

France at that time, as a basis upon which negotiations for peace might take place, I hope the same basis will now be offered, . . . or else I see no conclusion to which the war can come.”

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Mr. Can-

ning.

Nov. 17.

Mr. Canning was not present during this debate, but he took the first opportunity that presented itself for delivering his sentiments. “If,” said he, “in the present state of this country and of the world, those who, during the course of the tremendous and protracted struggle, on various occasions, called upon parliament to pause, to retard its too rapid and too rash advance, and to draw back from the task it had unwisely undertaken to perform, . . . if those persons have manfully and honourably stepped forward to join their congratulations to the joyful acclamations of the nation, and to admit the present to be the period favourable for a mighty and decided effort, how much more grateful must it be to those who, at no time during the struggle, have lifted up their voices in this place, excepting to recommend and to urge new exertions, . . . to those who, when the prospects were most dreary and melancholy, insisted that there was but one course becoming the character and honour of Great Britain, . . . a persevering and undaunted resistance to the overwhelming power of France! To an individual who, under the most discouraging circumstances, still maintained that the deliverance of Europe (often a derided term) was an object not only worthy of our arms, but possible to be achieved, it must be doubly welcome to come forward and vindicate his share in the national exultation. If, too, on the other hand, there have been those who, having recommended pacification when the opportunity was less favourable, are now warranted, as undoubtedly they are, in uttering the same sentiments, in the confidence that the country will sympathize with them, it is natural for those who, under other circumstances, have discouraged the expectation of peace, and have warned the nation

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 XLV. this occasion of stating their sincere conviction and their joy
 1813. (as strongly felt by them as by others) that, by the happy course
 November. of events during the last year, and by the wise policy we shall now
 pursue, peace may not, perhaps, be within our grasp, but is at
 least within our view. It is impossible to look back upon those
 times when the enemy vaunted, and we perhaps feared, that we
 should have been compelled to sue for peace, without, amid all
 the ebullition of joy, returning thanks to that Providence which
 gave us courage and heart still to bear up against accumulating
 calamity. Peace is safe now, because it is not dictated; peace
 is safe now, for it is the fruit of exertion, the child of victory;
 peace is safe now, because it will not be purchased at the
 expense of the interest and of the honour of the empire: it is
 not the ransom to buy off danger, but the fruit of the mighty
 means which we have employed to drive danger from our shores.
 I must, with heartfelt delight, congratulate my country, that,
 groaning as she has done at former periods under the heavy
 pressure of adverse war, still 'peace was despaired of, for who
 could think of submission?' Her strength, her endurance have
 been tried and proved by every mode of assault that the most
 refined system of hostility could invent, not only by open
 military attacks, but by low attempts to destroy her commercial
 prosperity: the experiment has been made, the experiment has
 failed; and we are now triumphantly, but not arrogantly, to
 consider what measures of security should be adopted, or on
 what terms a peace should be concluded.

“But has this country gained nothing by the glorious contest,
 even supposing peace should be far distant? Is it nothing to
 Great Britain, even purchased at so large a price, that her mili-
 tary character has been exalted? Is it no satisfaction . . . no
 compensation to her . . . to reflect that the splendid scenes displayed

on the continent are owing to her efforts? that the victories of Germany are to be attributed to our victories in the Peninsula? That spark, often feeble, and sometimes so nearly extinguished as to excite despair in all hearts that were not above it, .. that spark which was lighted in Portugal, which was fed and nourished there, has at length burst into a flame that has dazzled and illuminated Europe. At the commencement of this war, our empire rested upon one majestic column, our naval power. In the prosecution of the war, a hero has raised another stupendous pillar of strength to support our monarchy, .. our military pre-eminence. It is now that we may boast not only of superiority at sea, but on shore; the same energy and heroism exist in both the arms of Great Britain: they are rivals in strength, but inseparable in glory. Out of the calamities of war has arisen a principle of safety, that, superior to all attacks, shall survive through ages, and to which our posterity shall look forward. Compare the situation of England with her condition at the renewal of the war! Were we not then threatened by the aggressions of an enemy even upon our own shores, .. were we not then trembling for the safety and sanctity even of our homes? Now contemplate Wellington encamped on the Bidassoa! I know that a sickly sensibility leads some to doubt whether the advance of Lord Wellington was not rash and precipitate. I cannot enter into that refinement which induces those who affect to know much to hesitate upon this subject: I cannot look with regret upon a British army encamped upon the fertile plains of France: I cannot believe that any new grounds for apprehension are raised by an additional excitement being afforded to the irritability of the French people: I foresee no disadvantage from entering the territories of our enemy not as the conquered but the conquerors! I cannot regret that the Portugueze are now looking upon the walls of Bayonne 'that circle in those wolves'

