

## CHAPTER XX

1854

### OUTBREAK OF THE CRIMEAN WAR

I NOW come to that period of my life in which the heavy and sometimes oppressive responsibilities of Cabinet office came upon me with a rush. It is no light matter to be one—even the youngest, as I then was—of a small group of men, whose decisions deal with the lives of thousands of our own countrymen and the dearest interests of millions of other men. I must not allow this memoir of my own life to lapse into a mere political essay on the origin and the causes of the Crimean War. There are few subjects connected with a comparatively recent past on which more nonsense is now talked, under complete misapprehension both of the policy pursued and of the steps taken to give that policy effect. But I do desire in this record of my own life to recall and describe some of the leading personal agencies which are very often powerful and sometimes determining causes in the great events of history.

Writing as I now do at the opening of the last year of the nineteenth century, I find myself the only survivor of the Cabinet which waged the Crimean War. In recalling, as I can most vividly, all the steps along which we ourselves were led, and all the determining circumstances of some preceding years, I find the light of memory shining with special brilliancy on one fine day of the early summer of 1844. The Emperor Nicholas of Russia had come to visit his sister Sovereign and ally, the Queen of England. In June, 1844, the

Duke of Devonshire gave, in honour of the Emperor, a great garden-party at his lovely villa at Chiswick. The weather was glorious. All the approaches to the beautiful gardens were festooned with lilac and laburnum. The magnificent cedars which overshadow the porch and eastern façade of that Palladian villa spread their delicate tracery overhead against a sky of intense blue, flecked with a few creamy and peaceful clouds. On the other side of the house, the sun was blazing on the younger cedars, whose matted boughs of green needles rested on close-shaven lawns, whilst, in the shadow of a grove of oak and beech, the Emperor and the Duke were pacing slowly together arm in arm. The two men were nearly of the same height, but I could see that the Emperor was much the handsomer in figure. The Emperor held himself and stepped as soldiers always do. But my impression of his person was not complete till I saw him nearer, in the house. Those of us whom the Duke wished to present assembled in the southern drawing-room, and the Emperor came round with his host. Never before and never since have I felt myself in the presence of such a King of men. His whole form and aspect were those of perfect manly beauty. He must have been at least six foot three or six foot four in height, with shoulders well thrown back, and a fine military carriage. And this was crowned by a head of singular beauty, manliness, and power. In features it approached very nearly to the pure Greek ideal, in which the nose and the forehead are in one continuous line. The likeness, however, was not complete—happily, in my opinion, because it is associated, I think, in the sculptures of antiquity, with a disagreeable vacancy of expression. The Emperor Nicholas was not in the least like a Greek god, living in an Olympian serenity, and enjoying ‘a sacred everlasting calm.’ But he was the type of man in a world of action, and his whole expression was that of conscious will, of energy, and of power. His eyes were splendid, vigilant and watchful, without

being at all restless or unsettled. There was, indeed, no expression of sympathy or benevolence in his face.

Nicholas was the very ideal of a great monarch, of an autocrat over millions of the human race, full of a sense of his unique position, and in the habitual exercise of its immense and insuperable authority. If there was nothing in his countenance that was angelic, still less anything that was Divine, there was at least everything in perfection that is merely human. He seemed to me a specimen of the highest possible type of the genus *Homo*. Lord Aberdeen, in a letter to Madame de Lieven, written at this time, after speaking of the commanding presence of the Emperor, said that there was in the expression of his countenance an ingredient of sadness. I did not see this. The predominant expression, which overlaid all others, was that of a resolute will, which was always fearless, and might be fierce. His voice, so far as I heard it in a few words, gave the same impression. It was the voice and intonation of a man accustomed to command, to see all other wills bend before his own.

I am particular in the description of the Emperor Nicholas, because in his personal character lay the most determining cause of the Crimean War. It was impossible to look at that magnificent man without seeing and feeling that he was Russia. In speaking of other countries at that time, one might feel that one was speaking of well-known Ministers, whose opinions and policy were sure to be followed. Austria was governed by Metternich, France might be governed by Thiers or by Guizot, or by some heterogeneous republican Cabinet. But Russia was the Emperor Nicholas. That Empire is, of course, too vast for any human being to hold all its threads in his single hand. Doubtless, too, there were national and dynastic traditions, which were more or less insuperable even to such a man as Nicholas. But in all the practical decisions of contemporary life, and especially in the relations of Russia with the other Powers of Europe, the personal will of

that Sovereign was to be reckoned with as paramount and supreme. Nobody who was ever in his presence could fail to see that he was a man who might be influenced by argument and persuasion, but who would not only never yield to menace, but would be hardened by it into more defiant determination.

