

**THE DECLARATION OF PARIS OF 1856: BEING  
AN ACCOUNT OF THE MARITIME RIGHTS OF  
GREAT BRITAIN; A  
CONSIDERATION OF THEIR IMPORTANCE; A  
HISTORY OF THEIR SURRENDER BY THE  
SIGNATURE OF THE DECLARATION OF PARIS**

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The Declaration of Paris of 1856: Being an Account of the Maritime Rights of Great Britain; A Consideration of Their Importance; A History of Their Surrender by the Signature of the Declaration of Paris by Thomas Gibson Bowles

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A HISTORY OF THEIR SURRENDER BY THE  
SIGNATURE OF THE DECLARATION OF PARIS;  
AND AN ARGUMENT FOR THEIR RE-  
SUMPTION BY THE DENUNCIATION  
AND REPUDIATION OF THAT  
DECLARATION :

BY

THOMAS GIBSON BOWLES, M.P.

"Since the Declaration of Paris, the fleet, valuable as it is  
for preventing an invasion of these shores, is almost valueless  
for any other purpose."

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G., 1871.

"We must see how we are to get rid of this rubbish."

PRINCE BISMARCK, 1870.

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## PREFACE.

THE purpose of this volume is to bring together, in summary form, the principal facts relating to the Declaration of Paris of 1856, with the considerations arising therefrom ; and, if it might be so fortunate, to win thereto, in some degree, the public attention.

So little of that attention has hitherto been given to this matter that many of the facts herein cited are often ignored, and some of them denied, even by those few who occasionally deal with the subject.

That the subject itself is of the utmost moment can be doubted by none. That the present position of Great Britain in regard to it is satisfactory or even tolerable has never been asserted by any. The Declaration of Paris has no friends. As it stands, all who have considered it agree in denouncing it as having created a situation in which Great Britain cannot possibly remain, and from which it is most urgent that she should extricate herself. Yet in that situation she still remains. All agree that something must be done ; yet nothing is done. Neither will anything be done until, if it be so, the British people in general become fully sensible of the tremendous character of the issues involved, and generally determined to resume those maritime rights which were filched from them in 1856 under the circumstances related in the following pages.

This is no new thing. The contest, between the desire of the Continental military powers on the one



hand to abridge these rights, and the determination of Great Britain on the other hand to maintain them unabridged, which was begun in 1752, and which was conducted by Great Britain with ever increasing resolution throughout years of ever increasing stress and danger, was ended, for the time, by the secret surrender of the rights made in the Declaration of Paris at a moment when no stress or danger was. What is new is the indifference with which that surrender has been generally regarded or ignored.

But for that surrender the present most lamentable war in South Africa would have been shorter and less bloody. But for that surrender all merchandise, the produce and property of the Transvaal or of the Orange Free State, would now be liable to capture at sea and to confiscation as lawful prize of war, whatever might be its nature or destination, and under whatever neutral flag it might be found. But for that surrender Great Britain might capture every ounce of gold produced in the Transvaal and shipped to Europe in payment for arms, ammunition, or services of any kind. But for that surrender she could capture every kind of merchandise destined to and the property of the enemy, whether contraband of war or not. In short, but for the Declaration of Paris Great Britain could *stop the Supplies* of the Transvaal carried to it under neutral flags, as well as the payment for those supplies carried from it under those same flags. In consequence, however, of the signing away of her rights by the Declaration, she can, as she now stands, capture and confiscate only what may be decided to be contraband of war, and nothing else whatever; a restriction of her rights under the Common Law of Nations so great as to have brought, in practice, inability to exercise even the right that is left, and

to force her irresistible Navy to look helpless on at the supply of her avowed enemies by her professed friends. In a word, by the Declaration of Paris Great Britain is debarred from the use of the most potent and merciful method of the capture and confiscation of merchandise; and is driven to rely alone upon the far less potent and most unmerciful method of the slaughter and destruction of men.

It is sometimes assumed that the responsibilities of Great Britain begin and end with the defence of the British Islands against invasion. This is far from being the case. She is no whit less responsible for the defence of India and of her other possessions and colonies scattered throughout the world. Besides that, moreover, she is bound by the most solemn engagements, some of them of great antiquity, with reference to the territories of other countries which she has guaranteed.

Thus, she has guaranteed that Belgium "shall form an independent and perpetually neutral State," and shall "be bound to observe such neutrality towards all other States," by Article VII of the Treaty of 19th April, 1839.

She has undertaken "in case of the attack of an invader to protect Chusan and its dependencies, and to restore it to the possession of China as of old," by Article IV of the Treaty of 4th April, 1846.

She has guaranteed that the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg "shall henceforth form a perpetually neutral State," and "shall be bound to observe the same neutrality towards all other States," by Article II of the Treaty of 11th May, 1867.

She has given a "guarantee to His Majesty the King of Prussia his descendants and successors," of

“the possession of” that portion of Saxony ceded to him by the Treaty of 9th June, 1815.

She has guaranteed the integrity and the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland by the Declaration of 20th November, 1815.

She has guaranteed as against Russia, the territories of the King of Sweden and Norway, and has undertaken, in case Russia should make “any proposal or demand” of cession or exchange thereof, “to furnish to H.M. the King of Sweden and Norway sufficient naval and military forces to co-operate with the naval and military forces of his said Majesty for the purpose of resisting the pretensions or aggressions of Russia,” by Article II of the Treaty of 17th November, 1855.

She has guaranteed “the independence and the territorial integrity” of the Ottoman Empire by Article VII of the Treaty of 30th March, 1856.

She has guaranteed Greece as “a monarchical, independent, and constitutional State” by the Treaty of 7th May, 1832, and by Article III of the Treaty of 3rd August, 1863, and the “perpetual neutrality” of the Ionian Islands under Article II of the Treaty of 14th November, 1863.

She has especially guaranteed as against Russia all the Ottoman possessions in Asia, and “if any attempt shall be made at any future time by Russia to take possession of any further territories of H.I.M. the Sultan in Asia,” then “England engages to join H.I.M. the Sultan in defending them by force of arms,” by Article I of the Treaty of 4th June, 1878.

She has engaged herself to “respect the independence” of the Sultan of Muscat by the Declaration of 10th March, 1862.

She has placed on record her “sincere desire to