

INVASION OF PORTUGAL.

[On the 23d ultimo we published Mr. Canning's opening Speech in the momentous Debate of Spain's apparent connivance at the late Invasion of Portugal: In the following will be found the Right Hon. Secretary's Reply to the objections which were taken to the Address to His Majesty on the subject. When the Right Hon. Secretary had sat down after his first Speech]

Sir ROBERT WILSON followed, and in an animated speech fully justified the measures taken by the Government, and wished the troops every success—Success, he said, could not fail to attend our efforts, as it was a cause in which God and justice were on our side.

Mr. HUME, as constant as the polar star to the spirit of opposition, questioned the policy of sending an army to Portugal, and moved an amendment, that the house resume the subject that day week.

Mr. WOOD, of Preston, seconded the amendment

Mr. BARING began by saying, that so great was his horror of war, that he had listened with the utmost attention, in the hope of finding some flaw in the case as made out by the Rt. Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Canning; some opening into which he could insinuate an argument against the necessity of an appeal to arms, and he sincerely regretted that he could not. The measures then adopted by his Majesty's Ministers seemed indispensable.

Mr. BROUGHAM made a most eloquent speech, and depicted the horrors of war in strong colours—was fully alive to all its present and future mischiefs, but like the Hon. Gentleman who had just preceded him, he was constrained to say, that no alternative was left to the Government but the one adopted. He paid Mr. Canning the highest compliments for the manly part he had taken in this trying affair, and pronounced his speech to be the best of all his best.

Mr. BANKS, like Mr. Hume and Mr. Wood, objected to the course pursued by Ministers, and were the only dissenters among 300 members present.

Mr. Secretary CANNING.—I do not intend to occupy the House with a reply, but there have been two or three objections taken by Hon. Gentlemen which I should be sorry to leave unanswered. I admit I understated the case against Spain—I did so purposely—I did so decidedly. I wished to show no more of her conduct than was sufficient to establish the *casus fœderis*, but not to state so much as would make it impossible for Spain to avoid war. The Honourable Gentleman who spoke last, wishes, in his great love for peace, to do that which would make war inevitable. He would not interfere now—he would wish to tell Spain, "you have not done enough to rouse us—you have given no cause of offence—I think nothing of your hovering over my frontiers—I think nothing of your coming in arms, of your ravaging my plains, and carrying destruction into my cities—I think nothing of your collecting knots of conspirators, and of your supplying them with food, clothing, and arms; nothing of your training them, supplying them with Spanish stores, and of your sending them to Portugal. I will not stir for all these things: but in order to keep the peace of Europe, which I so dearly love, I call on you to make a declaration of war, and then I'll come and fight you." (Laughter.) That is the effect of the Honourable Member's speech; that his connivance to keep the peace. The more clumsy connivance of Government has been, to warn the Spanish authorities that they were known to mediate disturbances in Portugal. His Majesty's Ministers said to them—"Beware of your proceedings, for we are sure to avenge your deeds: it is with you to determine if the present misunderstanding shall end in open