In recalling, as I can most vividly, that beautiful day and the festive scene at Chiswick—now fifty-four years ago—I have often asked myself whether there was an attitude of reserve in the thoughts of any of those present towards the great potentate before us—whether, stealing into our thoughts of honour and of welcome, there was any voice that whispered: ‘Here is a dangerous man—dangerous to the peace of the world and to the independence of Europe; let us do all we can to conciliate him.’ But my answer is emphatically in the negative. Very different associations with the Sovereign of Russia were at that time deeply embedded in the national memory, and in 1844 had not yet had time to be much enfeebled. Not only political society, but the army and the people, were all of a generation who had been accustomed to think of Russia as the stoutest of all our allies in our great contest against the intolerable tyranny of Napoleon. There was probably not a man or a woman present who recollected, or who even knew, the fact that upon one occasion—more than fifty years before—Pitt had lost his head for a moment, and had called on Parliament to arm him for resistance to the Empress Catherine, because she had taken Taganrog from the Turks and meant to keep it. But if anyone had remembered it, they might have remembered, too, that Fox made the remarkable declaration that it was an entire novelty to him to hear of Russia being considered a dread to Europe, and Burke declared that it would be a shameful policy to support the Turks. Parliament had been obsequious, but the country had not responded, and Pitt, recovering from his momentary aberration, had allowed the matter to drop, the whole

incident being now only memorable as giving a date for the first symptom of those changes of national feeling which finally led up to the Crimean War.

Pitt's error was completely obliterated, not only by the passive resistance he met with, but by his own complete change of front under the aggressions of revolutionary France. Seven years later he was moving for the grant of subsidies to Russia to help her armaments, and was impressing on the House of Commons the high character of the uncle of our guest at Chiswick, the Emperor Alexander. And this had continued to be our relation with Russia till the final overthrow of our great enemy in 1815. Alexander was the greatest of the allied Sovereigns of the Continent, whom we had so long helped with money and with counsel and with arms. In 1827 he had co-operated with us in establishing the independence of Greece. In 1844 only seventeen years had elapsed since our common triumph, and during those years all that had happened in Europe had happened without a break in our friendship with Russia. It is true that in 1828-1829 a war broke out between Russia and Turkey, in which Russia showed such irresistible superiority of strength over Turkey that her armies crossed the Danube and the Balkans, and she dictated her own terms of peace under the very walls of Constantinople. This did alarm us. What if Russia should keep what she had got? The Duke of Wellington was on the point of interfering, when Russia made peace on terms which, however dangerous for the future, did not occasion any immediate alarm. So after this we returned to our old relations with Russia. It is not wonderful, therefore, if all of us who met the Emperor at that beautiful fête at Chiswick in 1844, met him heartily, with all honour, not only for his high personal character, but as the embodiment of a Power with which we had long been in close alliance—an alliance fruitful of good to Europe and to the liberties of the world.

And on his side not less was there everything to give him confidence in the sincerity of our reception. He found the Foreign Office in the hands of Lord Aberdeen, the valued friend of his uncle, as well as of the Austrian Emperor, during the advance of the allied Sovereigns upon Paris in 1814. He knew he could place absolute reliance on Lord Aberdeen's spirit of wisdom and justice towards other nations. It is not surprising, therefore, that at a moment when there was a complete lull in any excitement or cause of anxiety in foreign affairs, the Emperor Nicholas should have opened his mind to our Ministers on the prospects of peace, as connected with the odious condition of the East of Europe.

More than eight eventful years had passed since the Chiswick festivities to the Emperor Nicholas when the Aberdeen Government was formed. But those years had brought no change in the spirit of our dream towards that Sovereign. Foreign affairs had been comparatively quiet. At home the Irish famine in 1846-1847, and the great political changes to which it led, had engrossed all our attention. On the Continent the widespread outburst of revolutionary violence in 1848 had given every Cabinet in Europe more than enough to do, without meddling with its neighbours.

