

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

98-10

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM HUSKISSON, M.P.

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE, &c.

SIR,

IN your Speech of the 11th of May, 1826, in the House of Commons, upon the state of British Shipping, you acquainted the House that a great injury had been sustained by the Ship-Owners of Great Britain, from our compelling the Barbary Powers to abandon the illegitimate mode in which they had carried on war against the States in the Mediterranean.

As I was officially situated at Genoa when this measure was effected, it may not, at this crisis, be improper to detail some circumstances connected with it, in order that steps may be taken to obtain, if possible, some commercial privileges in return for what has confessedly been, on the part of Great Britain, so great a sacrifice of maritime superiority and advantages.

It is needless to state to you, Sir, that the annexation of the ancient Republic of Genoa to the Sardinian Dominions, in the year 1815, conformably to the special Article of the Treaty of Vienna, caused the highest degree of discontent among the Genoese, being contrary, as they affirmed, to the stipulations by which the city and territory of Genoa were surrendered to the British naval and land forces in March, 1814.

The grant of the British flag to the Ship-owners of Genoa, in order to protect their vessels from the piracies of the Barbary Powers, qualified, however, in some degree, this discontent; but in March, 1816, from the remonstrances of the British Ship-owners, orders for the discontinuance of such grant were given by His Majesty's Government to the British Consuls and Vice-Consuls in the Mediterranean, it being contrary to the provisions of the Navigation Act.

The Expedition of Lord Exmouth against the Barbary Powers, took place precisely at the period these orders were issued, for it was well known that the Genoese would never have remained tranquil without means being taken to continue to them the advantages of peaceably navigating the Mediterranean, and Levant seas; and this could not be done except by sacrificing the British carrying trade in those seas (in the way it was sacrificed by our interference with the Barbary Powers) to them, conjointly with the other weaker maritime states of Europe.

0520

I believe that the Sardinian Government did profess at the period of our interference, that it would grant some facilities to British Commerce at Genoa, as an equivalent for the losses Great Britain would necessarily sustain from the circumstances stated; but I fear, Sir, the records of the British Legation at the court of Turin, and of the British Consulate at Genoa, will present details the very reverse of such professions having ever been realised.*

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient humble Servant,

WM. KEER BROWN.

November 30th, 1826.

* *Vide* Letter to Mr. Caning, page 32.

EXTRACT from the Right Honourable William Huskisson's Speech, upon the State of British Shipping, 12th May, 1826.—(COURIER.)

“UPON the general pacification of Europe, but before we laid up our ships in ordinary, we insisted upon the Powers of Barbary abandoning the illegitimate mode in which they carried on war against the States of the Mediterranean, taking prisoners for the sake of ransom, or to make them slaves. The abolition of this caused a great change in the commerce of the Mediterranean. *I do not mean to say that what we did was not praiseworthy; and although it was not a positive duty to put an end to such a state of things; although there was no great moral obligation for us to do it, as in the case of the Slave Trade, and be it right or wrong, it is right, as I think, and will be looked upon as such by history, to the honour of England; but it has produced a change injurious to our shipping in that quarter.* Before that event the flag of Great Britain was the only one which was protected from the piracies of the barbarians; but afterwards, all the flags of the little States of the Mediterranean were equally respected with our own. This, of course, had the effect of diminishing the quantity of English ships, and the number of English sailors, employed in the Mediterranean. In the coasting trade of the Mediterranean there were 16,000 British seamen employed, and from 7,000 to 8,000 natives. *But for this circumstance, that trade must have been carried on by British ships alone.* I cannot say exactly what change may have taken place on that account, but I recollect that an honourable Member, now no more, (Mr. Marrayat,) stated that the number of vessels in the Mediterranean had decreased from eight or ten thousand to between seven and eight hundred.”

0522

professions having ever been realised.*

I believe that the Sardinian Government did profess at the period of our interference, that it

Note.—As the British Shipping Interest has suffered such a direct severe loss, from the sacrifice of the carrying trade in the Mediterranean and Levant Seas, by British ships, as well as in other instances, without any reciprocal advantages in other branches of commerce being granted to this country, to fill up the vacuum made in her national industry, is it not greatly to be feared—nay, positively to be inferred—if the Corn Trade is thrown open, the Agricultural Interest will also fall a direct sacrifice to the foreigner, as well as that no return of commercial advantages will be granted to Great Britain, to fill up that still greater vacuum in her national industry, an open trade in corn will inevitably create.

WM. KEER BROWN.

copy

*Kentish Gazette/Canterbury 26th July 1826,
Postscript to Sir Egerton Mordaunt's letter to the Editor,
upon the Corn Laws, 19th July 1826 —*

*¶ Since I closed this Letter I have been favored with
the perusal of a letter to Mr. Canning, upon a free trade
in Corn, by William Freer Mordaunt, Canterbury, 1825.*

*¶ Mr. Mordaunt it seems was sometime since Council at
Genoa.* And discovers great knowledge of the amount
and distribution of our foreign Commerce, — He
plainly proves the high improbability of any great
extension of foreign vent for our Manufactures and
consequent ruin that would ensue from the large
Expenditure necessary to furnish a part of the subsistence
of the British population from foreign Corn —
He has Demonstrated by details that which I had
deduced by general arguments"*

Egerton Mordaunt

** Only vice-Council*



A

LETTER

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM HUSKISSON, M.P.
&c. &c. &c.

RELATIVE TO THE LOSS

OF THE

BRITISH

CARRYING TRADE,

In the Mediterranean and Levant Seas,

IN 1816.

BY

WM. KEER BROWN.

J. LODGE, PRINTER, WOODBRIDGE.

B

M

E250