hostilities." In the meantime the question is open to any means of reconciliation; and whether Ministers or the Honourable Gentleman are right, whether we ought to have endeavoured to obtain the grand object of his chivalrous imagination, a trial of that question upon a tented field, and in a list battle; if it was really our duty, as we ourselves apprehended, to nip the disorder in the bud; or if, according to the Hon. Gentleman, we ought to let it grow up to maturity, in order to mow it down with the more magnificent scythe of war. I leave the House to determine. (Laughter and cheers.) It has been complained that no papers have been laid before the House; so that the facts that call for our interference might be made as notorious as the noon day sun. It should be remembered, that if this course had been taken, if an act of unmistakeable hostility on the part of Spain had been demonstrated by papers laid on the table of the House, Spain would have been precluded from that *locus penitentia* which I was desirous to leave to her. I did not wish to cut off all means of retreat—to drive Spain into a corner from which she could have no escape. I hope I have sufficiently explained the reasons why I understated the case against Spain. With the knowledge which my official situation necessarily gives me, I make a statement to the House such as I judge will be sufficient to answer my purpose. It is for the House in general to judge whether I have succeeded. My Hon. Friend, if he ask at the proper time, should that time arrive, will be convinced that it is not from want of evidence that my statement is not so full as he wished it to be. An amendment has been made upon the original proposition, and it has been justified by a reference to a declaration which I made some years ago; when I said, that it would be exceedingly onerous for this country to engage in war—which declaration has been supposed to be inconsistent with the measure which I now propose. The variation between the two cases upon which I ground the difference of conduct, is that in the one instance I maintained that war was to be avoided, when we were not obliged to engage in it; whereas, in the present case, I say, that unless it can be averted by seasonable demonstrations on the part of this country, war cannot be avoided. I do not, therefore, change my opinions as to the desirableness of peace, nor do I the less depreciate the necessity of war; but I say that, in the former instance, though, in the opinion of some respectable persons in and out of Parliament, I might have been plighted to embark in war, my argument was, that we were not bound by any engagement of good faith or honour to engage in war—that our choice, in short, was free, and, being free, my choice was for peace. My argument, at the present day, is that we have no choice—our faith is engaged; our honour is pledged; and, with all the same predilections for peace which I then professed, I maintain that no course is left to us on the present occasion, but that which is dictated both by honour and policy, to maintain the faith of the country, and to fulfil the national engagements. It has been suggested, that the Foreign Enlistment Act might be repealed on the present occasion, and Mina and his associates be enabled to rush to the contest, and by that means obviate the effect of the aggression upon Portugal. Believing, Sir, as I do, that such a measure would entail the heaviest calamities upon that country, I cannot consent to give it my countenance. I am ready to admit, Sir, in the first place, that the Foreign Enlistment Bill was passed principally at the instigation of Spain, and that that Bill operated more in her favour than in that of any other European Power. In the

next place, I am ready to admit, that the whole conduct of Spain has been to do directly towards Portugal, those acts, which Spain earnestly implored Great Britain to take a way from British subjects the power of doing towards her. If we do what is suggested there would be some ground for saying to this country, you recognised and acted upon a principle in 1819, when you had no private interests to promote; you last year, acting upon principle, refused to withdraw the protection afforded to Foreign Powers by that Bill, but you now withdraw it, and violate that principle where you have a private interest to promote. I admit, there would be strong ground for saying to Spain:—"Since the year 1819, we have given you the benefit of a particularly efficient measure, and you have thought proper, since last year, to turn that very measure, conferred solely for your own protection, against the pacific interests of our Ally. Are we not fairly entitled, then, to place you where you would have been had that never passed?" This would, undoubtedly, have justified the revocation of the bill from Spain: that I must clearly admit: but I do not equally well see how it would apply to the other great objects involved in such a question as this, and which I have rather adumbrated than over stated in my opening speech. The great desire of this country ought undoubtedly to be to effect her purpose by the most lenient means. If circumstances should lead to hostilities, and that war must rage in Spain, the course now taken by Great Britain would rather take from war that most tremendous of all characters which could attach to such an event, were it once driven to assume the name of a war of opinion. (Hear, hear.) If we are to have war let us—if we can take from it the character, which has been so ably and so eloquently described by an Hon. and Learned Gentleman (Mr. Brougham); that tremendous character, which must attach to war, when war is let loose, in the shape of a war of opinion; (Cheers;) I, Sir, for one, should be extremely sorry to be driven, whatever acts Spain might be guilty of, to have recourse to that most lamentable and disastrous mode of warfare. Another point has been touched upon by an Hon. Member, who, in a speech with which, in no other respect, I find fault, has, in the most handsome and able manner, stated his reasons for approving of the line of conduct adopted, in this instance, by his Majesty's Government. That Hon. Member has said, "Instead of repealing the Foreign Enlistment Bill, call upon France to withdraw her Armies from Spain." There are, Sir, so many considerations connected with that subject, that they would carry me beyond what it is necessary to state upon the present occasion. It is enough now to state, that I do not know how the French Army can be employed to promote the views of Spain. I believe the effect of the presence of the French Army in Spain, is the protection rather than otherwise of that very party, to put down which, the aid of that Army, was called in; and that my firm belief is, that the first and immediate consequences of the withdrawal of that Army, at a moment of excitement, would be the letting loose of that party rage, of which the party, least in numbers, would be the victims. But when it is stated, that the presence of the French army in Spain, has entirely altered the relative situations of France and Great Britain, and that France is thereby raised, and Great Britain, lowered, in the eyes of Europe, I must beg leave, most humbly, to give my dissent to that proposition. The House knows; the country knows; that when the French army was on the point of entering Spain, that I, in common with the other members of his Majesty's Government, did all in my power to prevent it; that we did