In the retrospect of the past, apart altogether from the hospitalities of 1844, there was nothing to be seen as regarded Russia but a friendly alliance, leading on two memorable occasions to active co-operation. The guns of Navarino which destroyed the Turkish fleet in 1827 were the guns of a united British and Russian squadron. The armed intervention which in 1840 stopped the advance of the Egyptian Pasha in Syria owed all its decisiveness to the same alliance, whilst the Protocol of 1841, which recorded the transaction and explained its principle, gave permanent expression to a new and united policy regarding the affairs of the East of Europe. The essence of that principle was this: that the fate of the Turkish Empire was a matter

of European concern, and that all the Powers were to acknowledge it to be the subject of mutual consultation and of collective action. The diplomatic form in which this principle was expressed was the unfortunate but the still surviving phrase of the 'integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire.' No form of words could have been chosen more grotesquely inconsistent with the notorious facts of the case out of which the treaty sprang. Neither the independence nor the integrity of Turkey had been respected by the Powers which had intervened to secure the success of the Greek revolt in 1829. Neither had the fresh intervention of the same Powers in the contest between the Sultan and the Pasha of Egypt in 1840 been such as would have been possible in the case of a really independent empire. But, although the diplomatic phrase chosen in the Protocol of 1841 was a bad one, at least everybody knew what it meant. It meant that Turkey was so weak that her integrity and her independence could exist, even nominally, only on condition of the European Powers agreeing to abstain from separate attacks, and of their acknowledging among themselves that this should be held a common and a binding obligation.

All parties in this country had approved of this arrangement. Our intervention in Egypt and Syria was indeed the work of Lord Palmerston, and constituted the greatest triumph of his career at the Foreign Office. But it was not the triumph of any domestic party. Lord Aberdeen heartily approved of it. 'I think Lord Palmerston is on the right course,' wrote Lord Aberdeen to Madame de Lieven in June, 1840, 'and I hope he will persevere in it.' So that, when these two reputed antagonists came together most unexpectedly in the same Cabinet in 1853, the basis of our policy in any revival of the Eastern Question rested on maxims of policy on which all the members of that Cabinet had been long thoroughly agreed.

Nor was this all. The Emperor Nicholas, after his visit to us in 1844, embodied in a Memorandum those views on the relations of all of us to Turkey which he had expressed in conversation with our leading Ministers during that visit. The Memorandum contained the following leading propositions: 'That the maintenance of Turkey in its existing territory and degree of independence is a great object of European policy. That, in order to preserve that maintenance, the Powers of Europe should abstain from making on the Porte demands conceived in a selfish interest, or from assuming towards it an attitude of exclusive dictation. That, in the event of the Porte giving to any one of the Powers just cause of complaint, that Power should be aided by the rest in its endeavours to have that cause removed. That all the Powers should urge on the Porte the duty of conciliating its Christian subjects, and should use all their influence, on the other hand, to keep those subjects to their allegiance. That, in the event of any unforeseen calamity befalling the Turkish Empire, Russia and England should agree together as to the course that should be pursued.' Nothing could be more reasonable, nothing more friendly, and even confidential, towards us than this declaration of the views and intentions of the Emperor of Russia. It was in complete accordance with the historical transactions of 1827 and of 1840, and with the principles laid down in the Protocol of 1841. It remained in the Foreign Office, and was handed on from 1844 by each Minister to his successor. It had passed through the hands of Lord Aberdeen, of Lord Palmerston, of Lord Granville, and of Lord Malmesbury, whilst, in our new Cabinet, it remained in the custody, first of Lord John Russell and then of Lord Clarendon. It may be said with certainty that if the Emperor Nicholas had abided by the assurances of this Memorandum, the Crimean War would never have arisen, and, so long as we had no reason to believe that he contemplated a different course of policy, we had every



right to entertain that unsuspecting confidence in European peace which was undoubtedly the attitude of all our minds during the earlier months of 1853.

It is only fair to the Emperor Nicholas to remember that he was tempted or driven out of his promised course by a provocation which came from France. More than two years before this date Lord Aberdeen had said in a letter to Madame de Lieven : ' There can be no great danger of war in Europe unless it should come from France,' and France was the perpetual centre of disturbance. Lord Aberdeen had felt much her caprice, her restlessness, and her trickiness. She had opposed the other Powers in their policy for the pacification of the Levant, and one consequence of this was that the Treaty of 1840 was concluded with France standing sulkily aside. She, therefore, had given no consent to the mutual promise of the other Powers that they would not make separate and self-seeking demands on Turkey.

