SPEECH ON PRESENTING A PETITION FROM THE MERCHANTS OF LONDON FOR THE RECOGNITION OF THE INDEPENDENT STATES ESTABLISHED IN THE COUNTRIES OF AMERICA FORMERLY SUBJECT TO SPAIN.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON THE 15TH OF JUNE, 1824.

- Scit . . . .
- Unde petat Romam, libertas ultima mundi
- Quo steterit ferienda loco.—
- *Pharsalia,* lib. vii. 579.

"As for the wars anciently made on behalf of a parity or tacit conformity of estate,—to set up or pull down democracies and oligarchies,—I do not see how they may be well justified."—Bacon, Essay on the True Greatness of Kingdoms.

Mr. Speaker,—

I hold in my hand a Petition from the Merchants of the City of London who are engaged in trade with the countries of America formerly subject to the crown of Spain, praying that the House would adopt such measures as to them may seem meet to induce His Majesty's Government to recognise the independence of the states in those countries which have, in fact, established independent governments.

In presenting this Petition, I think it right to give the House such information as I possess relating to the number and character of the Petitioners, that it may be seen how far they are what they profess to be,—what are their means of knowledge,—what are likely to be the motives of their application,—what faith is due to their testimony, and what weight ought to be allowed to their judgment. Their number is one hundred and seventeen. Each of them is a member of a considerable commercial house interested in the trade to America; the Petition, therefore, conveys the sentiments of three or four hundred merchants. The signatures were collected in two days, without a public meeting, or even an advertisement. It was confined to the American merchants, but the Petitioners have no reason to believe that any merchant in London would have declined to put his name to it. I am but imperfectly qualified to estimate the importance and station of the Petitioners. Judging from common information, I should consider many of them as in the first rank of the mercantile community. I see among them the firm of Baring and Company, which, without disparagement to any others, may be placed at the head of the commercial establishments of the world. I see also the firms of Herring, Powles, and Company; of Richardson and Company; Goldsmid and Company; Montefiore and Company; of Mr. Benjamin Shaw, who, as Chairman of Lloyd's Coffee-house, represents the most numerous and diversified interests of traffic; together with many others not equally known to me, but whom, if I did know, I have no doubt that I might with truth describe as persons of the highest mercantile respectability. I perceive among them the name of Ricardo, which I shall ever honour, and which I cannot now pronounce without

emotion.* In a word, the Petitioners are the City of London. They contain individuals of all political parties; they are deeply interested in the subject,—perfectly conversant with all its commercial bearings; and they could not fill the high place where they stand, if they were not as much distinguished by intelligence and probity, as by those inferior advantages of wealth which with them are not fortunate accidents, but proofs of personal worth and professional merit.

If, Sir, it had been my intention to enter fully on this subject, and especially to discuss it adversely to the King's Government, I might have chosen a different form of presenting it to the House. But though I am and ever shall be a member of a party associated, as I conceive, for preserving the liberties of the kingdom, I present this Petition in the spirit of those by whom it is subscribed, in the hope of relieving that anxious desire which pervades the commercial world,—and which is also shared by the people of England,—that the present session may not close without some discussion or some explanation on this important subject, as far as that explanation can be given without inconvenience to the public service. For such a purpose, the presentation of a petition affords a convenient opportunity, both because it implies the absence of any intention to blame the past measures of Government as foreign from the wishes of the Petitioners, and because it does not naturally require to be followed by any motion which might be represented as an invasion of the prerogative of the Crown, or as a restraint on the discretion of its constitutional advisers.

At the same time I must add, that in whatever form or at whatever period of the session I had brought this subject forward, I do not think that I should have felt myself called upon to discuss it in a tone very different from that which the nature of the present occasion appears to me to require. On a question of policy, where various opinions may be formed about the past, and where the only important part is necessarily prospective, I should naturally have wished to speak in a deliberative temper. However much I might lament the delays which had occurred in the recognition of the American States, I could hardly have gone further than strongly to urge that the time was now at least come for more decisive measures.

With respect, indeed, to the State Papers laid before us, I see nothing in them to blame or to regret, unless it be that excess of tenderness and forbearance towards the feelings and pretensions of European Spain which the Despatches themselves acknowledge. In all other respects, I can only describe them as containing a body of liberal maxims of policy and just principles of public law, expressed with a precision, a circumspection, and a dignity which will always render them models and master-pieces of diplomatic composition.* Far from assailing these valuable documents, it is my object to uphold their doctrines, to reason from their principles, and to contend for nothing more than that the future policy of England on this subject may be governed by them. On them I rest: from them seems to me to flow every consequence respecting the future, which I think most desirable. I should naturally have had no other task than that of quoting them, of showing the stage to which they had conducted the question, of unfolding their import where they are too short for the generality of readers, and of enforcing their application to all that yet remains undone. But something more is made necessary by the confusion and

misconception which prevail on one part of this subject. I have observed with astonishment, that persons otherwise well informed should here betray a forgetfulness of the most celebrated events in history, and an unacquaintance with the plainest principles of international law, which I should not have thought possible if I had not known it to be real. I am therefore obliged to justify these State Papers before I appeal to them. I must go back for a moment to those elementary principles which are so grossly misunderstood.

And first, Sir, with respect to the term "recognition," the introduction of which into these discussions has proved the principal occasion of darkness and error. It is a term which is used in two senses so different from each other as to have nothing very important in common. The first, which is the true and legitimate sense of the word "recognition," as a technical term of international law, is that in which it denotes the explicit acknowledgment of the independence of a country by a state which formerly exercised sovereignty over it. Spain has been doomed to exhibit more examples of this species of recognition than any other European state; of which the most memorable cases are her acknowledgment of the independence of Portugal and Holland. This country also paid the penalty of evil councils in that hour of folly and infatuation which led to a hostile separation between the American Colonies and their mother country. Such recognitions are renunciations of sovereignty,—surrenders of the power or of the claim to govern.

But we, who are as foreign to the Spanish states in America as we are to Spain herself,—who never had any more authority over them than over her,—have in this case no claims to renounce, no power to abdicate, no sovereignty to resign, no legal rights to confer. What we have to do is therefore not recognition in its first and most strictly proper sense. It is not by formal stipulations or solemn declarations that we are to recognise the American states, but by measures of practical policy, which imply that we acknowledge their independence. Our recognition is virtual. The most conspicuous part of such a recognition, is the act of sending and receiving diplomatic agents. It implies no guarantee, no alliance, no aid, no approbation of the successful revolt,—no intimation of an opinion concerning the justice or injustice of the means by which it has been accomplished. These are matters beyond our jurisdiction. It would be an usurpation in us to sit in judgment upon them. As a state, we can neither condemn nor justify revolutions which do not affect our safety, and are not amenable to our laws. We deal with the authorities of new states on the same principles and for the same object as with those of old. We consider them as governments actually exercising authority over the people of a country, with whom we are called upon to maintain a regular intercourse by diplomatic agents for the interests of Great Britain, and for the security of British subjects. Antiquity affords a presumption of stability, which, like all other presumptions, may and does fail in particular instances; but in itself it is nothing, and when it ceases to indicate stability, it ought to be regarded by a foreign country as of no account. The tacit recognition of a new state, with which alone I am now concerned, not being a judgment for the new government, or against the old, is not a deviation from perfect neutrality, or a cause of just offence to the dispossessed ruler.* When Great Britain recognised the United States, it was a concession by the recognising Power, the object of which was the advantage and security of the government recognised. But when Great Britain (I hope very soon) recognises the states of Spanish America, it will not be as a concession to them, for they

need no such recognition; but it will be for her own sake,—to promote her own interest,—to protect the trade and navigation of her subjects,—to acquire the best means of cultivating friendly relations with important countries, and of composing by immediate negotiation those differences which might otherwise terminate in war. Are these new doctrines?—quite the contrary. They are founded on the ancient practice of Europe. They have been acted upon for more than two centuries by England as well as other nations.

