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DECLARATION.

IT is with deep regret that Her Majesty announces the failure of Her anxious and protracted endeavours to preserve for Her People and for Europe the blessings of peace.

The unprovoked aggression of the Emperor of Russia against the Sublime Porte has been persisted in with such disregard of consequences, that after the rejection by the Emperor of Russia of terms which the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of the French, and the King of Prussia, as well as Her Majesty, considered just and equitable, Her Majesty is compelled by a sense of what is due to the honour of Her Crown, to the interests of Her People, and to the independence of the States of Europe, to come forward in defence of an Ally whose territory is invaded, and whose dignity and independence are assailed.

Her Majesty, in justification of the course she is about to pursue, refers to the transactions in which Her Majesty has been engaged.

The Emperor of Russia had some cause of complaint against the Sultan with reference to the settlement, which His Highness had sanctioned, of the conflicting claims of the Greek and Latin Churches to a portion of the Holy Places of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. To the complaint of the Emperor of Russia on this head, justice was done; and Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople had the satisfaction of promoting an arrangement to which no exception was taken by the Russian Government.

But while the Russian Government repeatedly assured the Government of Her Majesty that the Mission of Prince Menchikoff to Constantinople was exclusively directed to the settlement of the question of the Holy Places at Jerusalem, Prince Menchikoff himself pressed upon the Porte other demands of a far more serious and important character, the nature of which he in the first instance endeavoured, as far as possible, to conceal from Her Majesty's Ambassador. And these demands, thus studiously concealed, affected not the privileges of the Greek Church at Jerusalem but the position of many millions of Turkish subjects in their relations to their Sovereign the Sultan.

These demands were rejected by the spontaneous decision of the Sublime Porte.

Two assurances had been given to Her Majesty; one, that the Mission of Prince Menchikoff only

regarded the Holy Places; the other, that his Mission would be of a conciliatory character.

In both respects Her Majesty's just expectations were disappointed.

Demands were made which, in the opinion of the Sultan, extended to the substitution of the Emperor of Russia's authority for his own, over a large portion of his subjects; and those demands were enforced by a threat; and when Her Majesty learnt that on announcing the termination of his Mission, Prince Menchikoff declared that the refusal of his demands would impose upon the Imperial Government the necessity of seeking a guarantee by its own power, Her Majesty thought proper that Her Fleet should leave Malta, and, in co-operation with that of His Majesty the Emperor of the French, take up its station in the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles.

So long as the negotiation bore an amicable character Her Majesty refrained from any demonstration of force. But when, in addition to the assemblage of large military forces on the frontier of Turkey, the Ambassador of Russia intimated that serious consequences would ensue from the refusal of the Sultan to comply with unwarrantable demands, Her Majesty deemed it right, in conjunction with the Emperor of the French, to give an unquestionable proof of Her determination to support the Sovereign rights of the Sultan.

The Russian Government has maintained that the determination of the Emperor to occupy the Principalities was taken in consequence of the advance of the Fleets of England and France. But the menace of invasion of the Turkish territory was conveyed in Count Nesselrode's Note to Rechid Pacha, of the ¹⁹ May, and re-stated in his Despatch to Baron Brunnow of the ²⁰ May, _{1 June}, which announced the determination of the Emperor of Russia to order his troops to occupy the Principalities if the Porte did not within a week comply with the demands of Russia.

The Despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, authorizing him in certain specified contingencies to send for the British Fleet, was dated the 31st May, and the order sent direct from England to Her Majesty's Admiral to proceed to the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles was dated the 2d of June.

The determination to occupy the Principalities was therefore taken before the orders for the advance of the combined squadrons were given.