In 1850, more than two years before the Aberdeen Cabinet came into office, when Palmerston was still at the Foreign Office, the French Minister at the Porte had begun a quarrel about a French claim to protect the Latin monks at Jerusalem in certain privileges over the Holy Places. These privileges came into competition and collision with the like privileges enjoyed under the territorial protectorate of Russia by the monks of the Greek Church. When the Aberdeen Cabinet first met, we found this quarrel still growling and unsettled. But we had not the slightest difficulty in knowing how to deal with it. Our duty under the understanding of 1840 and of the Emperor's Memorandum and Letters was simply the duty of a peacemaker. It was our duty to side with neither of the contending Governments, but to urge on the Porte to make every possible concession to both of them in the interests of peace. Our Minister at the Porte had long been Sir Stratford Canning, afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, a man of great ability, and

one who had acquired over the Porte an influence due to his powerful character and to his hearty adoption of the doctrine laid down in the Protocol of 1841, that the preservation of Turkey was of great importance to the peace of Europe. He was at home on leave when we began our work, and he was sent out in the end of February, 1853, with instructions in strict conformity with the engagements to which England had been a party. The Emperor Nicholas at the same moment sent a special Envoy to the same destination, and rumours soon reached our ears that this Envoy, Prince Menschikoff, was instructed to make demands upon the Porte which were entirely new, had nothing to do with the Holy Places, were conceived in a selfish interest, and were precisely such as the signatories to the Protocol of 1841 had promised not to make. Clarendon, who, according to arrangement, had now succeeded Lord John Russell at the Foreign Office, at once directed our Minister at St. Petersburg to ask for an explanation. This was given in the form of an absolute denial, and during the whole of March and a great part of April we continued to receive from the Emperor the most explicit assurances that the settlement of the question about the Holy Places was all he wanted, and that Russia would ask for nothing more.

It was not till the 26th of April, 1853, that we received a despatch from Lord Stratford which at last left no doubt that Russia was deliberately deceiving us, and that Menschikoff, in the teeth of all assurances, had some secret demands to make on the Porte in the exclusive interests of his own Government. Lord Stratford had at once turned this discovery to useful account, by impressing on the French Minister the great importance of settling the dispute about the Holy Places, so that England, when that question was out of the way, might join with France in a united resistance to any Russian demand which might seem to place in her hands the fate of Turkey. The French

Minister saw the importance of this advice, and in a short time the dispute about the Holy Places was settled to the satisfaction of both the French and Russian Embassies. This had been accomplished about the 25th of April, and it had the important effect of at once leaving us disembarrassed from the local quarrel, and free to come to an understanding with France on the far larger question which so unexpectedly was now growing beneath our feet.

With these transactions, however little we knew it at the time, we entered on the rapids, and the roar of the distant cataract became slowly more and more audible to the ear. Hitherto we had not dreamed of the possibility of war. This, therefore, is a moment in my life on which I wish to focus the clearest lights of memory, and to give a living picture of the attitude of mind in which those events and transactions found us.

It is the system in all Cabinets to which I have belonged that the Secretary for Foreign Affairs is in close personal relations with the Prime Minister, and that a great deal of the Foreign Office business is settled between them, without its being referred to the Cabinet at all. In our case, two men of such authority as Lord Aberdeen and Lord John Russell were specially fitted to deal with the current business, and I do not recollect that the wretched squabble between the French and Russian Embassies at Constantinople was ever made the subject of Cabinet discussion at all. It is to be remembered that we none of us felt securely seated in office till we knew the fate of Gladstone's Budget. And this we did not know till after his great speech had been delivered on the 17th of April, 1853, so that only ten days elapsed between that memorable success and our learning with certainty that the special Envoy of Nicholas was making demands on Turkey which would give to Russia some special and exclusive power over the Ottoman Porte.