I have already generally alluded, Sir, to the memorable and glorious revolt by which the United Provinces of the Netherlands threw off the yoke of Spain. Nearly four-score years passed from the beginning of that just insurrection to the time when a recognition of independence was at last extorted from Castilian pride and obstinacy. The people of the Netherlands first took up arms to obtain the redress of intolerable grievances; and for many years they forbore from proceeding to the last extremity against their tyrannical king.* It was not till Philip had formally proscribed the Prince of Orange,—the purest and most perfect model of a patriotic hero,—putting a price on his head, and promising not only pardon for every crime, but the honours of nobility to any one who should assassinate him,† that the States-General declared the King of Spain to have forfeited, by a long course of merciless tyranny, his rights of sovereignty over the Netherlands.‡ Several assassins attempted the life of the good and great Prince of Orange: one wounded him dangerously; another consummated the murder,—a zealot of what was then, as it is now, called “legitimacy.” He suffered the punishment due to his crime; but the King of Spain bestowed on his family the infamous nobility which had been earned by the assassin,—an example which has also disgraced our age. Before and after that murder, the greatest vicissitudes of fortune had attended the arms of those who fought for the liberties of their country. Their chiefs were driven into exile; their armies were dispersed. The greatest and most opulent of the Belgic Provinces, misled by priests, had made their peace with the tyrant. The greatest captains of the age commanded against them. The Duke of Alva employed his valour and experience to quell the revolts which had been produced by his cruelty. The genius of the Prince of Parma long threatened the infant liberty of Holland. Spinola balanced the consummate ability of Prince Maurice, and kept up an equal contest, till Gustavus Adolphus rescued Europe from the Holy Allies of that age. The insurgents had seen with dread the armament called “Invincible,” which was designed, by the conquest of England, to destroy the last hopes of the Netherlands. Their independence appeared more than once to be annihilated; it was often endangered; it was to the last fiercely contested. The fortune of war was as often adverse as favourable to their arms.

It was not till the 30th of January, 1648,* nearly eight years after the revolt, nearly seventy after the declaration of independence, that the Crown of Spain, by the Treaty of Munster, recognised the Republic of the United Provinces, and renounced all pretensions to sovereignty over their territory. What, during that long period, was the policy of the European states? Did they wait for eighty years, till the obstinate punctilio or lazy pedantry of the Escurial was subdued? Did they forego all the advantages of friendly intercourse with a powerful and flourishing republic? Did they withhold from that republic the ordinary courtesy of keeping up a regular and open correspondence with her through avowed and honourable ministers? Did they refuse to their own subjects that

protection for their lives and properties, which such a correspondence alone could afford?

All this they ought to have done, according to the principles of those who would resist the prayer of the Petition in my hand. But nothing of this was then done or dreamt of. Every state in Europe, except the German branch of the House of Austria, sent ministers to the Hague, and received those of the States-General. Their friendship was prized,—their alliance courted; and defensive treaties were formed with them by Powers at peace with Spain, from the heroic Gustavus Adolphus to the barbarians of Persia and Muscovy. I say nothing of Elizabeth herself,—proscribed as she was as an usurper,—the stay of Holland, and the leader of the liberal party throughout Europe. But no one can question the authority on this point of her successor,—the great professor of legitimacy,—the founder of that doctrine of the divine right of kings, which led his family to destruction. As king of Scotland, in 1594, forty-four years before the recognition by Spain, James recognised the States-General as the successors of the Houses of Austria and Burgundy, by stipulating with them the renewal of a treaty concluded between his mother Queen Mary and the Emperor Charles V.* In 1604, when he made peace with Spain, eager as he was by that transaction to be admitted into the fraternity of legitimate kings, he was so far curbed by the counsellors of Elizabeth, that he adhered to his own and to her recognition of the independence of Holland: the Court of Madrid virtually acknowledging, by several articles of the treaty,† that such perseverance in the recognition was no breach of neutrality, and no obstacle to friendship with Spain. At the very moment of the negotiation, Winwood was despatched with new instructions as minister to the States-General. It is needless to add that England, at peace with Spain, continued to treat Holland as an independent state for the forty-four years which passed from that treaty to the recognition of Munster.

‡ The policy of England towards Portugal, though in itself far less memorable, is still more strikingly pertinent to the purpose of this argument. On the 1st of December 1640, the people of Portugal rose in arms against the tyranny of Spain, under which they had groaned about sixty years. They seated the Duke of Braganza on the throne. In January 1641, the Cortes of the kingdom were assembled to legalize his authority, though seldom convoked by his successors after their power was consolidated. Did England then wait the pleasure of Spain? Did she desist from connection with Portugal, till it appeared from long experience that the attempts of Spain to recover that country must be unavailing? Did she even require that the Braganza Government should stand the test of time before she recognised its independent authority? No: within a year of the proclamation of the Duke of Braganza by the Cortes, a treaty of peace and alliance was signed at Windsor between Charles I. and John IV., which not only treats with the latter as an independent sovereign, but expressly speaks of the King of Castile as a dispossessed ruler; and alleges on the part of the King of England, that he was moved to conclude this treaty "*by his solicitude to preserve the tranquillity of his kingdoms, and to secure the liberty of trade of his beloved subjects.*" The contest was carried on: the Spaniards obtained victories; they excited conspiracies; they created divisions. The palace of the King of Portugal was the scene of domestic discord, court intrigue, and meditated usurpation. There is no trace of any complaint or remonstrance, or even murmur, against the early recognition by England, though it was not till twenty-six years afterwards that Spain herself

acknowledged the independence of Portugal, and (what is remarkable) made that acknowledgment in a treaty concluded under the mediation of England.*

To these examples let me add an observation upon a part of the practice of nations, strongly illustrative of the principles which ought to decide this question. All the Powers of Europe treated England, under the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, as retaining her rights of sovereignty. They recognised these governments as much as they had recognised the Monarchy. The friends of Charles II. did not complain of this policy. That monarch, when restored, did not disallow the treaties of foreign Powers with the Republic or with Cromwell. Why? Because these Powers were obliged, for the interest of their own subjects, to negotiate with the government which, whatever might be its character, was actually obeyed by the British nation. They pronounced no opinion on the legitimacy of that government,—no judgment unfavourable to the claims of the exiled prince; they consulted only the security of the commerce and intercourse of their own subjects with the British Islands.

It was quite otherwise with the recognition by Louis XIV. of the son of James II., when his father died, as King of Great Britain. As that prince was not acknowledged and obeyed in England, no interest of France required that Louis should maintain an intercourse, or take any notice of his pretensions. That recognition was therefore justly resented by England as a wanton insult,—as a direct interference in her internal affairs,—as an assumption of authority to pronounce against the lawfulness of her government.†

I am aware, Sir, that our complaints of the interference of France in the American war may be quoted against my argument. Those who glance over the surface of history may see some likeness between that case and the present: but the resemblance is merely superficial; it disappears on the slightest examination. It was not of the establishment of diplomatic relations with America by France in 1778, that Great Britain complained. We now know from the last edition of the Memoirs of the Marquis de Bouillé, that from the first appearance of discontent in 1765, the Duc de Choiseul employed secret agents to excite commotion in North America. That gallant and accomplished officer himself was no stranger to these intrigues after the year 1768, when he became governor of Guadaloupe.* It is well known that the same clandestine and treacherous machinations were continued to the last, in a time of profound peace, and in spite of professions of amity so repeated and so solemn, that the breach of them produced a more than political resentment in the mind of King George III. against the House of Bourbon. We also learn, from no contemptible authority, that at the very time that the preliminaries of peace were signed at Fontainbleau in 1762 by the Duc de Choiseul and the Duke of Bedford, the former of these ministers concluded a secret treaty with Spain, by which it was stipulated, that in eight years both Powers should attack England;—a design of which the removal of Choiseul defeated the execution.† The recognition of the United States was no more than the consummation and avowal of these dark designs. So conscious was the Court of Versailles of their own perfidy, that they expected war to be the immediate consequence of it. On the same day with the treaty of commerce they signed another secret treaty,‡ by which it was stipulated, that in case of hostilities between France and England, America should make common cause with the former. The division of the territories to be

conquered was even provided for. Negligent and supine as were the English Ministers, they can hardly be supposed to have been altogether ignorant of these secret treaties. The cause of war, then, was not a mere recognition after a long warning to the mother country,—after a more than generous forbearance shown to her dignity and claims (as it would be now in the case with Spanish America): it was that France, in defiance of the most solemn assurances of her Ministers, and also as it is said of her Sovereign, at length openly avowed those machinations to destroy the union between the British nation and the people of America,—Englishmen by blood, and freemen by principle, dear to us by both ties, but most dear by the last,—which they had carried on during so many years of peace and pretended friendship.

