

Must the conflict in Poland be still further prolonged?

Is Denmark to be at War with Germany, and have the Powers which formerly took a part in the discussion of this question become indifferent to it?

Must anarchy continue in the Danubian Principalities, and thus at any moment tend to re-open the question of the East?

Must Italy and Austria always remain in presence of each other in a hostile attitude?

Must the occupation of Rome by French troops be prolonged for an indefinite time?

The Emperor's Government put a further question:—

Must we, without having made new attempts at conciliation, renounce the hope of lightening the burthens imposed upon the nations of Europe by excessive armaments, kept up by the feeling of mutual distrust?

These, no doubt, are the principal questions which either disturb or threaten the peace of Europe; but there is a further question which Her Majesty's Government consider to lie at the bottom of this whole matter, and that is the following:—

Is a General Congress of European States likely to furnish a peaceful solution of the various matters in dispute?

This, indeed, is the question which it behoves the Governments of the different States to consider seriously and attentively.

There appears to Her Majesty's Government to be one main consideration which must lead them to their conclusion.

After the war which desolated Germany from 1619 to 1649, and after the successive wars which afflicted the Continent of Europe from 1793 to 1815, it was possible to distribute territories and to define rights by a Congress, because the nations of Europe were tired of the slaughter, and exhausted by the burthens of war, and because the Powers, who met in Congress, had by the circumstances of the time the means of carrying their decisions and arrangements into effect.

But at the present moment, after a continuance of long peace, no Power is willing to give up any territory to which it has a title by Treaty, or a claim by possession.

For example, of the questions mentioned as disturbing or threatening Europe, two of the most quieting are those regarding Poland and Italy.

Let us examine the present state of these questions, and see whether it is probable that a Congress would tend to a peaceful settlement of them.

In the first place, with regard to Poland, the question is not new to France, to Austria, or to Great Britain.

For several months these Powers, while carefully abstaining from any threat, have attempted to obtain from Russia by friendly representations the adoption of measures of a healing nature, but have only succeeded in procuring promises, often repeated, that when the insurrection shall have been put down, recourse will be had to clemency and conciliation. Would there be any advantage in repeating in the name of a Congress representations already made with so little effect?

Is it probable that a Congress would be able to secure better terms for Poland unless by a combined employment of force?

Considerable progress has been made by the military preponderance, and by the unsparing severity of Russia, in subduing the insurgents.

It is likely that Russia will grant in the pride of her strength what she refused in the early days of her discouragement?

Would she create an independent Poland at the mere request of a Congress?

But if she would not, the prospect becomes one of humiliation for Europe, or of war against Russia; and those Powers who are not ready to incur the cost and hazard of war, may well desire to avoid the other alternative.

It may be truly said, moreover, that the present period is one of transition. If the insurrection shall be subdued, it will then be seen whether the promises of the Emperor of Russia are to be fulfilled. If the insurrection shall not be subdued, or if, in order to subdue it, the Polish population is treated with fresh, and if that be possible, with aggravated rigour, other questions will arise which may require further consideration, but which would hardly receive a solution from a large Assembly of Representatives of all the Powers of Europe.

Indeed, it is to be apprehended that questions, arising from day to day, coloured by the varying events of the hour, would give occasion rather for useless debate than for practical and useful deliberation in a Congress of twenty or thirty Representatives, not acknowledging any supreme authority, and not guided by any fixed rules of proceeding.

Passing to the question of Italy, fresh difficulties occur. In the first place, is it intended to sanction by a new Treaty, the present state of possession in Italy? The Pope, and the Sovereigns related to the dispossessed Princes, might, on the one side, object to give a title they have hitherto refused, to the King of Italy; and the King of Italy, on the other, would probably object to a settlement which would appear to exclude him, by inference, at least, from the acquisition of Rome and Venetia.

But is it intended to ask Austria, in Congress, to renounce the possession of Venetia? Her Majesty's Government have good grounds to believe that no Austrian Representative would attend a Congress where such a proposition was to be discussed. They are informed that if such an intention were announced beforehand, Austria would decline to attend the Congress, and that if the question were introduced without notice, the Austrian Minister would quit the Assembly. Here again, therefore, the deliberations of the Congress would soon be brought in sight of the alternative of nullity or war.

But is it possible to assemble a Congress and to summon an Italian Representative to sit in it without discussing the State of Venetia? The Emperor of the French would be the first person to feel, and to admit that such a course would not be possible.

With regard to Germany and Denmark, it is true that several of the Powers of Europe have interested themselves in that question, but the addition of Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Turkey to the deliberation would scarcely improve the prospect of a satisfactory solution. And if, with regard to Poland and Italy, no beneficial result is likely to be attained, is it expedient to call together a General Congress of all the States of Europe to find a remedy for the anarchy of Moldo-Wallachia?

Were all these questions, those of Poland, Italy, Denmark and the Danubian Provinces, to be decided by the mere utterance of opinions, the views of Her Majesty's Government upon most of them might, perhaps, be found not materially to differ from those of the Emperor of the French.

But if the mere expression of opinions and wishes would accomplish no positive results, it appears certain that the deliberations of a Congress