I feel I can recall with absolute fidelity the pre-

conceptions and the temper of mind with which we all contemplated this new prospect. There was not a single man of us in the Cabinet who had any feeling of enmity to Russia, or any tinge of that exaggerated fear of her which animated the whole school of Anglo-Indians. Palmerston and Lord John Russell and Aberdeen had all acted in alliance with Russia within recent years, and the presence of her fleets in the Mediterranean had been hailed as a help, not feared as a danger. On the other hand, there was not one of us, unless it was Palmerston, who had any sympathy with the Turks either as a people or as a Government. Most of us—I certainly for one, and I think all the younger members of the Cabinet—believed with the Emperor Nicholas that Turkey was a decaying Empire—the ‘Sick Man’ of Europe—and that the sole question of European interest was, under what conditions it should be guided to its inevitable fate. I have excepted Palmerston, not because I ever heard him say a word on this purely speculative question, but because I have since seen a letter from him to Lytton Bulwer, which expresses the strongest incredulity as to the weakness of Turkey. But Palmerston was nothing of a speculative politician. His habit of mind did not lead him to dwell upon, hardly even to glance at, those deeper-seated moral causes which affect the strength and prepare the fall of States. His active and vigorous mind was always concerning itself with the immediate motives and conduct of men, and he troubled himself very little with anything beyond. In all his speeches I only recollect one passage which touched a deeper chord, and I remember it because of the great surprise with which I read it. It was in some speech on Continental politics, in which he spoke of the difficulties which had pursued the Powers concerned in the partition of Poland. These he finely called ‘that sad inheritance of triumphant wrong.’ Of course, the same high perception of moral causes in the fate of nations might well have led him, as it did lead, I think,

all his younger colleagues, to see the inevitable doom of the dominion set up, on the overthrow of the Greek Empire, by the Ottoman Turks.

Never in the history of Europe has there been such an 'inheritance of triumphant wrong' as that. For myself I not only hated the Turkish Empire, but I loathed the politics of Christians, which led them to treat with levity and even with favour a Government so odious in every aspect, except the animal courage of its soldiers. But all this was entirely outside the question with which, as a Cabinet, we had to deal. There was not a shadow of a difference among us as to the course which it was our duty to pursue. That duty was to adhere to the principles laid down in the Treaty of 1840, which had been negotiated by Palmerston, and under his inducement had received the adhesion of the whole of Europe except France. We did not determine to adhere to these principles ourselves, and to enforce them on others, merely because we had once agreed to them eleven years before, but because the principles in themselves were just and right, and the only principles compatible with peace. The Protocol of 1841 was as essential for permanent use as the Treaty of 1840 had been for meeting a sudden and formidable crisis in Syria and Egypt. If each of the Powers was free to deal with Turkey as it pleased, on any complaint that might arise, the interests of all of them would be in perpetual danger.

Then there was another general consideration in which we were all agreed—a consideration so obviously true that it weighed upon us heavily, independently of any process of argument. It was this: that, if isolated action against Turkey, with a view to the acquisition of special rights and powers, was to be deprecated and resisted on the part of any one of the European Powers, it was most of all to be dreaded on the part of Russia.

By geographical position, by hereditary ambitions, by recent wars and extraordinary means and opportunities of access, Russia was the natural enemy of

Turkey. It was Russia alone that was always overhanging the flanks of Turkey with her enormous mass and weight. It was Russia that was in the thoughts of Europe when, at our invitation, the Powers had entered into a sort of self-denying covenant against individual ambitions regarding the Eastern Question. If Russia were now to be allowed, without resistance, to do the very thing we had all promised not to do, all that had been gained by the Protocol of 1841 in the interests of peace would be lost for ever.

Of course, I need hardly say that behind all this, or, rather, underlying it, there was in the mind of all of us one unspoken but indelible opinion—that the absorption by Russia of Turkey in Europe, and the seating of the Russian Emperor on the throne of Constantinople, would give to Russia an overbearing weight in Europe, dangerous to all the other Powers and to the liberties of the world. This opinion needs no argument in its support. It is enough to look at the map of Europe. Already the European territories of Russia outflank those of every other Power. They are practically inaccessible to attack, as Napoleon found to his cost. They contain innumerable hordes of fighting men. The one thing they want is a good frontage to the south. There is one such frontage, and only one in the world, which would repeat in the south that singular combination in the north of a position of great advantage for attack with unassailability in defence.

There is no feature in the physical geography of our globe so peculiar in its political significance as that which consists in the two channels of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, with the Sea of Marmora between them. Nowhere else in the world is there a vast inland sea, more than 700 miles broad, that washes the shores of two separate quarters of the world, and yet opens with a mouth as narrow as the neck of a bottle, so that the Power possessing it must have irresistible facilities of attack from a position altogether impregnable in

defence. If this imperial dominion were to be added to what Russia already has, the Black Sea would be a Russian lake, the Danube would be a Russian river, and some of the richest provinces of Eastern Europe and of Western Asia would give to Russia inexhaustible resources in men, in money, and in ships. With these, together with a unique position of geographical advantage, she would possess inordinate power over the rest of Europe.