I now proceed to review the progress which we have already made towards the recognition of the states of Spanish America, as it appears in the Papers before the House. I will not dwell on the statute 3 Geo. IV. c. 43, which provides, "that the merchandize of countries in America or the West Indies, *being or having been a part of the dominions of the King of Spain*, may be imported into Great Britain in ships which are the build of these countries;" though that clause must be allowed to be an ack ackedgment of independence, unless it could be said that the provinces separated from Spain were either countries without inhabitants, or inhabited by men without a government. Neither will I say any thing of the declaration made to Spain, that consuls must be immediately sent to South America; though I shall hereafter argue, that the appointment of consuls is as much an act of recognition as the appointment of higher ministers. Lord Liverpool indeed said, that by doing so we were "treating South America as independent,"—which is the only species of recognition which we have a right to make. I should be the last to blame the suspension of such a purpose during the lawless and faithless invasion of Spain, then threatened, and soon after executed. So strongly was I convinced that this was a sacred duty, that I at that time declined to present a petition of a nature similar to that which I now offer to your consideration. Nothing under heaven could have induced me to give the slightest aid to the unrighteous violence which then menaced the independence of Spain.

The Despatch of Mr. Secretary Canning to Sir Charles Stuart, of the 31st of March, 1823, is the first paper which I wish to recall to the remembrance, and recommend to the serious attention of the House. It declares that time and events have decided the separation of Spanish America,—that various circumstances in their internal condition may *accelerate or retard* the recognition of their independence; and it concludes with intelligibly intimating that Great Britain would resist the conquest of any part of these provinces by France. The most explicit warning was thus given to Spain, to France, and to all Europe, as well as to the states of Spanish America, that Great Britain considered their independence as certain,—that she regarded the time of recognising it as a question only of policy,—and that she would not suffer foreign Powers to interfere for preventing its establishment. France, indeed, is the only Power named; but the reason of the case applied to every other, and extended as much to conquest *under the name of Spain* as if it were made avowedly for France herself.

The next document to which I shall refer is the Memorandum of a Conference between

M. de Polignac and Mr. Secretary Canning, on the 9th of October, 1823; and I cannot help earnestly recommending to all persons who have any doubt with respect to the present state of this question, or to the footing on which it has stood for many months,—who do not see or do not own that our determination has long been made and announced,—to observe with care the force and extent of the language of the British Government on this important occasion.—"The British Government," it is there said, "were of opinion that any attempt to bring Spanish America under its ancient submission must be utterly hopeless; that all negotiation for that purpose would be unsuccessful; and that the prolongation or renewal of war for the same object could be only a waste of human life and an infliction of calamities on both parties to no end." Language cannot more strongly declare the conviction of Great Britain that the issue of the contest was even then no longer doubtful,—that there was indeed no longer any such contest as could affect the policy of foreign states towards America. As soon as we had made known our opinion in terms so positive to Europe and America, the pretensions of Spain could not in point of justice be any reason for a delay. After declaring that we should remain, however, "strictly neutral if war should be unhappily prolonged," we go on to state more explicitly than before, "that the junction of any Power in an enterprise of Spain against the colonies would be viewed as an entirely new question, upon which they must take such decision as the interest of Great Britain might require;"—language which, however cautious and moderate in its forms, is in substance too clear to be misunderstood. After this paragraph, no state in Europe would have had a right to affect surprise at the recognition, if it had been proclaimed on the following day. Still more clearly, if possible, is the same principle avowed in a subsequent paragraph:—"That the British Government had no desire to precipitate the recognition, so long as there was any reasonable chance of an accommodation with the mother country, by which such a recognition might come first from Spain:" but that it could not wait indefinitely for that result; that it could not consent to make its recognition of the new states dependent on that of Spain; "and that it would consider any foreign interference, either by force or by menace, in the dispute between Spain and the colonies, as a motive for recognising the latter without delay." And here in a matter less important I should be willing to stop, and to rest my case on this passage alone. Words cannot be more explicit: it is needless to comment on them, and impossible to evade them. We declare, that the only accommodation which we contemplate, is one which is to terminate in recognition by Spain; and that we cannot indefinitely wait even for that result. We assert our right to recognise, whether Spain does so or not; and we state a case in which we should immediately recognise, independently of the consent of the Spanish Government, and without regard to the internal state of the American provinces. As a natural consequence of these positions, we decline any part in a proposed congress of European Powers for regulating the affairs of America.

Sir, I cannot quit this document without paying a just tribute to that part which relates to commerce,—to the firmness with which it asserts the right of this country to continue her important trade with America, as well as the necessity of the appointment of consuls for the protection of that trade,—and to the distinct annunciation, "that an attempt to renew the obsolete interdictions would be best cut short by a speedy and unqualified recognition of the independence of the South American states." Still more do I applaud the declaration, "that Great Britain had no desire to set up any separate right to the free

enjoyment of this trade; that she considered the force of circumstances and the irreversible progress of events to have already determined the question of the existence of that freedom for all the world." These are declarations equally wise and admirable. They coincide indeed so evidently with the well-understood interest of every state, that it is mortifying to be compelled to speak of them as generous; but they are so much at variance with the base and shortsighted policy of Governments, that it is refreshing and consolatory to meet them in Acts of State;—at least when, as here, they must be sincere, because the circumstances of their promulgation secure their observance, and indeed render deviation from them impossible. I read them over and over with the utmost pleasure. They breathe the spirit of that just policy and sound philosophy, which teaches us to regard the interest of our country as best promoted by an increase of the industry, wealth, and happiness of other nations.

Although the attention of the House is chiefly directed to the acts of our own Government, it is not foreign from the purpose of my argument to solicit them for a few minutes to consider the admirable Message sent on the 2d of December, 1823, by the President of the United States* to the Congress of that great republic. I heartily rejoice in the perfect agreement of that message with the principles professed by us to the French Minister, and afterwards to all the great Powers of Europe, whether military or maritime, and to the great English State beyond the Atlantic. I am not anxious to ascertain whether the Message was influenced by our communication, or was the mere result of similarity of principle and coincidence of interest. The United States had at all events long preceded us in the recognition. They sent consuls and commissioners two years before us, who found the greater part of South America quiet and secure, and in the agitations of the remainder, met with no obstacles to friendly intercourse. This recognition neither interrupted amicable relations with Spain, nor Occasioned remonstrances from any Power in Europe. They declared their neutrality at the moment of recognition: they solemnly renew that declaration in the Message before me. That wise Government, in grave but determined language, and with that reasonable and deliberate tone which becomes true courage, proclaims the principles of her policy, and makes known the cases in which the care of her own safety will compel her to take up arms for the defence of other states. I have already observed its coincidence with the declarations of England, which indeed is perfect, if allowance be made for the deeper, or at least more immediate, interest in the independence of South America, which near neighbourhood gives to the United States. This coincidence of the two great English Commonwealths (for so I delight to call them, and I heartily pray that they may be for ever united in the cause of justice and liberty) cannot be contemplated without the utmost pleasure by every enlightened citizen of either. Above all, Sir, there is one coincidence between them, which is, I trust, of happy augury to the whole civilized world:—they have both declared their neutrality in the American contest as long as it shall be confined to Spain and her former colonies, or as long as no foreign Power shall interfere.

On the 25th of December 1823, M. Ofalia, the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, proposed to the principal Powers of Europe a conference at Paris on the best means of enabling his Catholic Majesty to re-establish his legitimate authority, and to spread the blessings of his paternal government over the vast provinces of America which once

acknowledged the supremacy of Spain. To this communication, which was made also to this government, an answer was given on the 30th of January following, which cannot be read by Englishmen without approbation and pleasure. In this answer, the proposition of a congress is once more rejected; the British Government adheres to its original declaration, that it would wait for a time,—but a limited time only,—and would rejoice to see his Catholic Majesty have the grace and advantage of taking the lead among the Powers of Europe in the recognition of the American states, as well for the greater benefit and security of these states themselves, as from the generous disposition felt by Great Britain to spare the remains of dignity and grandeur, however infinitesimally small, which may still be fancied to belong to the thing called the crown of Spain. Even the shadow of long-departed greatness was treated with compassionate forbearance. But all these courtesies and decorums were to have their limit. The interests of Europe and America imposed higher duties, which were not to be violated for the sake of leaving undisturbed the precedents copied by public offices at Madrid, from the power of Charles V. or the arrogance of Philip II. The principal circumstance in which this Despatch added to the preceding, was, that it both laid a wider foundation for the policy of recognition, and made a much nearer approach to exactness in fixing the time beyond which it could not be delayed.

