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Buckingham Palace, January 24, 1860.

THIS day Her Majesty, accompanied by His Royal Highness The Prince Consort, proceeded in state from Buckingham-Palace to the House of Peers, where she arrived soon after two o'clock; and was received, on alighting from Her state coach, by the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, Sir Augustus Clifford, officiating for the Lord Great Chamberlain (the Lord Willoughby de Eresby), the Earl Marshal, the Treasurer of the Household, Garter King of Arms, and the Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod, and proceeded to the State Robing-room in the customary manner.

Her Majesty was there robed, and the procession moved into the House in the usual order;—the crown was borne by the Marquis of Lansdowne, the sword of state by the Earl Granville, and the cap of maintenance by the Marquis of Winchester.

Her Majesty being seated on the Throne, and His Royal Highness the Prince Consort on a Chair on the left side of the Cloth of Estate, the Great Officers of State and others standing on the right and left, R. C. S. Clifford, Esq., Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod, was sent with a message from Her Majesty to the House of Commons, commanding their immediate attendance in the House of Peers. The Commons being come thither accordingly, Her Majesty was pleased to deliver the following most gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament:

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

It is with great satisfaction that I again meet you in Parliament, and have recourse to your assistance and advice.

My relations with Foreign Powers continue to be on a friendly and satisfactory footing.

At the close of the last session I informed you, that overtures had been made to me, to ascertain whether, if a conference should be held by the great powers of Europe, for the purpose of settling arrangements connected with the present state and future condition of Italy, a plenipotentiary would be sent by me to assist at such a conference. I have since received a formal invitation from the Emperor of Austria and from the Emperor of the French to send a plenipotentiary to a congress, to consist of the representatives of the eight powers who were parties to the Treaties of Vienna of

1815; the objects of such congress being stated to be, to receive communication of the Treaties concluded at Zurich; and to deliberate, associating with the above-mentioned powers the Courts of Rome, of Sardinia, and of the Two Sicilies, on the means best adapted for the pacification of Italy, and for placing its prosperity on a solid and durable basis.

Desirous, at all times, to concur in proceedings having for their object the maintenance of peace, I accepted the invitation, but, at the same time, I made known that in such a congress I should steadfastly maintain the principle that no external force should be employed to impose upon the people of Italy any particular government or constitution.

Circumstances have arisen which have lead to a postponement of the congress, without any day having been fixed for its meeting; but whether in congress or in separate negotiation, I shall endeavour to obtain for the people of Italy freedom from foreign interference by force of arms in their internal concerns; and I trust that the affairs of the Italian Peninsula may be peaceably and satisfactorily settled.

Papers on this subject will soon be laid before you.

I am in communication with The Emperor of the French, with a view to extend the commercial intercourse between the two countries, and thus to draw still closer the bonds of friendly alliance between them.

A dispute having arisen between Spain and Morocco, I endeavoured, by friendly means, to prevent a rupture; but, I regret to say, without success.

I will direct papers on this subject to be laid before you.

My plenipotentiary and the plenipotentiary of The Emperor of the French having, in obedience to their instructions, proceeded to the mouth of the Peiho River, in order to repair to Peking to exchange in that city the ratifications of the Treaty of Tien-tsin, in pursuance of the Fifty-sixth Article of that Treaty, their further progress was opposed by force, and a conflict took place between the Chinese Forts at the mouth of the river and the naval forces by which the plenipotentiaries were escorted.

The allied forces displayed on this occasion their usual bravery; but, after sustaining a severe loss, were compelled to retire.

I am preparing, in concert and co-operation with The Emperor of the French, an expedition