The Eastern Question, as it presented itself to us in May, 1853, was inseparably bound up with this estimate of the interests at stake. I can speak at least with certainty of my own convictions, and with hardly less certainty of the convictions of all my colleagues. Not that we discussed it. Men do not discuss opinions which are considered axiomatic. But it underlay every motive to action and every thought of policy. Moreover, the absorption of Turkey by Russia was not regarded by us at this time as so difficult as to be at all necessarily a very remote contingency. Russia had very recently advanced to Adrianople, and a later experience has shown us how surely she can always repeat the process.

There was still another correlative assumption in our minds, and that was this: that Russia might proceed by sap and mine, and not by open conquest. By treaties, or diplomatic 'notes,' equivalent to treaties, giving to Russia special and exclusive rights of protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Porte, the Turkish Empire might be so politically mortgaged to Russia, that a foreclosure could be put in force at any convenient opportunity. We considered it our duty so to act and provide as to checkmate this method of deglutition as well as any other.

In recent years I have seen a great many foolish things said and written, condemnatory of the Crimean War, but they have always been conceived in terms which showed complete ignorance of the then existing conditions of the case. It is quite true that we could

have avoided the Crimean War. We might have intimated to the other Powers of Europe, whom we had rallied round us a few years before, to defend the Turkish Empire against France and Mahomet Ali, and whom we had persuaded to join us in the Protocol of 1841—we might have intimated to all these Powers that we had changed our minds, that we could not venture to run the risk of encountering the enmity of Russia, as we had encountered the enmity of France. Nothing but this was needed to avert, at least for the moment, the danger of war. Nothing but this! But this was an impossibility, except to cowards. And even if we ourselves could have endured the shame, Britain would have made short work of Ministers who could so defame her in the world.

The course we took was the only possible alternative. It was to enlist France in the policy and in the engagements of the Treaty of 1840. It was to encourage her to form a close alliance with ourselves, and with the Continental Powers, in resisting any demand on the part of Russia tending to establish in her hands special rights over the subjects of Turkey, which could have but one object and effect—that of making Russia the arbiter of the fate of the Ottoman Empire. To attain this end we directed all the resources of our diplomacy. Lord Stratford was sent to Constantinople, taking Paris and Vienna on his way. At each capital he was to point out the danger to Europe involved in the apparent policy of Russia, and the necessity of opposing it with a united front, and all our Embassies were set on the same track.

From the end of April, 1853, foreign affairs were no longer conducted, as in quiet times, by two Ministers almost alone, with only an occasional reference to the Cabinet. The sense of imminence in the dangers before us was too great for that. At every Cabinet meeting the time was now mainly taken up by hearing all the important despatches read to us. There is in all such docu-



ments a great amount of repetition, and the phrases of diplomacy are to a large extent so artificial and conventional, that the work did sometimes seem wearisome beyond endurance. But we had two great alleviations. The first was the constant recollection that, on the apparently most trivial points in discussion before us, the issues of peace or of a bloody war depended. The second source of relief was the liveliness and humour which characterized the reading of our Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon. His running comments were inimitable. His readings of the character of each diplomatist were often as good as a play, and were a real help in enabling us to judge how far we could trust each separate estimate of the situation at the separate Courts.

For ten long months—from April 30th, 1853—this anxious and weary work continued. It only ended when at last, on the 27th February, 1854, we issued a summons to Russia to evacuate the principalities which she had violently and illegally occupied since the first days of June, 1853. We knew, of course, that the summons would be refused by the Emperor Nicholas, and that our demand was war. The declaration of war followed, as a matter of course, in the end of March, 1854.

It is a satisfaction to me to remember that every single step tending to make war more inevitable was taken in advance by Russia, and that we only followed with slowness and reluctance. The first insolent demand of special rights of interference, in contempt of reiterated assurances; the persistence in this demand after our objections were known; the threat to break off diplomatic relations with the Porte if it were not conceded; the withdrawal of her Ambassador in pursuance of that threat; her next threat that she would send her armies into the principalities, which were Turkish territories; her actual advance, which was an act of war; her destruction of the Turkish fleet in the Bay of Sinope; her final declaration that she would

suffer no interference on the part of Europe in her negotiations with Turkey—all these steps were taken in succession by Russia in defiance of all that we were contending for, and all of them were taken without our making them a *casus belli*, until at last, no hope remaining of any diplomatic solution of the contest, we accepted with regret the inevitable alternative, and declared war in March, 1854.