I have no subsequent official information. I have heard, and I believe, that Spain has answered this Despatch,—that she repeats her invitation to England to send a minister to the proposed congress, and that she has notified the assent of Russia, Austria, France, and Prussia. I have heard, and I also believe, that England on this occasion has proved true to herself,—that, in conformity to her ancient character, and in consistency with her repeated declarations, she has declined all discussion of this question with the Holy (or *un*-Holy) Alliance. Would to God that we had from the beginning kept aloof from these Congresses, in which we have made shipwreck of our ancient honour! If that were not possible, would to God that we had protested, at least by silence and absence against that conspiracy at Verona, which has annihilated the liberties of continental Europe!

In confirmation of the review which I have taken of the documents, I may also here mention the declaration made in this House, that during the occupation of Spain by a French army, every armament against the Spanish ports must be considered as having a French character, and being therefore within the principle repeatedly laid down in the Papers. Spain indeed, as a belligerent, can be now considered only as a fang of the Holy Alliance, powerless in itself, but which that monster has the power to arm with thrice-distilled venom.

As the case now stands, Sir, I conceive it to be declared by Great Britain, that the acknowledgment of the independence of Spanish America is no breach of faith or neutrality towards Spain,—that such an acknowledgment might long ago have been made without any violation of her rights or interposition in her affairs,—that we have been for at least two years entitled to make it by all the rules of international law,—that we have delayed it, from friendly consideration for the feelings and claims of the Spanish Government,—that we have now carried our forbearance to the utmost verge of reasonable generosity,—and, having exhausted all the offices of friendship and good

neighbourhood, are at perfect liberty to consult only the interest of our own subjects, and the just pretensions of the American states.

In adopting this recognition now, we shall give just offence to no other Power. But if we did, and once suffer ourselves to be influenced by the apprehension of danger in resisting unjust pretensions, we destroy the only bulwark,—that of principle,—that guards a nation. There never was a time when it would be more perilous to make concessions, or to show feebleness and fear. We live in an age of the most extravagant and monstrous pretensions, supported by tremendous force. A confederacy of absolute monarchs claim the right of controlling the internal government of all nations. In the exercise of that usurped power they have already taken military possession of the whole continent of Europe. Continental governments either obey their laws or tremble at their displeasure. England alone has condemned their principles, and is independent of their power. They ascribe all the misfortunes of the present age to the example of her institutions. On England, therefore, they must look with irreconcilable hatred. As long as she is free and powerful, their system is incomplete, all the precautions of their tyrannical policy are imperfect, and their oppressed subjects may turn their eyes to her, indulging the hope that circumstances will one day compel us to exchange the alliance of kings for the friendship of nations.

I will not say that such a state of the world does not require a considerate and circumspect policy. I acknowledge, and should earnestly contend, that there never was a moment at which the continuance of peace was more desirable. After passing through all the sufferings of twenty years universal war, and feeling its internal evils perhaps more severely since its close than when it raged most widely and fiercely, we are only now beginning to taste the natural and genuine fruits of peace. The robust constitution of a free community is just showing its power to heal the deepest wounds,—to compose obstinate convulsions,—and to restore health and vigour to every disordered function or disabled member. I deprecate the occurrence of what must disturb this noble process,—one of the miracles of Liberty. But I am also firmly convinced, that prudence in the present circumstances of Europe forbids every measure that can be represented as having the appearance of fear. If we carry our caution further than strict abstinence from injustice, we cannot doubt to what motive our forbearance will be imputed. Every delay is liable to that interpretation. The least scrupulous politicians condemn falsehood when it wears the appearance of fear. It may be sometimes unsafe to fire at the royal tiger who suddenly crosses your path in an eastern forest; but it is thought fully as dangerous to betray your fear by running away: prudent men quietly pursue their road without altering their pace,—without provoking or tempting the ferocious animal.

Having thus traced the progress of measures which have lead us to the very verge of recognition, the question naturally presents itself, Why do we not now recognize? It is not so much my duty as it is that of the Government, to tell us why they do not complete their own system. Every preparation is made; every adverse claim is rejected; ample notice is given to all parties. Why is the determination delayed? We are irrevocably pledged to maintain our principles, and to act on them towards America. We have cut off all honourable retreat. Why should we seem to hesitate? America expects from as the

common marks of amity and respect. Spain cannot complain at their being granted. No other state can intimate an opinion on the subject, without an open attack on the independence of Great Britain. What then hinders the decisive word from being spoken?

We have already indeed taken one step more, in addition to those on which I have too long dwelt. We have sent consuls to all the ports of Spanish America to which we trade, as well as to the seats of the new government in that country. We have seen in the public papers, that the consul at Buenos Ayres has presented a letter from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in this country to the Secretary of that Government, desiring that they would grant the permission to the consul, without which he cannot exercise his powers. Does not this act acknowledge the independence of the State of Buenos Ayres? An independent state alone can appoint consuls:—an independent state only can receive consuls. We have not only sent consuls, but commissioners. What is their character? Can it be any other than that of an envoy with a new title? Every agent publicly accredited to a foreign government, and not limited by his commission to commercial affairs, must in reality be a diplomatic minister, whatever may be his official name. We read of the public and joyful reception of these commissioners, of presents made by them to the American administrators, and of speeches in which they announce the good-will of the Government and people of England towards the infant republics. I allude to the speech of Colonel Hamilton at Bogota, on which, as I have seen it only in a translation, I can only venture to conjecture (after making some allowance for the overflow of courtesy and kindness which is apt to occur on such occasions) that it expressed the anxious wishes and earnest hopes of this country, that he might find Columbia in a state capable of maintaining those relations of amity which we were sincerely desirous to establish. Where should we apply for redress, if a Columbian privateer were to capture an English merchantman? Not at Madrid, but at Bogota. Does not this answer decide the whole question?

But British subjects, Sir, have a right to expect, not merely that their Government shall provide some means of redress, but that they should provide adequate and effectual means,—those which universal experience has proved to be the best. They are not bound to be content with the unavowed agency and precarious good offices of naval officers, nor even with the inferior and imperfect protection of an agent whose commission is limited to the security of trade. The power of a consul is confined to commercial affairs; and there are many of the severest wrongs which the merchant suffers, which, as they may not directly affect him in his trading concerns, are not within the proper province of the consul. The English trader at Buenos Ayres ought not to feel his safety less perfect than that of other foreign merchants. The habit of trusting to an ambassador for security has a tendency to reconcile the spirit of adventurous industry with a constant affection for the place of a man’s birth. If these advantages are not inconsiderable to any European nation, they must be important to the most commercial and maritime people of the world.

The American Governments at present rate our friendship too high, to be jealous and punctilious in their intercourse with us. But a little longer delay may give rise to an unfavourable judgment of our conduct. They may even doubt our neutrality itself. Instead of admitting that the acknowledgment of their independence would be a breach of neutrality towards Spain, they may much more naturally conceive that the delay to

acknowledge it is a breach of neutrality towards themselves. Do we in truth deal equally by both the contending parties? We do not content ourselves with consuls at Cadiz and Barcelona. If we expect justice to our subjects from the Government of Ferdinand VII., we in return pay every honour to that Government as a Power of the first class. We lend it every aid that it can desire from the presence of a British minister of the highest rank. We do not inquire whether he *legitimately* deposed his father, or *legally* dispersed the Cortes who preserved his throne. The inequality becomes the more strikingly offensive, when it is considered that the number of English in the American States is far greater, and our commerce with them much more important.

We have long since advised Spain to acknowledge the independence of her late provinces in America: we have told her that it is the only basis on which negotiations can be carried on, and that it affords her the only chance of preserving some of the advantages of friendship and commerce with these vast territories. Whatever rendered it right for Spain to recognise them, must also render it right for us. If we now delay, Spain may very speciously charge us with insincerity "It now," she may say, "appears from your own conduct, that under pretence of friendship you advised us to do that from which you yourselves recoil."

