



The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1863.

Foreign-Office, September 11, 1863.

THE following Despatch has been addressed by Earl Russell to Lord Napier, Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

*Foreign Office,
August 11, 1863.*

MY LORD,

ON the 18th of last month Baron Brunnow communicated to me a despatch which he had received the evening before from Prince Gortchakoff.

This Despatch, of which I inclose a copy,* is far from being a satisfactory answer to the representation which, in concert with France and Austria, Her Majesty's Government addressed to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg.

The despatch begins, indeed, by stating that "the Imperial Cabinet admits the principle that every Power signing a Treaty has a right to interpret its sense from its own point of view, provided that the interpretation remains within the limits of the meaning that it is possible to put upon it according to the text itself." Prince Gortchakoff adds, "In virtue of this principle the Imperial Cabinet does not dispute this right on the part of any one of the eight Powers which have concurred in the General Act of Vienna of 1815."

Prince Gortchakoff, however, departing widely from the question of the interpretation of the Treaty of Vienna, proceeds to ascribe the continuance of the insurrection in Poland to the moral and material assistance which it receives from without; admits vaguely the six points; rejects the proposed suspension of hostilities; refuses to accept a Conference of the eight Powers who signed the Treaty; and, finally, declares that the re-establishment of order must precede the serious application of any measures destined for the pacification of Poland.

Her Majesty's Government will now proceed to examine calmly the principal topics of Prince Gortchakoff's reply to the considerations brought before him in my despatch.

Prince Gortchakoff, while he admits that confidence on the part of the governed, and the ascendancy of law over arbitrary power, must be the foundation of order and stability, adds that the indispensable corollary to these principles is respect for authority. But the Russian Cabinet cannot

be ignorant that clemency and conciliation are often more effective in establishing respect for authority than material force. It would be a lamentable error to seek to restore that respect by force of arms alone, without the addition of some adequate security for the political and religious rights of the subjects of the King of Poland. Such security the proposals of the three Powers held out to Russia and to Poland alike.

It has pleased the Cabinet of St. Petersburg not to avail itself of this mode of restoring respect for authority.

2. Prince Gortchakoff affirms—and this view is the theme of the beginning and end of his despatch—that the re-establishment of order in Poland is dependent upon a condition to which he had called the attention of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, "and which is not only unfulfilled, but is not even alluded to in the despatch of Lord Russell; we refer to the material assistance and moral encouragements obtained from abroad by the insurgents."

Her Majesty's Government would have been glad to have avoided this topic, and instead of commenting on the past, to refer only to healing measures for the future.

But thus compelled by Prince Gortchakoff's reference to allude to the subject, Her Majesty's Government have no hesitation in declaring their conviction that the principal obstacle to the re-establishment of order in Poland is not the assistance obtained by the insurgents from abroad, but the conduct of the Russian Government itself.

The Empress Catherine in 1772 promised to the Poles the maintenance of their religion. The Emperor Alexander I in 1815 promised to the Poles national representation and national administration.

These promises have not been fulfilled. During many years the religion of the Poles was attacked, and to the present hour they are not in possession of the political rights assured to them by the Treaty of 1815, and the Constitution of the same year.

The violation of these solemn engagements on the part of the Russian Government produced disaffection, and the sudden invasion of the homes of Warsaw, in a night of January last, was the immediate cause of the present insurrection.

Unless the general feeling in Poland had been estranged from Russia, the moral and material assistance afforded from abroad would have availed the insurgents little. It is true, however, that lively sympathy has been excited in Europe

* See "Correspondence respecting the Insurrection in Poland, 1863," Part IV, presented to Parliament, July 20, 1863.