for that such paltry disputes should involve two such nations in a struggle which would be fought out on every sea, we cannot believe. Although it does not lessen the demerit of those who tamper with international good will, yet we, in common with almost all Englishmen, think that the bonds of a common language and civilisation are too strong to be broken by a dissension to which nine-tenths on both sides of the Atlantic are totally indifferent. Not through any fear of war, for England was never so strong or so well prepared as now, but from sincere love of peace and its inestimable benefits, we trust that American statesmen will be actuated by the same spirit which our own rulers have shown.

From the London Weekly Dispatch.

ENGLAND AMERICA, RUSSIA.

The respectable fraternity of Capel Court have "got up" a very clever panic on the "dodge" of the "cloud in the West, no bigger than a man's hand." The President's Message, and some confused rumour of Mr Buchanan having demanded his passports (albeit in this free country we have none), have given the Bears the turn of the market. Let us look at this "uneasy feeling in the political world in reference to our relations with our cousins on the other side of the Atlantic" (as it pleases euphuistic editors to style our embroglio with the United States) a little more closely. It has been long observed by those who have watched the experiment of Republican institutions, that the king pro tem, of Columbia, the provisional Sovereign of the United States, who, for many years after the establishment of the Union was chosen from among the "foremost men of all the land," has latterly been ballotted from the awkward squad of Noddies and Doodles. The thing which all parties avoid in the choice of President is fitness, ability, commanding character, or genius in statesmanship. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Adams reigned in the first years after the Declaration of Independence, Tyler, Polk, Pierce, are the "pretty kings of clouds" who govern now.—Clay, Webster, Calhoun, are deliberately ignored, just because they are the best. As the Cardinals chose their Popes from among the oldest and feeblest of their body, just because they were not dangerous to their own pretensions, so the factions—which mean the whole people of America—are guided (or, as some of their wits say, nasiducted) in their selection of their ruler, solely by his negative qualities—by the fact that he is nobody, and that, therefore, he will shut out somebody. They take no guarantee for his patriotism, his integrity, his firmness, force of character and discretion.—They do not even take any ordinary security for decent independence of action in the shape

of that worldly wealth which may put a man, only four years in office and certain of dismissal at the end, above the temptation of pecuniary considerations. He declares war and makes peace, appoints ambassadors and negotiates treaties, directs the army, and commands the navy of a first-rate Power in the world; before now he has, by his single fiat, extinguished the great national bank of his country, yet his private fortune may be, indeed is not a thousand a year—his salary not equivalent to that of a clerk of the House of Commons; in fact, his social position, his capacity, his official emoluments, his private fortune, not nearly equal to that of our Lord Mayor Salomons. Indeed his quality altogether reminds us forcibly of the Guildhall and the Mansion-house, except that the kitchen, the paraphernalia and the whole aspect of the externals of office are not half so respectable and seemly. He marches into the White House, at Washington, with a flourish of trumpets, and in four years sneaks out at the back door in a cab and carpet-bag; thenceforth thought no more of than Perkin Warbeck, or poor Richard Cromwell, after the Restoration. In fact, he is but a rotten cork bobbing about on the tide of faction, a miserable instrument of party, a tool of electioneers, a mere door-mat whereon to wipe the dirty shoes of speculating politicians, and a fool-ometer of intrigue.—Such is the temporary ruler of one of the most powerful nations in the world. His countrymen make no secret of the motives which direct his policy. He is the sport of his party. To gain a fresh lease of office, they tell you he will bluster, threaten war, send fleets to menace States, wink at Fillibusters who go by his "ticket," encourage, connive at buccaneers, who pounce upon the territory of civilized kingdoms. Well, just as Russia is in her extremity—just as she needs some "sympathiser" to threaten us with another war, that we may make haste to patch up a peace with her to have our hands free to deal with a new opponent—does this precious President and his turkey-cock of an Attorney-General come to the aid of the Czar, and insist on making a quarrel with us upon a subject in reference to which we have repeatedly acknowledged our error, and expressed our regret, offered every honourable reparation, and yielded to every requisition that did not absolutely amount to a national moral prostration. No! That is not enough. The details of the Five Points have yet to be settled; and it will be a good diversion in favor of Russia if President Pierce should still grumble and threaten, and keeping us uneasy about America, induce us to let Russia off with a whole skin, and money in both pockets. Let us be candid. In the matter of the Central American treaty, we are clearly in the wrong. Ours is a pettifogging, the American is the plain and honest reading of that engagement. We must insist on our Government complying with the requisitions of the other party to that treaty, because no other course is honest. But in the Crampton affair we have conceded as far as we honourably ought, and if Cushing "does not like it, why he may lump it." If we do not say that the Czar has bought the whole American Cabinet, it is not because in such a system of Government as prevails on the other side of the Atlantic we see anything whatever to prevent him. The proved and tested statesman and patriots of America are systematically excluded from power; electioneering speculators and political adventurers guard the issues of office and form the real king-makers of the country; its own press openly charges its chief ruler with corruption and faction, the meanest motives, and the most dishonest sources of policy.—Why should Europe any longer be made the sport of the stump orator and Locofoco ticket monger? We say this at this time in order that the country may not be precipitated into an unworthy peace with Russia merely because her friends at Washington have consented to become her Jumping Jacks when she sees it time to pull the strings. America, as a military and naval Power, is utterly contemptible for any purposes of aggression. We say nothing of the fact that a hundred millions of her trade is with England, and that an interruption of it would be ruin to her. But her whole sea-board is entirely defenceless. New York, Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans, would be laid in ashes in a month after the first declaration of war. She has scarcely the vestige of an army, while ours has been doubled, seasoned, war-proved in the field and in the "imminent deadly breach." Our fleet is ten times as large as hers. Land a few regiments and a hundred thousand stand of arms at Mobile among the slaves, and where is their room to doubt the result? Nobody knows better than John Bull, that power upon paper, undeveloped military resources, are utterly unavailing in a contest with a nation that has an army and a fleet. Our position at the beginning of this war was that of America now. We know now, that nothing is formidable in a war but troops of the line and ships of the line, with neither of which is America provided. We have now an army and a navy that "can go anywhere and do anything." The Black Sea fleet is now at liberty, because that of Russia in the Euxine is annihilated. We have therefore no occasion to moderate our terms of peace with the Czar, because America threatens us with war. England must never retreat from the position which before now she has successfully