We have declared that we should immediately proceed to recognition, either if Spain were to invade the liberty of trade which we now possess, or if any other Power were to take a part in the contest between her and the American states. But do not these declarations necessarily imply that they are in fact independent? Surely no injustice of Spain, or France, or Russia could authorize England to acknowledge that to be a fact which we do not know to be so. Either therefore we have threatened to do what ought not to be done, or these states are now in a condition to be treated as independent.

It is now many months since it was declared to M. de Polignac, that we should consider "any foreign interference, by force or *menace*, in the dispute between Spain and her colonies, as a motive for recognising the latter without delay." I ask whether the interference "by menace" has not now occurred? M. Ofalia, on the 26th of December, proposed a congress on the affairs of America, in hopes that the allies of King Ferdinand "will assist him in accomplishing the worthy object of upholding the principles of order and legitimacy, the subversion of which, once commenced in America, would speedily communicate." Now I have already said, that, if I am rightly informed, this proposition, happily rejected by Great Britain, has been acceded to by the Allied Powers. Preparations for the congress are said to be already made. Can there be a more distinct case of interference by menace in the American contest, than the agreement to assemble a congress for the purpose described in the despatch of M. Ofalia?

But it is said, Sir, that we ought not to recognise independence where a contest is still maintained, or where governments of some apparent stability do not exist. Both these ideas seem to be comprehended in the proposition,—"that we ought to recognise only where independence is actually enjoyed," though that proposition properly only affirms the former. But it is said that we are called upon only to acknowledge the fact of independence, and before we make the acknowledgment we ought to have evidence of

the fact. To this single point the discussion is now confined. All considerations of European policy are (I cannot repeat it too often) excluded: the policy of Spain, or France, or Russia, is no longer an element in the problem. The fact of independence is now the sole object of consideration. If there be no independence, we cannot acknowledge it: if there be, we must.

To understand the matter rightly, we must consider separately—what are often confounded—the two questions,—Whether there is a contest with Spain still pending? and Whether internal tranquillity be securely established? As to the first we must mean such a contest as exhibits some equality of force, and of which, if the combatants were left to themselves, the issue would be in some degree doubtful. It never can be understood so as to include a bare chance, that Spain might recover her ancient dominions at some distant and absolutely uncertain period.

In this inquiry, do you consider Spanish America as one mass, or do you apply your inquiry to the peculiar situation of each individual state? For the purposes of the present argument you may view them in either light:—in the latter, because they are sovereign commonwealths, as independent of each other as they all are of Europe, or in the former, because they are united by a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive, which binds them to make common cause in this contest, and to conclude no separate peace with Spain.

If I look on Spanish America as one vast unit, the question of the existence of any serious contest is too simple to admit the slightest doubt. What proportion does the contest bear to the country in which it prevails? My geography, or at least my recollection, does not serve me so far, that I could enumerate the degrees of latitude and longitude over which that vast country extends. On the western coast, however, it reaches from the northern point of New California to the utmost limit of cultivation towards Cape Horn. On the eastern it extends from the mouth of the Mississippi to that of the Orinoco; and, after the immense exception of Guiana and Brazil, from the Rio de la Plata to the southern footsteps of civilized man. The prodigious varieties of its elevation exhibit in the same parallel of latitude all the climates and products of the globe. It is the only abundant source of the metals justly called “precious,”—the most generally and permanently useful of all commodities, except those which are necessary to the preservation of human life. It is unequally and scantily peopled by sixteen or eighteen millions,—whose numbers, freedom of industry, and security of property must be quadrupled in a century. Its length on the Pacific coast is equal to that of the whole contment of Africa from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Gibraltar. It is more extensive than the vast possessions of Russia or of Great Britain in Asia. The Spanish language is spoken over a line of nearly six thousand miles. The State of Mexico alone is five times larger that European Spain. A single communication cut through these territories between the Atlantic and Pacific would bring China six thousand miles nearer to Europe;* and the Republic of Columbia or that of Mexico may open and command that new road for the commerce of the world.

What is the Spanish strength? A single castle in Mexico, an island on the coast of Chili, and a small army in Upper Peru! Is this a contest approaching to equality? Is it sufficient to render the independence of such a country doubtful? Does it deserve the name of a

contest? It is very little more than what in some of the wretched governments of the East is thought desirable to keep alive the vigilance of the rulers, and to exercise the martial spirit of the people. There is no present appearance that the country can be reduced by the power of Spain alone; and if any other Power were to interfere, it is acknowledged that such an interference would impose new duties on Great Britain.

If, on the other hand, we consider the American states as separate, the fact of independence is undisputed, with respect at least to some of them. What doubts can be entertained of the independence of the immense provinces of Caraccas, New Grenada, and Quito, which now form the Republic of Columbia? There, a considerable Spanish army has been defeated: all have been either destroyed, or expelled from the territory of the Republic: not a Royalist soldier remains. Three Congresses have successively been assembled: they have formed a reasonable and promising Constitution; and they have endeavoured to establish a wise system and a just administration of law. In the midst of their difficulties the Columbians have ventured (and hitherto with perfect success) to encounter the arduous and perilous, but noble problem of a pacific emancipation of their slaves. They have been able to observe good faith with their creditors, and thus to preserve the greatest of all resources for times of danger. Their tranquillity has stood the test of the long absence of Bolivar in Peru. Englishmen who have lately traversed their territories in various directions, are unanimous in stating that their journeys were made in the most undisturbed security. Every where they saw the laws obeyed, justice administered, armies disciplined, and the revenue peaceably collected. Many British subjects have indeed given practical proofs of their faith in the power and will of the Columbian Government to protect industry and property:—they have established houses of trade; they have undertaken to work mines; and they are establishing steam-boats on the Orinoco and the Magdalena. Where is the state which can give better proofs of secure independence?

The Republic of Buenos Ayres has an equally undisputed enjoyment of independence. There no Spanish soldier has set his foot for fourteen years. It would be as difficult to find a Royalist there, as it would be a Jacobite in England (I mean only a personal adherent of the House of Stuart, for as to Jacobites in principle, I fear they never were more abundant). Its rulers are so conscious of internal security, that they have crossed the Andes, and interposed with vigour and effect in the revolutions of Chili and Peru. Whoever wishes to know the state of Chili, will find it in a very valuable book lately published by Mrs. Graham,* a lady whom I have the happiness to call my friend, who, by the faithful and picturesque minuteness of her descriptions, places her reader in the midst of the country, and introduces him to the familiar acquaintance of the inhabitants. Whatever seeds of internal discord may be perceived, we do not discover the vestige of any party friendly to the dominion of Spain. Even in Peru, where the spirit of independence has most recently appeared, and appears most to fluctuate, no formidable body of Spanish partisans has been observed by the most intelligent observers; and it is very doubtful whether even the army which keeps the field in that province against the American cause be devoted to the restored despotism of Spain. Mexico, the greatest, doubtless, and most populous, but not perhaps the most enlightened, portion of Spanish America, has passed through severe trials, and seems hitherto far from showing a

disposition again to fall under the authority of Spain. Even the party who long bore the name of Spain on their banners, imbibed in that very contest the spirit of independence, and at length ceased to look abroad for a sovereign. The last Viceroy who was sent from Spain* was compelled to acknowledge the independence of Mexico; and the Royalist officer,† who appeared for a time so fortunate, could not win his way to a transient power without declaring against the pretensions of the mother country.

If, then, we consider these states as one nation, there cannot be said to be any remaining contest. If, on the other hand, we consider them separately, why do we not immediately comply with the prayer of this Petition, by recognising the independence of those which we must allow to be in fact independent? Where is the objection to the instantaneous recognition at least of Columbia and Buenos Ayres?

But here, Sir, I shall be reminded of the second condition (as applicable to Mexico and Peru),—the necessity of a stable government and of internal tranquillity. Independence and good government are unfortunately very different things. Most countries have enjoyed the former: not above three or four since the beginning of history have had any pretensions to the latter. Still, many grossly misgoverned countries have performed the common duties of justice and good-will to their neighbours,—I do not say so well as more wisely ordered commonwealths, but still tolerably, and always much better than if they had not been controlled by the influence of opinion acting through a regular intercourse with other nations.