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which would have devastated their capital, . . . that the Portuguese now behold planted on the towers of Bayonne the standard which their enemy would have made to float upon the walls of Lisbon! I cannot think it a matter of regret that the Spaniards are now recovering from the grasp of an enemy on his own shores, that diadem which was stripped from the brow of the Bourbons to be pocketed by a usurper! I cannot think it a matter of regret that England formerly threatened with invasion is now the invader, . . . that France instead of England is the scene of conflict! I cannot think all this matter of regret; and of those who believe that the nation or myself are blinded by our successes, I entreat that they will leave me to my delusion, and keep their philosophy to themselves.

“Our enemy,” the accomplished orator pursued, “who enslaved the press and made it contribute so importantly to his own purposes of ambition, endeavoured to impress upon other nations a belief that Great Britain fought only to secure her own interests, and that her views were completely selfish. That illusion is now destroyed, and the designs of this country are vindicated. We call on all the powers with whom we have been or are at war to do us justice in this respect: above all we claim it of America! I ask her to review her own and the policy of this country! Now she can behold Buonaparte in his naked deformity, stripped of the false glory which success cast around him; the spell of his invincibility is now dissolved; she can now look at him without that awe which an uninterrupted series of victories had created. Were she now to survey him as he is, what would be the result? She would trace him by the desolation of empires, and the dismemberment of states. She would see him pursuing his course over the ruins of men and of things: slavery to the people and destruction to commerce, hostility to literature, to light, and life, were the principles upon which he acted. His

object was to extinguish patriotism, and to confound allegiance ; to darken as well as to enslave ; to roll back the tide of civilization ; to barbarize as well as to desolate mankind. Then let America turn from these scenes of bloodshed and horror, and compare with them the effect of British interference ! She will see that wherever this country has exerted herself, it has been to raise the fallen and to support the falling ; to raise, not to degrade the national character ; to rouse the sentiments of patriotism which tyranny had silenced ; to enlighten, to reanimate, to liberate. Great Britain has resuscitated Spain, and re-created Portugal ; Germany is now a nation as well as a name ; and all these glorious effects have been produced by the efforts and by the example of our country. If to be the deliverers of Europe ; if to have raised our own national character, not upon the ruins of other kingdoms ; if to meet dangers without shrinking, and to possess courage rising with difficulties, be admirable, surely we may not unreasonably hope for the applause of the world. If we have founded our strength upon a rock, and possess the implicit confidence of those allies whom we have succoured when they seemed beyond relief, then I say that our exertions during the last year, and all our efforts during the war, are cheaply purchased ; if we have burdened ourselves, we have relieved others ; and we have the inward, the soul-felt, the proud satisfaction of knowing that a selfish charge is that which, with the faintest shadow of justice, cannot be brought against us."

This speech was wormwood to Mr. Whitbread ; he animadverted in reply upon what he termed the overweening self-complacency with which Mr. Canning talked of the share we had had in giving a decisive turn to the aspect of affairs in the North ; it was the conduct of this country, he asserted, which had enabled Buonaparte to proceed as he had done in his unprin-

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Mr. Whitbread.

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 XLV. undone himself. "If there were no broad and definite outline
 1813. previously laid down," he said, "and firmly adhered to, as to
 November. the demands on the part of the allies, or the concessions on that
 of France, which were to form the groundwork of a general
 peace, he would venture to predict that before long some one
 or other of the allies would make a separate treaty founded on
 its own views or interests. And if we attempted blindly to push
 our advantages too far, he feared we should rouse the same irre-
 sistible power in France which in 1793 had repelled the com-
 bined attacks of all Europe, which had since led on the Emperor
 of the French to his conquests, and which might again turn the
 tide of success against us."

*Militia al-
 lowed to vo-
 lunteer for
 foreign ser-
 vice.*

*Lord Hol-
 land.*

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In pursuance of these opinions, Mr. Whitbread, when a bill was brought in for allowing three-fourths of any militia regiment to volunteer for foreign service, moved to insert in the preamble to the bill, that this was for bringing the war to a speedy and happy termination, and obtaining the blessings of peace upon terms of reciprocity, honour, and security, to all the belligerent powers. What he meant by reciprocity between some of those powers he would have found it difficult to explain;.. but the proposed insertion was negatived as unnecessary, and Mr. Whitbread neither opposed the bill, nor the supplies voted for carrying into effect the engagements of this nation with its allies. Lord Holland approved of the confidence which was thus placed in ministers. "Although," he said, "great part of the happy results of this war might be justly attributed to a powerful popular impulse, and to that infatuation on the part of the enemy, which, thank God, always attended the long abuse of power,.. yet it must be felt that a great deal of the merit is to be attributed to the conduct of the government of this country. If the sentiments of an individual," he pursued, "are of conse-

