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*Buckingham Palace, February 8, 1877.*

**T**HIS day Her Majesty proceeded in state from Buckingham Palace to the House of Peers, where she arrived soon after two o'clock; and was received on alighting from Her state carriage, by the Lord Chancellor, the Deputy Lord Great Chamberlain (Lord Aveland), the Earl Marshal, Garter King of Arms, and Black Rod, and proceeded into the House in the usual order;—The Crown was borne by the Duke of Richmond and Gordon (Lord President of the Council), the Sword of State by the Earl of Beaconsfield (Lord Privy Seal), and the Cap of Maintenance by the Marquess of Winchester.

Her Majesty being seated on the Throne, and the Great Officers of State and others standing in their respective places on the right and left, Black Rod was sent with a message from Her Majesty to the House of Commons, commanding their immediate attendance in the House of Peers. The Commons being come thither accordingly, Her Majesty was pleased to deliver to the Lord Chancellor the following most gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, which Her Majesty commanded his Lordship to read, and which he accordingly did:

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

IT is with much satisfaction that I again resort to the advice and assistance of my Parliament.

The hostilities which, before the close of last Session, had broken out between Turkey on the one hand and Servia and Montenegro on the other, engaged my most serious attention, and I anxiously waited for an opportunity when my good offices, together with those of my allies, might be usefully interposed.

This opportunity presented itself by the solicitation of Servia for our mediation, the offer of which was ultimately entertained by the Porte.

In the course of the negotiations I deemed it expedient to lay down, and, in concert with the other Powers, to submit to the Porte certain bases upon which I held that not only peace might be brought about with the Principalities, but the permanent pacification of the disturbed provinces, including Bulgaria, and the amelioration of their condition, might be effected.

Agreed to by the Powers, they required to be expanded and worked out by negotiation or by Conference, accompanied by an armistice. The Porte, though not accepting the bases and proposing other terms, was willing to submit them to the equitable consideration of the Powers.

While proceeding to act in this mediation, I thought it right, after inquiry into the facts, to denounce to the Porte the excesses ascertained to have been committed in Bulgaria, and to express my reprobation of their perpetrators.

An armistice being arranged, a Conference met at Constantinople for the consideration of extended terms in accordance with the original bases, in which Conference I was represented by a Special Envoy, as well as by my Ambassador.

In taking these steps, my object has throughout been to maintain the peace of Europe, and to bring about the better government of the disturbed provinces, without infringing upon the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

The proposals recommended by myself and my allies have not, I regret to say, been accepted by the Porte; but the result of the Conference has been to show the existence of a general agreement among the European Powers, which cannot fail to have a material effect upon the condition and government of Turkey.

In the meantime, the armistice between Turkey and the Principalities has been prolonged, and is still unexpired, and may, I trust, yet lead to the conclusion of an honourable peace.

In these affairs I have acted in cordial co-operation with my allies, with whom, as with other foreign powers, my relations continue to be of a friendly character.

Papers on these subjects will be forthwith laid before you.

My assumption of the Imperial title at Delhi was welcomed by the chiefs and people of India with professions of affection and loyalty most grateful to my feelings.

It is with deep regret that I have to announce a calamity in that part of my dominions which will demand the most earnest watchfulness on the part of my Government there. A famine not less serious than that of 1873 has overspread a large portion of the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay. I am confident that every resource will be employed not merely in arrest of this present famine, but in obtaining fresh experience for the prevention or mitigation of such visitations for the future.

The prosperity and progress of my Colonial Empire remain unchecked, although the proceedings of the Government of the Transvaal Republic, and the hostilities in which it has engaged with the neighbouring tribes, have caused some apprehensions for the safety of my subjects in South Africa. I trust, however, that the measures which