We really do not deal with Spain and America by the same weight and measure. We exact proofs of independence and tranquillity from America: we dispense both with independence and tranquillity in Old Spain. We have an ambassador at Madrid, though the whole kingdom be in the hands of France. We treat Spain with all the honours due to a civilized state of the first rank, though we have been told in this House, that the continuance of the French army there is an act of humanity, necessary to prevent the faction of frantic Royalists from destroying not only the friends of liberty, but every Spaniard who hesitates to carry on a war of persecution and extirpation against all who are not the zealous supporters of unbounded tyranny. On the other hand, we require of the new-born states of America to solve the awful problem of reconciling liberty with order. We expect that all the efforts incident to a fearful struggle shall at once subside into the most perfect and undisturbed tranquillity,—that every visionary or ambitious hope which it has kindled shall submit without a murmur to the counsels of wisdom and the authority of the laws. Who are we who exact the performance of such hard conditions? Are we the English nation, to look thus coldly on rising liberty? We have indulgence enough for tyrants; we make ample allowance for the difficulties of their situation; we are ready enough to deprecate the censure of their worst acts. And are we, who spent ages of bloodshed in struggling for freedom, to treat with such severity others now following our example? Are we to refuse that indulgence to the errors and faults of other nations, which was so long needed by our own ancestors? We who have passed through every form of civil and religious tyranny,—who persecuted Protestants under Mary,—who—I blush to add—persecuted Catholics under Elizabeth,—shall we now inconsistently,—unreasonably,—basely hold, that distractions so much fewer and milder and shorter,

endured in the same glorious cause, will unfit other nations for its attainment, and preclude them from the enjoyment of that rank and those privileges which we at the same moment recognise as belonging to slaves and barbarians?

I call upon my Right Honourable Friend* distinctly to tell us, on what principle he considers the perfect enjoyment of internal quiet as a condition necessary for the acknowledgment of an independence which cannot be denied to exist. I can discover none, unless the confusions of a country were such as to endanger the personal safety of a foreign minister. Yet the European Powers have always had ministers at Constantinople, though it was well known that the barbarians who ruled there would, on the approach of a quarrel, send these unfortunate gentlemen to a prison in which they might remain during a long war. But if there is any such insecurity in these states, how do the ministers of the United States of North America reside in their capitals? or why do we trust our own consuls and commissioners among them? Is there any physical pecularity in a consul, which renders him invulnerable where an ambassador or an envoy would be in danger? Is he bullet-proof or bayonet-proof? or does he wear a coat of mail? The same Government, one would think, which redresses an individual grievance on the application of a consul, may remove a cause of national difference after listening to the remonstrance of an envoy.

I will venture even to contend, that internal distractions, instead of being an impediment to diplomatic intercourse, are rather an additional reason for it. An ambassador is more necessary in a disturbed than in a tranquil country, inasmuch as the evils against which his presence is intended to guard are more likely to occur in the former than in the latter. It is in the midst of civil commotions that the foreign trader is the most likely to be wronged; and it is then that be therefore requires not only the good offices of a consul, but the weightier interposition of a higher minister. In a perfectly well-ordered country the laws and the tribunals might be sufficient. In the same manner it is obvious, that if an ambassador be an important security for the preservation of good understanding between the best regulated governments, his presence must be far more requisite to prevent the angry passions of exasperated factions from breaking out into war. Whether therefore we consider the individual or the public interests which are secured by embassies, it seems no paradox to maintain, that if they could be dispensed with at all, it would rather be in quiet than in disturbed countries.

The interests here at stake may be said to be rather individual than national. But a wrong done to the humblest British subject, an insult offered to the British flag flying on the slightest skiff, is, if unrepaired, a dishonour to the British nation.

Then the amount of private interests engaged in our trade with Spanish America is so great as to render them a large part of the national interest. There are already at least a hundred English houses of trade established in various parts of that immense country. A great body of skilful miners have lately left this country, to restore and increase the working of the mines of Mexico. Botanists, and geologists, and zoologists, are preparing to explore regions too vast to be exhausted by the Condamines and Humboldts. These missionaries of civilization, who are about to spread European, and especially English

opinions and habits, and to teach industry and the arts, with their natural consequences—the love of order and the desire of quiet,—are at the same time opening new markets for the produce of British labour, and new sources of improvement as well as enjoyment to the people of America.

The excellent petition from Liverpool to the King sets forth the value of our South American commerce very clearly, with respect to its present extent, its rapid increase, and its probable permanence. In 1819, the official returns represent the value of British exports at thirty-five millions sterling,—in 1822, at forty-six millions; and, in the opinion of the Petitioners, who are witnesses of the highest authority, a great part of this prodigious increase is to be ascribed to the progress of the South American trade. On this point, however, they are not content with probabilities. In 1822, they tell us that the British exports to the late Spanish colonies amounted in value to three millions eight hundred thousand pounds sterling; and in 1823, to five millions six hundred thousand;—an increase of near two millions in one year. As both the years compared are subsequent to the opening of the American ports, we may lay out of the account the indirect trade formerly carried on with the Spanish Main through the West Indies, the far greater part of which must now be transferred to a cheaper, shorter, and more convenient channel. In the year 1820 and the three following years, the annual average number of ships which sailed from the port of Liverpool to Spanish America, was one hundred and eighty-nine; and the number of those who have so sailed in five months of the present year, is already one hundred and twenty-four; being an increase in the proportion of thirty to nineteen. Another criterion of the importance of this trade, on which the traders of Liverpool are peculiarly well qualified to judge, is the export of cotton goods from their own port. The result of the comparison of that export to the United States of America, and to certain parts* of Spanish and Portuguese America, is peculiarly instructive and striking:—

ACTUAL VALUE OF COTTON GOODS EXPORTED FROM LIVERPOOL.

Year ending Jan. 5, 1820.	
To United States	£882,029
To Spanish and Portuguese America	852,651
Year ending Jan. 5, 1821.	
To United States	£1,033,206
To Spanish and Portuguese America	1,111,574

It is to be observed, that this last extraordinary statement relates to the comparative infancy of this trade; that it comprehends neither Vera Cruz nor the ports of Columbia; and that the striking disproportion in the rate of increase does not arise from the abatement of the North American demand (for that has increased), but from the rapid progress of that in the South American market. Already, then, this new commerce surpasses in amount, and still more in progress, that trade with the United States which is one of the oldest and most extensive, as well as most progressive branches of our traffic.

If I consult another respectable authority, and look at the subject in a somewhat different light, I find the annual value of our whole exports estimated in Lord Liverpool's speech†

on this subject at forty-three millions sterling, of which about twenty millions' worth goes to Europe, and about the value of seventeen millions to North and South America; leaving between four and five millions to Africa and Asia. According to this statement, I may reckon the trade to the new independent states as one eighth of the trade of the whole British Empire. It is more than our trade to all our possessions on the continent and islands of America was, before the beginning of the fatal American war in 1774:—for fatal I call it, not because I lament the independence of America, but because I deeply deplore the hostile separation of the two great nations of English race.

The official accounts of exports and imports laid before this House on the 3d of May, 1824, present another view of this subject, in which the Spanish colonies are carefully separated from Brazil. By these accounts it appears that the exports to the Spanish colonies were as follows:—

1818, £735,344.
1819, £850,943.
1820, £431,615.
1821, £917,916.
1822, £1,210,825.
1823, £2,016,276.

I quote all these statements of this commerce, though they do not entirely agree with each other, because I well know the difficulty of attaining exactness on such subjects,—because the least of them is perfectly sufficient for my purpose,—and because the last, though not so large as others in amount, shows more clearly than any other its rapid progress, and the proportion which its increase bears to the extension of American independence.

If it were important to swell this account. I might follow the example of the Liverpool Petitioners (who are to be heard with more respect, because on this subject they have no interest), by adding to the general amount of commerce the supply of money to the American states of about twelve millions sterling. For though I of course allow that such contracts cannot be enforced by the arms of this country against a foreign state, yet I consider the commerce in money as equally legitimate and honourable with any other sort of commercial dealing, and equally advantageous to the country of the lenders, wherever it is profitable to the lenders themselves. I see no difference in principle between a loan on the security of public revenue, and a loan on a mortgage of private property; and the protection of such dealings is in my opinion a perfectly good additional reason for hastening to do that which is previously determined to be politic and just.