quence enough to arrest your attention, it must be in your lordships' recollection that I always approved of the interposition and interference of ministers in the cause of Spain. The merit of such policy appears, and ever has appeared to my judgement, quite indisputable, and must now indeed be universally admitted; for, aided by the uncommon genius of Lord Wellington, that policy has produced the most important results. It has driven the enemy from that country which he had so long and so unremittingly oppressed. It has presented a most encouraging and impressive example to Europe of what a people excited by oppression were capable of achieving. It has changed the whole character of the war, by making it a war of the people. But a still farther advantage has arisen out of this policy. A most atrocious calumny had become current in Europe, that the government of this country was always ready to distribute its subsidies with a view to embroil the nations of the continent, while it kept its own people aloof from the contest. No such impression can ever again prevail in Europe. The calumny has been effectually refuted by the policy we have pursued with respect to Spain; for there we have not only given our money but our men; there we have given our money, not to excite the people but to enable them to act, and we have seconded their exertions by a powerful army.

“ In declaring my approbation of ministers in consequence of their moderate language and conduct, that approbation is, of course, founded upon a hope and confidence, that the very different language which appears in certain publications has in no degree their sanction or countenance. Sounding a violent and barbarous war-whoop through the country, abounding in coarse, vulgar, virulent epithets, these publications complete their abominable character by excitements to assassination. Although the French ruler has rendered himself so odious by

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his conduct, yet it must be admitted that he is a great military commander, still at the head of a great nation; and is it fitting that the press of this country should become the means of advising the assassination of such a man, . . . nay, of exhorting to the deed? and what else can be meant by the repeated declaration, that no peace can be concluded while this individual lives? The French ruler is no doubt ambitious, inordinately ambitious; but if it were resolved that no peace should be made with France while it was under the government of an ambitious man, when, I would ask, could peace be expected? The meaning, however, of all the publications I have referred to may be to recommend the restoration of the Bourbon family; but the attempt at such a measure would be totally inconsistent with the professed moderation and policy of ministers. That restoration might be good; but it would be preposterous to look for the success of such an object through the intervention of foreign armies; and it would be opposite to the policy and principle of ministers to engage in any such undertaking."

Alluding then to the just remark of Lord Grenville, that one great advantage resulting from the recent changes on the continent was, that it afforded an opportunity for restoring the balance of power, "I must be allowed," said Lord Holland, "to say, that the re-establishment and maintenance of that balance can never consist in, nor depend upon, particular divisions of territory, so much as upon the existence of a general feeling among the European states, that it is the interest of each to preserve the independence of each and all. Such is the feeling which gave birth and cement to the present confederacy; and therefore I wish that such a confederacy may continue to exist in peace as well as in war. I esteem the principle of this confederacy, because it appears solicitous to preserve the interest of all, without gratifying the peculiar interest

of any one; and upon that principle I would rather leave France with such possessions as should make her feel an interest in the common object of the confederacy, than transfer from her to any other state any possessions which might be likely to withdraw that state from the general feeling which it is the interest of peace and Europe to improve and strengthen.”

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It was well for Great Britain and for the continent that Buonaparte was not contented with such terms of peace as the allies, with a generosity which had neither the character of wisdom nor of justice, would a little before this have granted him. Even when he had been driven over the Rhine, they would, according to their own declaration, have left France more powerful than she had ever been under her Kings, if he would have consented to give up Italy. Out of Germany and out of the Peninsula he had been beaten; but they would have allowed France to remain with the whole of the Netherlands, and with the Rhine for her boundary, if vain-glory and a blind confidence in his fortune had not still demented Buonaparte. But he declared that he would not under any circumstances abandon Italy; and they who ought not under any circumstances now to have negotiated with him, prepared to enter France. On his part he collected the largest force that that exhausted country could supply to resist the impending invasion; and as it thus became an object of great importance for him to bring to his assistance Suchet's army, and the troops who were shut up in the remaining garrisons in Valencia and Catalonia, he thought this might be effected by dictating a treaty to his prisoner, Ferdinand. Accordingly he sent the Comte de Laforest to Valençay, to negotiate with that poor Prince, saying, that under the existing circumstances of his empire and his policy, he wished at once to settle the affairs of Spain; that England was encouraging Jacobinism and anarchy there, for

Terms offered by the allies to Buonaparte.

Buonaparte treats with Ferdinand.