resist, and that we were most anxious to resist it, by every means short of war. We did not think the entry of that army into Spain a sufficient ground for war on the part of this country; and that, Sir, for various reasons—and, among others, for this, that whatever effect a war, commenced upon the mere ground of the entry of a French army into Spain may have, the effect it would not have, would be this; to get that army out of Spain. I again repeat, that a war, entered into for the express purpose of getting the French army out of Spain, would defeat the object wished to be obtained. Whoever heard, in the whole history of wars between European powers or of a war between two great nations, having been ended by the obtaining of the exact, the identical, object, for which the war was begun? I believe, that in the whole history of Europe, such an instance cannot be found. I also think, Sir, that the effects of the entry of the French army into Spain have been exaggerated, and think that those exaggerations are to be attributed to these circumstances, that the connexion between France and Spain is mixed up with recollections of the most brilliant, the most glorious periods of English history. Now, however, the withdrawal of that army might be in other respects, and at other times desirable, I cannot allow that it at all effects the present question. On the contrary, I must sincerely believe that the exertions of France are directed to the preservation of existing treaties; and it is my conviction that if the army was withdrawn, the situation of affairs would not be remedied; while, in a moment of such excitement, party rage would re-assume its desperate violence, and that class, awed the least in numbers, would, beyond question, become its victims. (Hear, hear, hear.) The most exaggerated importance has always, in my opinion, been attached in this country to the connexion between France and Spain. I ask the House to look back to the time of Anne, when the question of the association of France and Spain was agitated. I ask the House to look back to the votes of Parliament of that period, where they will find, that the Parliament had voted that no peace could be made between the two countries, whilst Spain remained in the power of France, or rather, whilst Bourbon sat upon the throne of Spain. Look to the exaggerated apprehensions of those days, and see how they have been realized: look back to the state of Spain in those days—look at her when she was a most formidable power—when she was a power of such strength, as to threaten to blow up the whole world. Look at her in those days, and you will see that England was then fixed in a nook of that Spain—that our possession of the Rock of Gibraltar was contemporary with those exaggerated apprehensions. I do not believe, Sir, that the danger which could accrue from the possession of Spain by France, to be so great as is represented. Spain now, is not what Spain was then. Where can we now find that Spain, in the map of the world, which was to have swallowed up the power of maritime England? Do we not still remain in a nook of that same Spain—Gibraltar, where we have settled at a period contemporaneous with those fears, holding a firm and unshaken occupation up to this hour? And where, now, is that nation, which was to have shaken us from our sphere? That Spain of the old map was, be it remembered, the Spain, within the limits of whose empire the sun never set—it was Spain within the Indies—where will you find her now? (Cheers.) When the French army entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have resisted that measure by a war; but, Sir, if we had resisted it by a war, that war would not be war entered into for the same object for which the wars of other days were undertaken; that war, would