If, Sir, I were further called to illustrate the value of a free intercourse with South America, I should refer the House to a valuable work, which I hope all who hear me have read, and which I know they ought to read,—I mean Captain Basil Hall's Travels in that country. The whole book is one continued proof of the importance of a Free Trade to England, to America, and to mankind. No man knows better how to extract information

from the most seemingly trifling conversations, and to make them the means of conveying the most just conception of the opinions, interests, and feelings of a people. Though he can weigh interests in the scales of Smith, he also seizes with the skill of Plutarch on those small circumstances and expressions which characterize not only individuals but nations. “While we were admiring the scenery,” says he, “our people had established themselves in a hut, and were preparing supper under the direction of a peasant,—a tall copper-coloured semi-barbarous native of the forest,—but who notwithstanding his uncivilized appearance, turned out to be a very shrewd fellow, and gave us sufficiently pertinent answers to most of our queries. A young Spaniard of our party, a Royalist by birth, and half a patriot in sentiment, asked the mountaineer what harm the King had done. ‘Why,’ answered he, ‘as for the King, his only fault, at least that I know of, was his living too far off. If a king be really good for a country, it appears to me that he ought to live in that country, not two thousand leagues away from it.’ On asking him what was his opinion of free trade, ‘My opinion,’ said he, ‘is this:—formerly I paid nine dollars for the piece of cloth of which this shirt is made; I now pay two:—that is my opinion of free trade.’ ”* This simple story illustrates better than a thousand arguments the sense which the American *consumer* has of the consequences of free trade to him.

If we ask how it affects the American *producer,* we shall find a decisive answer in the same admirable work. His interest is to produce his commodities at less expense, and to sell them at a higher price, as well as in greater quantity:—all these objects he has obtained. Before the Revolution, he sold his copper at seven dollars a quintal: in 1821, he sold it at thirteen. The articles which he uses in the mines are, on the other hand, reduced;—steel from fifty dollars a quintal to sixteen dollars; iron from twenty-five to eight; the provisions of his labourers in the proportion of twenty-one to fourteen; the fine cloth which he himself wears, from twenty-three dollars a yard to twelve; his crockery from three hundred and fifty reals per crate to forty; his hardware from three hundred to one hundred reals; and his glass from two hundred to one hundred.†

It is justly observed by Captain Hall, that however incompetent a Peruvian might be to appreciate the benefits of political liberty, he can have no difficulty in estimating such sensible and palpable improvements in the condition of himself and his countrymen. With Spanish authority he connects the remembrance of restriction, monopoly, degradation, poverty, discomfort, privation. In those who struggle to restore it, we may be assured that the majority of Americans can see only enemies who come to rob them of private enjoyments and personal accommodations.

It will perhaps be said, that Spain is willing to abandon her monopolies. But if she does now, might she not by the same authority restore them? If her sovereignty be restored, she must possess abundant means of evading the execution of any concessions now made in the hour of her distress. The faith of a Ferdinand is the only security she offers. On the other hand, if America continues independent, our security is the strong sense of a most palpable interest already spread among the people,—the interest of the miner of Chili in selling his copper, and of the peasant of Mexico in buying his shirt. I prefer it to the royal word of Ferdinand. But do we not know that the Royalist General Canterac, in the

summer of 1823, declared the old prohibitory laws to be still in force in Peru, and announced his intention of accordingly confiscating all English merchandise which he had before generously spared? Do we not know that English commerce every where flies from the Royalists, and hails with security and joy the appearance of the American flag?* But it is needless to reason on this subject, or to refer to the conduct of local agents. We have a decree of Ferdinand himself to appeal to, bearing date at Madrid on the 9th February, 1824. It is a very curious document, and very agreeable to the general character of his most important edicts;—in it there is more than the usual repugnance between the title and the purport. As he published a table of proscription under the name of a decree of amnesty, so his professed grant of free trade is in truth an establishment of monopoly. The first article does indeed promise a free trade to Spanish America. The second, however, hastens to declare, that this free trade is to be "regulated" by a future law,—that it is to be confined to certain ports,—and that it shall be subjected to duties, which are to be regulated by the same law. The third also declares, that the preference to be granted to Spain shall be "regulated" in like manner. As if the duties, limitations, and preferences thus announced had not provided such means of evasion as were equivalent to a repeal of the first article, the Royal lawgiver proceeds in the fourth article to enact, that "till the two foregoing articles can receive their perfect execution, there shall be nothing innovated in the state of America." As the Court of Madrid does not recognise the legality of what has been done in America since the revolt, must not this be reasonably interpreted to import a re-establishment of the Spanish laws of absolute monopoly, till the Government of Spain shall be disposed to promulgate that code of restriction, of preference, and of duties,—perhaps prohibitory ones,—which, according to them, constitutes free trade.

But, Sir, it will be said elsewhere, though not here, that I now argue on the selfish and sordid principle of exclusive regard to British interest,—that I would sacrifice every higher consideration to the extension of our traffic, and to the increase of our profits. For this is the insolent language, in which those who gratify their ambition by plundering and destroying their fellow-creatures, have in all ages dared to speak of those who better their own condition by multiplying the enjoyments of mankind. In answer, I might content myself with saying, that having proved the recognition of the independence of these states to be conformable to justice, I have a perfect right to recommend it as conducive to the welfare of this nation. But I deny altogether the doctrine, that commerce has a selfish character,—that it can benefit one party without being advantageous to the other. It is twice blessed: it blesses the giver as well as the receiver. It consists in the interchange of the means of enjoyment; and its very essence is to employ one part of mankind in contributing to the happiness of others. What is the instrument by which a savage is to be raised from a state in which he has nothing human but the form, but commerce,—exciting in his mind the desire of accommodation and enjoyment, and presenting to him the means of obtaining these advantages? It is thus only that he is gradually raised to industry,—to foresight,—to a respect for property,—to a sense of justice,—to a perception of the necessity of laws. What corrects his prejudices against foreign nations and dissimilar races?—commercial intercourse. What slowly teaches him that the quiet and well-being of the most distant regions have some tendency to promote the prosperity of his own? What at length disposes him even to tolerate those religious differences which led him to

regard the greater part of the species with abhorrence? Nothing but the intercourse and familiarity into which commerce alone could have tempted him. What diffuses wealth, and therefore increases the leisure which calls into existence the works of genius, the discoveries of science, and the inventions of art? What transports just opinions of government into enslaved countries,—raises the importance of the middle and lower classes of society, and thus reforms social institutions, and establishes equal liberty? What but Commerce—the real civilizer and emancipator of mankind?

A delay of recognition would be an important breach of justice to the American states. We send consuls to their territory, in the confidence that their Government and their judges will do justice to British subjects; but we receive no authorised agents from them in return. Until they shall be recognised by the King, our courts of law will not acknowledge their existence. Our statutes allow certain privileges to ships coming from the "provinces in America lately subject to Spain;" but our courts will not acknowledge that these provinces are subject to any government. If the maritime war which has lately commenced should long continue, many questions of international law may arise out of our anomalous situation, which it will be impossible to determine by any established principles. If we escape this difficulty by recognising the actual governments in courts of Prize, how absurd, inconsistent, and inconvenient it is not to extend the same recognition to all our tribunals!

The reception of a new state into the society of civilized nations by those acts which amount to recognition, is a proceeding which, as it has no legal character, and is purely of a moral nature, must vary very much in its value, according to the authority of the nations who, upon such occasions, act as the representatives of civilized men. I will say nothing of England, but that she is the only anciently free state in the world. For her to refuse her moral aid to communities struggling for liberty, is an act of unnatural harshness, which, if it does not recoil on herself, must injure America in the estimation of mankind.

This is not all. The delay of recognition tends to prolong and exasperate the disorders which are the reason alleged for it. It encourages Spain to waste herself in desperate efforts; it encourages the Holy Alliance to sow division,—to employ intrigue and corruption,—to threaten, perhaps to equip and despatch, armaments. Then it encourages every incendiary to excite revolt, and every ambitious adventurer to embark in projects of usurpation. It is a cruel policy, which has the strongest tendency to continue for a time, of which we cannot foresee the limits, rapine and blood, commotions and civil wars, throughout the larger portion of the New World. By maintaining an outlawry against them, we shall give them the character of outlaws. The long continuance of confusion,—in part arising from our refusing to countenance their governments, to impose on them the mild yoke of civilized opinion, and to teach them respect for themselves by associating them with other free communities,—may at length really unfit them for liberty or order, and destroy in America that capacity to maintain the usual relations of peace and amity with us which undoubtedly exists there at present.

