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CORRESPONDENCE respecting Montenegro:

Despatch 1.

THE EARL RUSSELL TO MR. J. SAYILE LUMLEY.

SIR,

Foreign Office, Sept. 30, 1862.

I HAVE read and laid before the Queen your despatches, Nos. 88 and 93, of the 2nd and 5th instant, relating to the affairs of Montenegro.

Her Majesty's Government have to express their regret that they cannot agree with the views of Prince Gortschakoff either on the general question of interference in the affairs of Turkey or on the particular question of Montenegro.

Her Majesty's Government have always understood that when Turkey was allowed to form part of the system of Europe, she was to have all the advantages, and be liable to all the duties, of an independent State. She was, in short, to be as independent as Prussia or Portugal, Sweden or Saxony, and, on the other hand, to be bound like those States by the faith of treaties and the ties of international comity and good will.

If this be so, it is not justifiable, where treaties are silent to interfere without necessity or provocation in a case where an insurrection has broken out in Turkey, and that insurrection has been supported by a neighbouring Prince.

Such was the case in Herzegovina, where an insurrection broke out, and in Montenegro, from which it was fomented and supported.

If the Prince of Montenegro was a vassal, the Sultan had a right to reduce him to obedience, and to impose such conditions as will secure that obedience for the future; if he was an independent Prince, the Sultan had a right to force him to accept such terms of peace as would prevent a renewal of his aggression.

As to the particular terms demanded by Turkey, Her Majesty's Government do not pretend to justify or to condemn them.

It is for the Porte to declare what guarantees are necessary for her future quiet.

The terms proposed, however, are not without example.

Soon after the beginning of the last century the Highlanders of Scotland attempted to overthrow the throne of the Hanoverian family, and

to set up another dynasty. The advisers of the British Crown took means to overcome this resistance. They defeated the insurgents in two rebellions, they made good roads through the Scotch mountains, and they erected forts to keep the disaffected in awe.

At the present day Her Majesty has no more loyal subjects than the Highlanders of Scotland.

I will not conclude without giving, in a few words, the view taken by Her Majesty's Government of what is going on in Turkey.

If the Slavonic and Greek subjects of the Sultan rise in insurrection, and that insurrection is suppressed, the weight of authority will be made heavier, privileges will be withdrawn, and the sums which ought to be expended in making roads and harbours, and in promoting improvement, will be diverted to the pay and maintenance of a large military force.

If, on the other hand, the darling scheme entertained in some quarters of overthrowing the Turkish rule should be successful, Greeks and Slavonians will quarrel, each province will claim supremacy, civil war will ravage the countries where the authority of the Sultan shall have been thrown off, and an appeal will be made to the great Powers of Europe to put an end to this anarchy by dividing among themselves the Turkish provinces. But the European Powers would hardly be able to perform this task without giving rise to fresh conflicts—probably to a general war.

Such are the views which induce Her Majesty's Government, while sincerely desirous of improving the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte, to refuse all countenance to projects which in Greece go by the name of the 'great idea,' and which, whether Greek or Slavonic, tend to the disruption of all existing ties of allegiance in the Turkish empire, and are more or less connected with the criminal intrigues of which Turkey feels the effects in Servia, and which aim no less at the subversion of every monarchy in Europe than at the destruction of the integrity of the Ottoman empire.

You may give a copy of this despatch to Prince Gortschakoff.

I am, &c.

RUSSELL.