It is vain to expect that Spain, even if she were to reconquer America, could establish in that country a vigorous government, capable of securing a peaceful intercourse with other

countries. America is too determined, and Spain is too feeble. The only possible result of so unhappy an event would be, to exhibit the wretched spectacle of beggary, plunder, bloodshed, and alternate anarchy and despotism in a country almost depopulated. It may require time to give firmness to native governments; but it is impossible that a Spanish one should ever again acquire it.

Sir, I am far from foretelling that the American nations will not speedily and completely subdue the agitations which are in some degree, perhaps, inseparable from a struggle for independence. I have no such gloomy forebodings; though even if I were to yield to them, I should not speak the language once grateful to the ears of this House, if I were not to say that the chance of liberty is worth the agitations of centuries. If any Englishman were to speak opposite doctrines to these rising communities, the present power and prosperity and glory of England would enable them to detect his slavish sophistry. As a man, I trust that the virtue and fortune of these American states will spare them many of the sufferings which appear to be the price set on liberty; but as a Briton, I am desirous that we should aid them by early treating them with that honour and kindness which the justice, humanity, valour, and magnanimity which they have displayed in the prosecution of the noblest object of human pursuit, have so well deserved.

To conclude:—the delay of the recognition is not due to Spain: it is injurious to America: it is inconvenient to all European nations,—and only most inconvenient to Great Britain, because she has a greater intercourse with America than any other nation. I would not endanger the safety of my own country for the advantage of others; I would not violate the rules of duty to promote its interest; I would not take unlawful means even for the purpose of diffusing liberty among men; I would not violate neutrality to serve America, nor commit injustice to extend the commerce of England: but I would do an act, consistent with neutrality, and warranted by impartial justice, tending to mature the liberty and to consolidate the internal quiet of a vast continent,—to increase the probability of the benefits of free and just government being attained by a great portion of mankind,—to procure for England the honour of a becoming share in contributing to so unspeakable a blessing,—to prevent the dictators of Europe from becoming the masters of the New World,—to re-establish some balance of opinions and force, by placing the republics of America, with the wealth and maritime power of the world, in the scale opposite to that of the European Allies,—to establish beyond the Atlantic an asylum which may preserve, till happier times, the remains of the Spanish name,—to save nations, who have already proved their generous spirit, from becoming the slaves of the Holy Alliance,—and to rescue sixteen millions of American Spaniards from sharing with their European brethren that sort of law and justice,—of peace and order,—which now prevails from the Pyrenees to the Rock of Gibraltar.

[*] Mr. Ricardo had died on the 11th of September preceding.—Ed.

[*] They were among the first papers issued from the Foreign Office, after the accession to office of Mr. Canning, and represented the spirit of *his*—as distinguished from the preceding Castlereagh policy.—Ed.

[*] These doctrines are so indisputable, that they are not controverted even by the jurists of the Holy Alliance, whose writings in every other respect bear the most ignominious marks of the servitude of the human understanding under the empire of that confederacy. Martens, who in the last edition of his Summary of International Law has sacrificed even the principle of national independence (liv. iii. c. ii. s. 74), without which no such law could be conceived, yet speaks as follows on recognitions:—"Quant à la simple reconnaissance, il semble qu'une nation etrangère, n'étant pas obligée à juger de la légitimité, peut toutes les fois qu'elle est douteuse se permettre de s'attacher au seul fait de la possession, et traiter comme indépendant de son ancien gouvernement, l'état ou la province qui jouit dans le fait de l'indépendance, sans blesser par là les devoirs d'une rigoureuse neutralité."—Précis du Droit des Gens, liv. iii. c. ii. s. 80. Göttingen, 1821. Yet a comparison of the above sentence with the parallel passage of the same book in the edition of 1789 is a mortifying specimen of the decline of liberty of opinion in Europe. Even Kluber, the publisher of the proceedings of the Congress of Vienna, assents to the same doctrine, though he insidiously contrives the means of evading it by the insertion of one or two ambiguous words:—"La souverainete est acquise par un état, ou lors de sa fondation ou bien lorsqu'il se dégage légitimement de la dépendance dans laquelle il se trouvait. Pour être valide, elle n'a pas besoin d'être reconnue ou garantie par une puissance quelconque: pourvu que la possession ne soit pas *vicieuse*."—Droit des Gens, part i. c. i. s. 23. Mr. Kluber would find it difficult to answer the question, "Who is to judge whether the acquisition of independence be *legitimate*, or its possession *vicious*?" And it is evident that the latter qualification is utterly unmeaning; for if there be an original fault, which vitiates the possession of independence, it cannot be removed by foreign recognition, which, according to this writer himself, is needless where the independence is lawful, and must therefore be useless in those cases where he insinuates rather than asserts that foreign states are bound or entitled to treat it as unlawful.

[*] The following are the words of their illustrious historian:—"Post longam dubitationem, ab ordinibus Belgarum Philippo, ob violatas leges, imperium abrogatum est; lataque in illum sententia cum quo, si verum fatemur, novem jam per annos bellatum erat; sed tunc primum desitum nomen ejus et insignia usurpari, mutataque verba solennis jurisjurandi, ut qui princeps hactenus erat: hostis vocaretur. Hoc consilium *vicinas apud gentes necessitate et tot irritis ante precibus excusatum*, haud desiere Hispani ut scelus insectari, parum memores, pulsum a majoribus suis regno invisæ crudelitatis regem, eique prælatam stirpem non ex legibus genitam; ut jam taceantur vetera apud Francos, minus vetera apud Anglos, recentiora apud Danos et Sueonas dejectorum regum exempla."—Grotii Annales, lib. iii.

[†] Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, vol. v. p. 368.

[‡] Ibid. p. 413.

[*] Dumont, vol. vi. p. 429.

[*] Dumont, vol. v. p. 507.

[†] See particularly Art. xii. and xiv. in Rymer, vol. xvi. The extreme anxiety of the English to adhere to their connection with Holland, appears from the Instructions and Despatches in Winwood.

[‡] Dumont, vol. vi. p. 238.

[*] Treaty of Lisbon, February 23d, 1688. Dumont, vol. vii. p. 70.

[†] “Le Comte de Manchester, ambassadeur d’Angleterre, ne parut plus à Versailles après la reconnaissance du Prince de Galles, et partit, sans prendre congé, quelques jours après l’arrivée du Roi à Fontainbleau. Le Roi Guillaume reçut en sa maison de Loo en Hollande la nouvelle de la mort du Roi Jacques et de cette reconnaissance. Il était alors à table avec quelques autres seigneurs. Il ne proféra pas une seule parole outre la nouvelle; mais il rougit, enfonça son chapeau, et ne put contenir son visage. Il envoya ordre à Londres d’en chasser sur le champ Poussin, et de lui faire repasser la mer aussi-tôt après. Il faisait les affaires du Roi en l’absence d’un ambassadeur et d’un envoyé. Cet éclat fut suivi de près de la signature de la Grande Alliance défensive et offensive contre la France et l’Espagne, entre l’Empereur et l’Empire, l’Angleterre et la Hollande.”—Mémoires de St. Simon vol. iii. p. 228.

[*] Mémoires de Bouillé, p. 15. Choiseul, Relation du Voyage de Louis XVI. à Varennes, p. 14.

[†] Ferrand, Trois Démembremens de la Pologne, vol. i. p. 76.

[‡] Martens, Recueil de Traités, vol. i. p. 701.

[*] Mr. Monroe.—Ed.

[*] See Humboldt’s admirable Essay on New Spain.

[*] Journal of a Residence in Chili.—Ed.

[*] Admiral Apodaca.—Ed.

[†] Don Augustin Iturbide.—Ed.

[*] Mr. Canning.—Ed.

[*] Viz., Brazil, Buenos Ayres, Monte Video, Chili, and the West Coast of America.

[†] Delivered in the House of Lords on the 15th of March.—Ed.

[*] Vol. ii. p. 188.

[†] Vol. ii. p. 47. This curious table relates to Chili,—the anecdote to Mexico.

[*] As in the evacuation of Lima in the spring of 1824.

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